

Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report 2023-24



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Welcome to the CSCP annual report! I'm here to guide you through your strategic safeguarding conversations, whether in senior leadership spaces, team discussions, service development sessions, or QA conversations. My goal is to provide the context you need to understand how your frontline safeguarding roles fit into Camden's broader safeguarding system. Dip into sections as priorities arise to enhance your multi-agency practices. Remember, your role has the unique privilege of impacting children's lives, so use me to reflect and improve. For feedback or suggestions, please visit: [CSCP Annual Report](#)



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Foreword from Lead Statutory Partners

We hope you find the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership's annual report 2023-24 engaging and of interest. This report demonstrates our shared accountability by analysing the effectiveness of our working arrangements.

It reflects our collective endeavour and responsibility to better safeguard children and young people in Camden and promote their welfare. We have highlighted our achievements over the past year while acknowledging the challenges we must overcome to continue improving our safeguarding arrangements.

In light of the publication of [Stable Homes, Built on Love](#) earlier in 2023, the work of the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership, resonates with the government's vision to create an improved safeguarding system for children that prioritises love, safety, and stability.

In this year's annual report, we have woven our vision, values, and objectives with impact measures based on our learning, scrutiny activities, and engagement conversations with young people, families, and feedback from practitioners.

This report highlights the challenges we aim to overcome in the coming years and our approach to relational practice to better serve children, families, and each other.

As we work on the publication of our refreshed safeguarding arrangements, in response to "[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)," we remain confident that despite leadership changes, including the departures of our former DCS and longstanding Board Chair / Independent Scrutineer, we have actively maintained our collective commitment to responsibility and accountability across statutory partners. This empowers us to lead across all levels of partnership arrangements, from strategic planning to frontline implementation.

Our plans include strengthening the role of education partners in our leadership and governance model.

On the next page is a snapshot of our refreshed shared values and priorities based on our learning and improvement framework, and collective safeguarding conversations.

Proposal to update our shared values:



Be compassionate, trauma informed and anti-racist when supporting children and families who have faced multiple disadvantages.



Develop a relational approach by making meaningful connections to uphold safeguarding as a joint responsibility, fostering mutual challenge and support among partners.



Collaborate in partnership to engage in reflection, learning, and continuous improvement.



Be curious and courageous to make a positive difference to the lives of children, through valuing and involving our diverse community.

It is important to note that we have carefully considered learnings from serious incidents locally and nationally, identifying areas for local practice development and national support needs. Our goal is to improve safeguarding arrangements by understanding our strengths and challenges, ensuring every child has the foundation they need to be safe and thrive.



Tim Aldridge



Executive Director, (DCS) Children and Learning, Camden Council



David Pennington



Director of Safeguarding North Central London Integrated Care System



Andy Carter



Chief Superintendent-BCU Commander Central North (Camden & Islington), Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service



Stephen Hall



Chief Executive Officer Camden Learning



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About the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)



Our shared vision:

All children and young people in Camden are safe, thriving and heard.



Our mission statement:

Working in partnership to keep all children and young people safe, thriving and heard within a community where safeguarding is a shared responsibility.

What we do

[Our Camden safeguarding arrangements](#) are published on our website and you can also find a [film about our work](#) and details of our objectives.

What you will find in the report and its purpose

This annual report is a joint report from our statutory safeguarding partners analysing the activity of the partnership in 2023-24. The report details what the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies have done considering safeguarding arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews and how effective safeguarding arrangements have been in practice.

The purpose is so that:

- Safeguarding Partners can be held to account
- Analysis can be undertaken to aid future policy development
- National support needs can be identified
- Future iterations of statutory guidance can be informed

2. About the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership

The focus of the report is on multi-agency priorities, **learning, impact, evidence, and improvement**. Here are some of the ways we have captured what we do in this report:

Learning and Improvement Framework



The annual report is published on the CSCP website: [CSCP Annual Reports](#).

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Scrutiny and Governance

What do we mean by scrutiny?

Our scrutiny, governance and assurance arrangements can be found in Section 10 of our Camden [safeguarding arrangements](#).

Key questions to test the effectiveness of our safeguarding arrangements:

- How effective are the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in getting a clear line of sight on single agency and multi-agency safeguarding practice?
- Do the arrangements enable space for reflection and learning from practice?
- How do the arrangements have a positive impact on the lives of children, multi-agency working and/or front-line practice?

Here we have included information regarding our independent scrutiny functions, independent audit, use of multi-agency dataset to understand performance and impact, our work with young advisors on the role of cross partnership governments arrangements.

What do inspections tell us about our safeguarding arrangements?

Health:



In the London Borough of Camden, there are several hospital trusts providing health services with a vital role in

safeguarding and providing quality care for children and their families. The following shares Camden Health Trusts rating by the Care Quality Commission (CQC):

- ✓ University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (UCLH) - Overall rated as **“Good”**.
- ✓ Royal Free Hospital - Overall rated as **“Good”**.
- ✓ Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust - Overall rated as **“Good”**.
- ✓ Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust - Overall rated as **“Good”**.
- ✓ Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust - Overall rated as **“Good”**.
- ✓ Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) - Overall rated as **“Good”**.

// *We are lucky enough in Camden to have an active health subgroup attended by dedicated and forward thinking child safeguarding professionals representing several acute hospital trusts as well as community health provision. This year we have been successful in working together to share and embed learning from both local and national safeguarding practice reviews and to evidence good inter health and multiagency communication through our deep dive case studies and our sample audits. The health subgroup works effectively as a team of professionals and allows shared learning, peer support, supervision and a safe supportive environment for professional challenge and growth through learning together. We also provide a space for restorative supervision which we hope we will be able to grow over the next year as a subgroup. //*

Quote from Chair of Health Subgroup, Designated Doctor & Designated Nurse.

The CSCP's Health Subgroup oversees safeguarding assurance across the health sector and provides a communication network for all named, designated and lead professionals across Camden's health services to facilitate the sharing of expertise on safeguarding children. The subgroup monitors the CSCP business plan and priorities to ensure that decisions made by the CSCP are implemented by the relevant agencies whilst influencing and advising on health issues.

Impact: In December 2023, CNWL shared findings from their dip-sample audit on emergency department notifications for children aged 0-19 years. The audit evidenced that 90% of notifications were made within four days with effective follow up. Overall, the audit provided CSCP assurance that there is robust and well-established communication and liaison between the acute and community setting. In recognition of the importance of information sharing with education settings, a recommendation from this audit was to encourage information sharing with independent schools, who do not have access to a school nurse through the liaison health visitor.

The Health Subgroup identified the increasing number of children not waiting to be seen or leaving without treatment which led to a deep dive of cases to understand circumstances. It was recognised that during this period, there was also an increase in emergency department attendances across NCL. The most common documented reason for not waiting was due to the waiting times. Each did not wait is reviewed by the safeguarding team to rag rate the cases to ensure an appropriate action is taken.

- Amber rag rating - case is discussed with a senior clinician and a welfare check or safeguarding referral must be considered.
- Red rag rating - case must be discussed with a paediatric registrar and a welfare check or safeguarding referral must be considered.

Assurance was sought that and children subject to child protection or those looked after are immediately raised with the relevant children's social work service.

In 2024, as recommended by the Health Subgroup, Health Trust made a joint commitment to ensure that a safeguarding statement is clearly documented in all relevant job descriptions.

Police:



The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has faced scrutiny in its approach to child protection, as highlighted by the [His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\), October 2023](#). The CSCP is seeking assurance on the following key findings pertaining to children:

- MPS's response to child criminal and sexual exploitation
- How MPS addresses the needs of vulnerable children who are suffering from, or at risk of, exploitation.
- How the MPS is improving understanding of the nature and scale of child exploitation and how this poses a significant barrier to effective intervention.

Impact: CSCP statutory partners have fed-back on MPS's Children's Strategy, which aims to reset how officers keep children and young people safe by seeing them as children first. Taking learning from our serious incidents and multi-agency dataset, we emphasised the importance of working collaboratively with partners in order to develop non-victim blaming/ anti-racist safeguarding practice. This will be reflected in our new safeguarding arrangements published in late 2024 and our training commission on trauma-informed practice.

Feedback from CSCP to MPS:

// Trauma-informed policing plays a crucial role in fostering trust with children. This includes recognising how being trauma-aware helps officers cope with their own stress and emotional challenges, positively influencing their interactions with children. //

MPS colleagues have provided assurance on the **two accelerated causes of concern from** (HMICFRS) in relation to:

- **identifying and assessing risks appropriately for children are reported missing.**
- **carrying out effective investigations for at risk children:**

Feedback from CSCP to MPS:

// We recognise the extensive expertise held within specific police teams, whether that be SNT, gangs, CET or YOS. We would welcome a model which enables officers across these teams to share geographic or issue specific information which informs a joined up contextual response to reducing the exploitation of children. At present, it feels like systems do not enable this approach, and information regarding potential exploiters is lost. Utilising partnership forums which draw together these areas may be one opportunity to facilitate this approach. //

Impact: As a result of sharing findings from this inspection at the CSCP's Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy Group, challenge around the work with mobile phones and understanding MISPER activity was raised. Police reflected that the changes that all cases, even those deemed not as high risk will be reviewed and this will help improve activity going forward.

Camden Council – Children’s Services



Camden Council’s children’s services was rated **‘outstanding’** by Ofsted, in April 2022. The October 2023, Focussed Visit found;

// Most children continuing to benefit from experienced leadership of services, good corporate and political support, a committed, well-trained workforce and resources which helps children to progress. A recent transformation of service delivery has enhanced support to staff and strengthened management oversight, so that children receive the right level of services to meet their needs. Most children benefit from timely help, with clear plans and evidence that risk is reducing //

Ofsted praised commitment from multi-agency safeguarding partners, and the strength of strategic leadership in our safeguarding arrangements and work on areas such as neglect, anti-racist safeguarding practice, and the training and support offer available for the frontline workforce.

The CSCP is maintaining oversight of progress made in the areas identified by Ofsted as requiring increased focus. These include:



Review Quality Assurance framework: Audit culture, guidance and moderation.



Enable greater capacity for QA activity through strengthened leadership and support.



Consider areas for bespoke quality assurance approaches: FGC and Fostering.



Demonstrate how we learn from complaints, performance and learning from serious incidents.



Refresh policies and standards to ensure quality assurance is woven throughout.



Management oversight of case progression across PLO/CP system, including the role of CPOs and IROs to enable escalation and challenge.



Ensure good practice and learning is routinely captured and shared to frontline workforce through workshops and development activities.

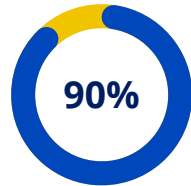


Capture and learn from feedback from children and families.

Education

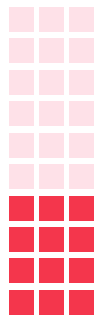


of primary and special schools/ Alternative Provision



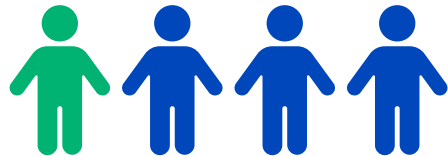
of secondary schools

are currently rated either 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, which is 10% above the national average.



Camden has more than twice as many outstanding primary schools (40%) compared to the rest of the country. [Camden Learning](#)

Nearly one in four Camden school pupils missed more than 10% of sessions in 2022-23.



In 2023, Children achieved good levels of educational attainment at Key Stage 2 and 4.

In 2023, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and advantaged students has narrowed for Key Stages 2 and 4.



In 2023, 95.8% of 16-17-year-olds in Camden were in Education, Employment or Training (EET).

Two out of five secondary school aged children do not eat fresh fruit and vegetables on most days.



This is reflected in:



Almost one in five Camden children in reception are considered overweight or obese.



By year 6 it's more than one in three.

This suggests that socioeconomic factors are also affecting health outcomes.

Impact: In recognition of the pivotal role of our local education providers, unique to our local safeguarding arrangements includes the education Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Forum. This forum's chairing arrangements is mirrored from our statutory safeguarding partners, co-Chaired between Camden Learning and Local Authority with regular engagement with Police and Health colleagues. The forum provides a safe space for all designated safeguarding leads across state, special, further education, early years and independent education settings to come together to discuss safeguarding challenges and to be kept informed on the changing face of safeguarding. Changes to both local and national policy is disseminated through this group with regular reflection on learning from serious safeguarding incidents and local challenges.

Voice of frontline practitioners: In early 2024, the CSCP launched a DSL survey to ascertain views in respect of the DSL Forum, supervision and training. Overall, DSLs were positive of the format, length and delivery method of the DSL Forum. In relation to areas requiring increased discussion, online safety stood out as a theme which will be further explored over 2024-25. Following feedback from DSLs, Camden Learning have implemented a half-termly safeguarding bulletin which will be co-produced with children's social work.

Impact: Due to the demanding role of DSLs and the complex vulnerabilities of children and young people, the need for reflective safeguarding sessions for DSLs is recognised nationally. Although already trialled by the CSCP in 2021-22 with limited take up, in 2024-25 the CSCP will further explore options for a DSL supervision offer available on an as required basis. The funding arrangements will be subject to further consideration.

Independent Scrutineer Evaluations on safeguarding arrangements and the quality of the annual report

There are 37, 068 children living in Camden today from a hugely diverse range of ethnicity, culture, and race. Every one of them is an individual with an individual story and history, which has created the childhood they are living now. Their experiences today will determine their adult hood, and how they will parent their own children, often repeating the same cycle of learning, and life experience. Good and bad.

As an Independent Scrutineer, my role is to steer, challenge, and support the statutory partners to ensure the safeguarding arrangements they lead on, serve to support, nurture, and protect all these children and their families, ensuring every child has the childhood they deserve—one they can learn from and pass on to their own children.

In this report, you will see evidence that Camden is fortunate to have high-quality organisations that work well together in supportive partnerships, across service delivery and strategic leadership, with a shared commitment to scrutiny, learning, and challenge. I have observed how services strive to maintain


this positive cycle and intervene when it is disrupted by abuse, neglect, trauma, or inequality. I have seen how the statutory partners respond to these ever-changing challenges, which requires collective leadership of services that can learn and adapt with agility. This forms the basis for the statutory partners' and my scrutiny of safeguarding practices for children in Camden.

As the context in which Camden's children and families live continues to evolve, I view the partnership remains determined to learn, investigate, and scrutinise both service practices and the experiences of our children to better meet these challenges. This has been particularly important to the statutory partners' joint response to local serious child safeguarding incidents.

I am confident that this report demonstrates the shared endeavour and collective accountability across our partnership to reduce the risk children face, identify opportunities to learn and improve, and create the environments in Camden through which they, and their families, can thrive.

CSCP Young Advisors

Voice of the child

 **Scrutiny:** Since 2019, the CSCP Young Advisors have enriched our approach by strengthening the links between our safeguarding arrangements and the lived experiences of local young people. The Young Advisors strengthen our governance by sharing their lived experiences on emerging safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Their views can be found interwoven throughout the report as they make up our governance framework.

In 2023-24, the CSCP has continued to share our model of involving Young Advisors in our scrutiny activity, and this has included involvement the Multi-Agency Child Safeguarding (MACS) Evaluation research project led by King's College London, in collaboration with the University of Bedfordshire and other partners. This project aims to evaluate the effectiveness of LSCPS in England. As part of stakeholder feedback, our Young Advisors have hosted national webinars with others like them across the country, to discuss how LSCPs can involve 'Young Scrutineers' in the work. The research output will be a film and a toolkit for LSCPs to utilise to develop their approach.

Our lay members

The two lay members provide a perspective on safeguarding arrangements as local residents and hold responsibility for championing the voice of the child and maintaining a link to the local community. One Lay Member co-chairs our Camden's Family Advisory Forum and the other takes part in our Partnership and sub-groups. In 2024-25, based on her experience, our most experienced lay member is being supported to lead our next multi-agency audit on safeguarding children who are Elective Home Educated, we hope this is interesting alternative to engaging stake holders in our QA Framework.

4

Camden - A borough of diversity and contrast



The annual report will refer to the impact of the CSCP in regards to the context of the borough demographics which have been summarised in this section.

Camden, a borough of diversity and contrast, covers an area of 8.5 square miles in inner London. Camden has seen changes in its population size and age distribution, reflecting broader trends in London and England. It is home to major transport hubs such as Kings Cross and Euston station, business centres such as Holborn and Tottenham Court Road and green open spaces like Hampstead Heath.

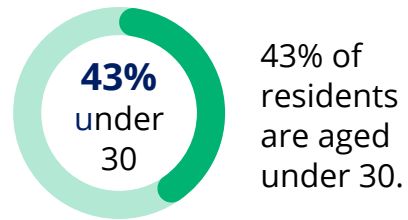


4. Camden - A borough of diversity and contrast

Camden has a population of 218,049m (ONS, 2022) and 37,068 are children.



Camden has a relatively young population due to a large population of students and young people living in the area:



Disability: There are fewer disabled people as a share of the population in Camden (15%) than the national average (17%).

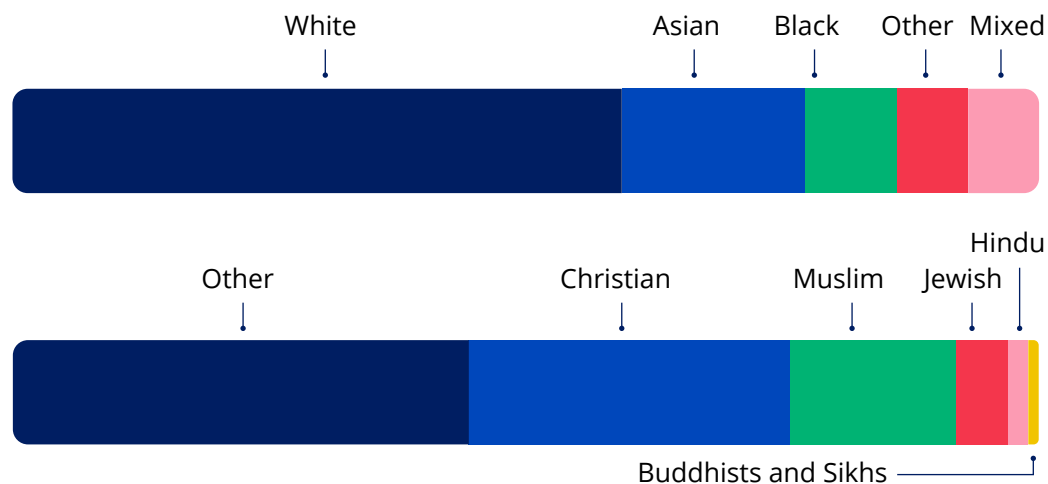
LGBTQ+: Camden is home to a larger percentage of people (17%) who don't identify as straight or heterosexual than the national average (14%).

Ethnic Diversity

Camden is more ethnically diverse than England. 40% of residents are from Black, Asian or other ethnic groups. In England more broadly the portion of the population that is white is 81%. 10% are Asian and 4% are Black.

Religion in Camden

The most popular religious group is Other, accounting for 44% of the population. Camden has a population of 31% Christian, 16% Muslim, 5% Jewish, 2% Hindu, and Buddhists and Sikhs each is around 1%. The remainder is split between people with no religion and those who decided not to identify a religion.

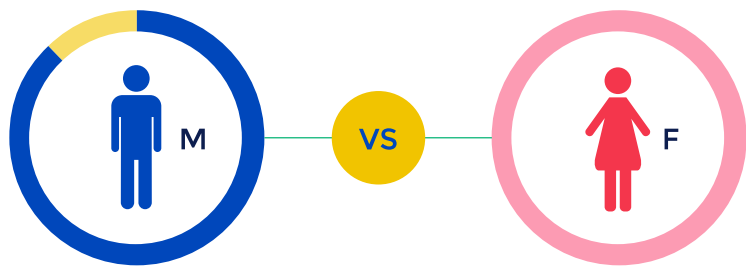


Camden has more young people aged 15-24:

16% in Camden

12% London

11% England



The number of males for each female in a population, was 88 males to every 100 females.

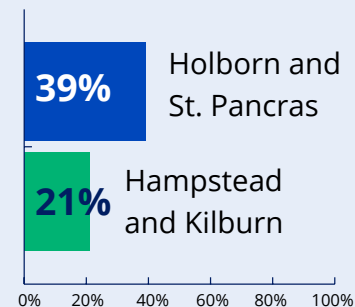
Split by gender, a girl born in Camden has a life expectancy of 88 years, and a boy has a life expectancy of 83 years.

What is life like for a child living and growing up in Camden

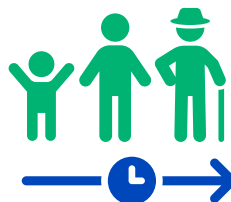
In 2022, two in five children were living in poverty after housing costs



Within Camden, child poverty rates vary significantly across different areas of the borough. The highest rates of poverty, after accounting for housing costs, are found in Holborn and St. Pancras (39%), which is nearly twice as high as the rate in Hampstead and Kilburn (21%).



In 2023, more than two in three children achieved a good level of development in early years education, higher than England.



Life expectancy in Camden is relatively high compared to England, but the gap is widening. Those in the most deprived areas die about 10 years earlier than those in the least deprived areas.



Far more people in Camden live in flats or apartments than the national average.

The average salary in Camden is £45,326 however the average property price in Camden being £1,213,891.

Almost 1 in 5 children are growing up in low-income households.

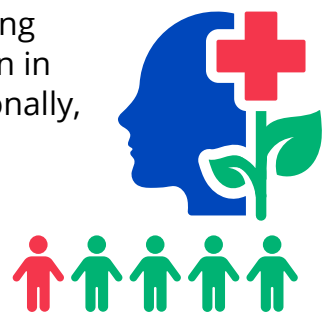


Over 40% of children are eligible for free school meals.

With a significant gap between those who are eligible for Free School Meals, and those who actually take it up.

Poor mental health of children and young people have been an increasing concern in recent years, both in Camden and nationally, as understood through surveys.

1 in 5 children and young people aged 8 to 25 years had a probable mental health disorder.



Find out more: [Camden Demographics](#) | [Age, Ethnicity, Religion, Wellbeing \(varbes.com\)](#)



5

Achievements made against 2022-24 safeguarding priority areas

The CSCP identifies three safeguarding priority areas to take forward biennially, which is reviewed annually. This is conducted based on:

- Emerging learning from Reviews and multiagency audits
- Trends and performance indicators in CSCP dataset
- Themes identified in multiagency subgroups/ forums and members survey to seek the views of our frontline workforce
- Work with CSCP Young Advisors and other children and parents participation forums.

The three identified priority areas for 2022-24 were:

1. **Relational safeguarding**
2. **Effective challenge**
3. **Violence against women and girls**

The below information provides evidence on how the CSCP achieved against each priority area:

Relational safeguarding

1. Children's Social Work Practice audits seek assurance on how **supervision** can be used to reflect on the impact of family's history on their functioning and approach to support. As part of this, consideration was given to whether there was sufficient community-based groups to ensure families, have a greater voice in the work being done with them and their children. Parent champions and advocates are embedded within the safeguarding system. In **Health agencies, reflective supervision spaces** have been developed to provide those working in children and young people safeguarding and maternity safeguarding teams a safe space to have reflective discussions relating to complex issues.
2. This resulted in fostering a deeper understanding of **each family's unique context** to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the support service offered. Examples of change delivery include Early Help practice model and development of community based 'Family Hubs' welcoming place where families access a range of services with co-located professionals.
3. The **redesign of CSCP audit forms** aims to challenge auditors to ensure that a child's identity is thoroughly understood and that this understanding informs practice. This initiative emphasises the importance of accurately recording how a child's views on their identity have been elicited and documenting evidence of these efforts. By doing so, CSCP sought assurance that child's identity is integrated into their care plan. Although improved practice was identified, the

5. Achievements made against 2022-2024 safeguarding priority areas

CSCP found that further development was needed in how workers consistently consider all the Social Graces in their work with families. Safeguarding supervision for case holding staff is now used to consider issues of equality and the impact on practice.

4. Promoting equality and diversity is evident in the planning and delivery of CSCP multi-agency training. Trainers are required to include scenarios that reflect the **local demographics** and ensure all courses reflect an understanding of how issues of equality can impact practice. New CSCP course developed by multi-agency practitioner on **anti-racist practice and unconscious bias and co-delivered with service uses/young adults** in 2023-24. Training evaluations have helped to re-shape the course based on constructive feedback and most recent evaluations indicate impact of revisions made.
5. **CSCP training accessed by community partners**, highlights our effort to build strong, supportive relationships with our community colleagues in 'Early Help' part of the safeguarding continuum. Over 190 community colleagues attended our multiagency safeguarding training in 2023-24 and the 3 Stage evaluation measures the impact of the training on safeguarding practice (see Section 12 on Training). Camden Prevent Team has included a **Community Engagement Post** which has sought to understand how more marginalised communities may be vulnerable to radicalisation and has held a community workshop to understand better the impact of radicalisation on families.
6. **A multi-agency disproportionality working group** was established in 2022 to consider the findings from the HMIP thematic report on the experience of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system (2021). Early Help

and Youth Services developed this work further in 2023-24. Children's Safeguarding will be building on this over 2024. Race Equality Catalyst Group sessions and Action Plans take place regularly with staff across varying disciplines with sponsorship from senior leaders. New to 2024 includes a **Director for relational practice**, children's services in Camden. City and Hackney LCSPR Child Q – The CSCP carefully considered the findings and challenged local practice. In consultation with Police and Schools/Education colleagues, [Schools-screening-and-searching-guidance 2023](#) was revised. The Royal Free Hospital has rolled out equality and diversity training and anti-racism training across the Trust, impact has resulted in a change of interpreter services to broaden the languages available for patients accessing care.

7. Embedding the Think Family approach with Camden & Islington NHS Trust through training. Impact was evidenced through an **audit on Think Family** confirming the success of the training and an update of the Adult and Children safeguarding policy.
8. Partners continue to work together on **LCSPR and thematic reviews** to learn as multi-agency partners and improve our procedures via sharing organisational learning (See Section 9).
9. Camden Housing Services have refreshed service principles to Proactive, Accessible, Caring and Together (PACT) underlining their commitment to relational practice.

Effective challenge

1. Wide variety of multi-agency partner attendance at CSCP meetings minutes of these meetings evidences a healthy partnership, able to provide **constructive challenge of quantitative and qualitative data** to keep children safe

5. Achievements made against 2022-2024 safeguarding priority areas

(evidenced throughout report). The **Statutory Partners** play an active role in modelling a culture of challenge and support. For example, this is evidenced in our rapid review reports of joint statutory partner decision making in commencing a LCSPR, and in the wider partnership meeting, where **sustained scrutiny of health** outcomes for Children Looked After, resulted in improvements in health and dental assessment for 2023-24 (See section 7).

2. [CSCP escalation policy](#) has been updated and shared across the frontline to raise awareness and the impact of its use can be measured through web analytics of this page (See Section on Communication).
3. The role of **lay members** in the CSCP is to act as the voice of the community and offer constructive challenge with the aim of driving improvement in services for residents (evidenced throughout report).
4. At CSCP meetings the **cabinet member** promotes an accountable safeguarding culture, which not only welcomes challenge but ensures that partnership decision-making puts the interest of local children and families at the centre.
5. The CSCP commissions an **Independent Scrutineer** to work closely with us to maintain transparency and openness. The role is to scrutinise performance, offer challenge and encourage a culture of learning and improvement. For example, The Independent Scrutineer challenged the Local Authority on decision making leading to the significant reduction in children subject to Child Protection (CP) Plans in 2022-23, a review of children subject to CP plans took place, which offered assurance that threshold were maintained.
6. The CSCP also commissions **Independent Reviewers** to lead on multi-agency audits and LCSPRs to enable a culture of reflection and openness.

7. The CSCP **Young Advisors** offer scrutiny and an alternative perspective, which helps shape and inform service delivery (evidenced throughout report).
8. CSCP multi-agency audits provide an opportunity to collectively review agency input, share learning and good practice. These **multi-agency moderation meetings** have often brought the network together to openly discuss and resolve pertinent issues.
9. Section 11 safeguarding audit of all Camden state schools completed in Summer 2023. This was followed up by deep dive safeguarding reviews in several primary, secondary and special schools, resulting in recommendations for improvements (See Section 7).
10. Camden's **Channel Panel** has been observed and evaluated by the Home Office and hosted a joint training with Islington to learn from and **challenge one and other on practice**.

Violence against women and girls

1. In early 2023 a **Violence Against Women and Girls Board** was established. Statutory partners are regularly briefed on the work, meet with local groups and have sponsored backbench reports on VAWG work.
2. **Serious Incident Domestic Abuse Review (SIDAR)** – joint review with children and adult services. Two workshop sessions organised for 2024 to review learning and the wider context of coercive control.
3. The CSCP seeks assurance that joint working continues between children's services, Camden Safety Net and the Police so that victims of domestic abuse are supported and the children in the household are safeguarded.

5. Achievements made against 2022-2024 safeguarding priority areas

Camden IDSVA service and **Camden Safety Net embedded within Early Help**. Camden MASH has fostered enhanced collaborative ties with colleagues from Camden Safety Net.

4. **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation**, we have coproduced with survivors refreshed Domestic Violence Abuse (DVA) Housing policy and procedures. These will embed a safety and survivor-led approach to DVA across housing services. Housing teams now use a DVA Universal Assessment form which was **co-produced with DVA survivors**. Camden Housing Service is developing new approaches to domestic abuse and family safety by working with partners in the London Restart pilot to develop an **accommodation pathway for perpetrators**. Neighbourhood housing teams are receiving training to enable them to effectively assess DVA risks and work to safeguard residents' experiencing DVA.
5. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims of domestic abuse if they "see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse". Developing training to support the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Clare's law.
6. **Healing Together for children** who have experienced domestic abuse - supports school-aged children and young people by teaching them simple mind-and-body techniques to better understand and regulate their own emotions and know what helps them feel calm and safe, through therapeutic sessions.
7. **CN BCU pilot** for domestic abuse investigations involves changing the approach for investigating standard risk cases where no violence has been used and where the victim is not

wishing to support a prosecution. Police officers will seek to take positive action based this on the academic research.

8. **Operation Encompass** has been running since 2020 and is embedded in **56 Camden maintained schools**.
9. **Royal Free Hospital** has been established as a **White Ribbon accredited** organisation since June 2023, with over 45 ambassadors and champions promoting the White Ribbon promise. Co-located IDVAs are hospital based 2 days a week and includes promotion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and a programme of domestic abuse training. There is a Trust lead for domestic abuse and a trust policy. Safeguarding Children Nurse Advisors completed training to be a **Domestic Abuse Prevention Ambassador (DAPA)**. A Safeguarding Children's Team representative completes research for MARAC and outcomes are shared with the allocated Health Professional working with the family.
10. Commissioning of **Whisper Me Happy Ever** After workshops in primary schools and **Tender Healthy Relationships** projects for secondary schools.

In this annual report we have identified challenging areas that require further priority focus at multiple layers of the partnership. At the time of writing this report, we have started to make progress in our new priorities for 2024-26:

1. Re-engaging vulnerable children in education (including SEND)
2. Mental Health in the family
3. Children Looked After and those that are Care Experienced.

6

Children and Families Contact Service

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6.1 Multi-agency arrangements at the Front Door

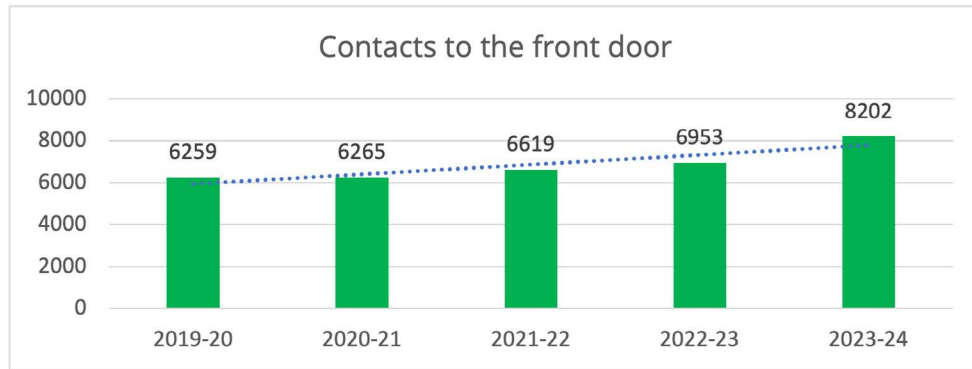
Camden’s Children and Families Contact Service (also known as the Front Door) is co-located with multi-agency partners and is responsible for making decisions on referrals and requests for services to ensure that children and families get the most suitable services and support depending on their level of need.

Impact: New to 2024 includes an education representative who will be co-located and embedded into the Children and Families Contact Service to provide advice and information, which reflects our local statutory safeguarding partner arrangements.

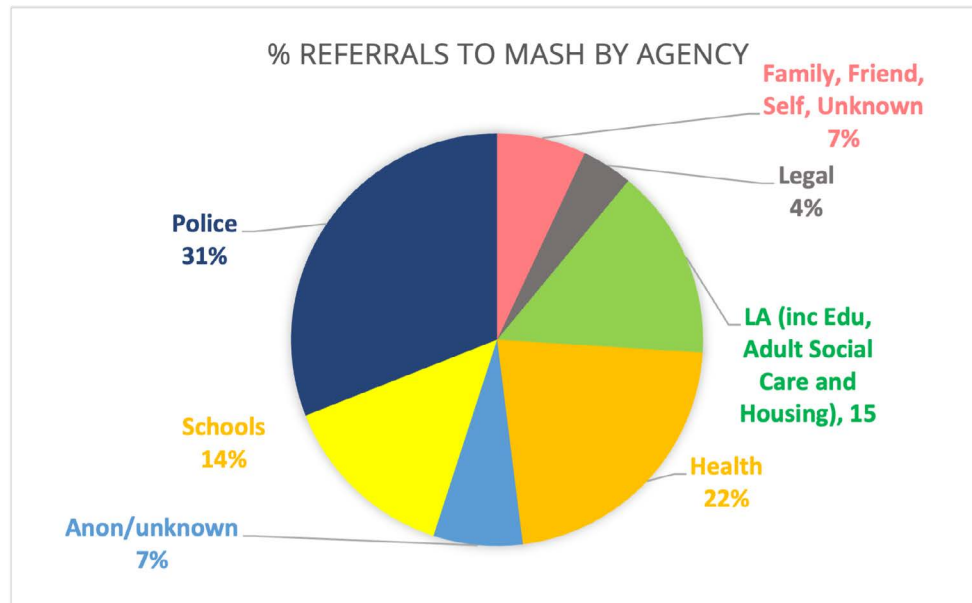
Impact: Children’s Services redesign 2023 has incorporated recommendations from our LSCPR, to build capacity and resilience at the front door. This has included strengthening management oversight, through a dedicated service manager role, to help ensure that the *right decision is made at the right time*.

There were 8,202 referrals made to the Children’s front door in 2023-24. This is a 17.5% increase in contacts reported in 2022-23. This demonstrates an increasing trend analysis over the previous five years of children and families who require additional support. Our statutory safeguarding partners recognise that it is likely that the longer-term impact of the pandemic and wider societal factors such as the cost of living are attributing to the spike.

6. Children and Families Contact Service



Scrutiny: We have recognised the need to accelerate progress in this area. Consequently, our statutory partners are committed to enhancing strategies to better understand the connections between broader societal factors and the rising demand for Early Help and statutory social care support. By effectively utilising data and evidence, we aim to drive system improvement.



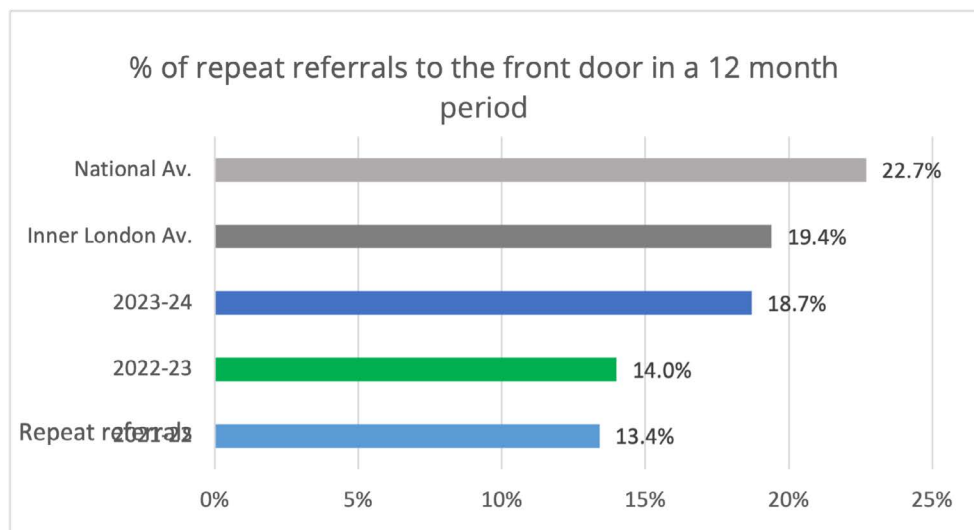
Impact: In keeping with previous years, the highest number of referrals received were by the Police at 31%. The second highest source of referrals, at 22% were from health services. Local Authority ranked third at 15%, which includes Housing, and Schools ranked fourth highest referral source, which mirrors the effectiveness of our statutory safeguarding partner collaboration.

Voice of the child

In keeping with the CSCP, mission statement: *'Working in partnership to keep all children and young people safe, thriving and heard within a community where safeguarding is a shared responsibility'* referrals from family, friend and self are encouraged. Work continues to be undertaken to engage the community to raise awareness of safeguarding issues. For example, the Guardianship Project is an ongoing community-based and community-led initiative that aims to explore how members of the community can come together to provide a safeguarding role for children and young people in their area. The project is delivered through the Champions programme run by Fitzrovia Youth in Action with the guardianship element led by Camden Detached Team and Integrated Youth Support Service. The Young Guardians produced [a film](#) as part of a resource pack for contextual safeguarding training for professionals, residents, local businesses, professionals.

Seeking assurance: The CSCP has challenged the increase in repeat referral rate, 18.7% in 2023-24 from 14% in 2022-23 and requested audit activity to be undertaken to explore whether this is any correlation between the increase in contacts

resulting in advice given. This will be an area monitored through the Quality Assurance Subgroup.



6.2 Early Help

This chapter considers how well early help support and safeguarding intervention is identified and referred by multi-agency partners.

There continues to be a high demand for early help services which is in tandem with the recognised national demand. Contacts progressed to the Early Help team increased by 145 cases in 2023-24. In line with Camden's vision of a "place where everyone has a chance to succeed and nobody gets left behind", Camden statutory arrangements has enabled significant investment in early intervention and prevention which is embedded within community services through our 'Family Hubs'. Early help hold the whole family in mind, using a partnership and

strengths-based approach and evidence-informed interventions to improve outcomes. Early help teams across services work to the same core principles, using the Resilient Families Framework as the foundation, providing the right help at the right time to prevent problems escalating and help families become more resilient.

Impact: The partnership is assured of the effectiveness of early help by monitoring the repeat referral rate. Over the last 5 years, the percentage of non-returning cases has remained consistent and close to the target (80%), with 2023-24 above target at 81%.

Understanding the child's lived experience

At initial early help assessment, the most prevalent factors include mental health and housing. Another factor which has showed a considerable increase this year is children with special educational needs and disabilities from 22% in 2022-23 to 34% in 2023-24. (This is a priority area for 2024-26). Although not in the top five presenting issues, financial issues show a continued year-on-year increase in prevalence which again is linked to the wider societal factors such as the cost of living. Partners are leading a number of key interventions and activities to support children and families who may be facing additional financial pressures, including:

- Camden have committed to funding Universal Free School Meals for all primary school children. Work is also ongoing with secondary age children to increase take-up and explore a discretionary offer.

- Camden have invested in a £1.3 million family support fund focused on tackling food hunger – providing secondary school families contributions towards uniform and providing free healthy school breakfasts to children from low-income families.
- Those working with families can apply for Camden’s cost of living hardship fund on behalf of families.
- Front door advice and guidance offer has been delivered on site in schools and GP services.

Impact: The CSCP training programme continues to include multi-agency training on Early Help, delivered by Early Help practitioners. Impact of the training is evidenced in 100% of delegates who attended the session in 2023-24 agreeing that the course enabled them to better identify and respond to safeguarding concerns. Delegate feedback includes *‘Fantastic course, it was good to hear about the services available in Camden that can collaborate and offer support to families facing challenges.’*

During 2023-24 the Early Help Service has continued to use quality assurance to highlight strengths in practice, learn from each other, deliver high quality casework and support the overall understanding of early help all of which will improve outcomes for children and their families. There have been 235 cases subject to quality assurance including 60 full case audits. This includes:

- Full case audits looking at practice and outcomes.
- 60 peer to peer audits to enable the Early Help workforce to observe and learn from practice.

- 111 Step Down audits to review Step Up processes, management decisions and risk management.
- Thematic Audits on management oversight, Targeted Early Help Support and Front Door Thresholds which reviewed quality of practice and identified potential learning opportunities and areas of focus.

Voice of the child

From January 2023 to July 2024 There have been 60 peer to peer audits of families open to early help. These audits have highlighted strengths around the child’s voice being represented particularly at assessment and initial TAF. These audits have also enabled Early Help co-ordinators to access previous practice and documents to support mentalising the lived experience of the child.



6.3 Effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

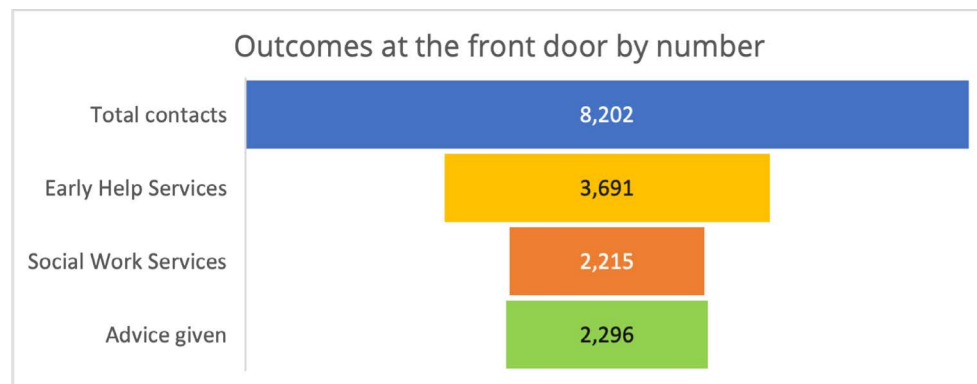
Outcome of front door contacts

In 2023-24, the most prevalent presenting factors relate to:

- domestic violence parent/carer (30%),
- parental mental health (26%),
- domestic violence child subject (23%)
- and child mental health (15%).

There has been a 10% increase in contacts which resulted in just advice being given. Although there has been an overall increase in the number of contacts to the front door, the outcome following contact has proportionally remained similar.

The graphs shows that in 2023-24, 27% of contacts to the front door resulted in referrals to children’s social care (2,215).



The multiple vulnerabilities recognised in social care assessments are shown in the chart on the next page. It identifies the range of presenting risk factors and those requiring the CSCP statutory partners to focus further on. Domestic abuse and mental health in the home and the most prevalent factors.

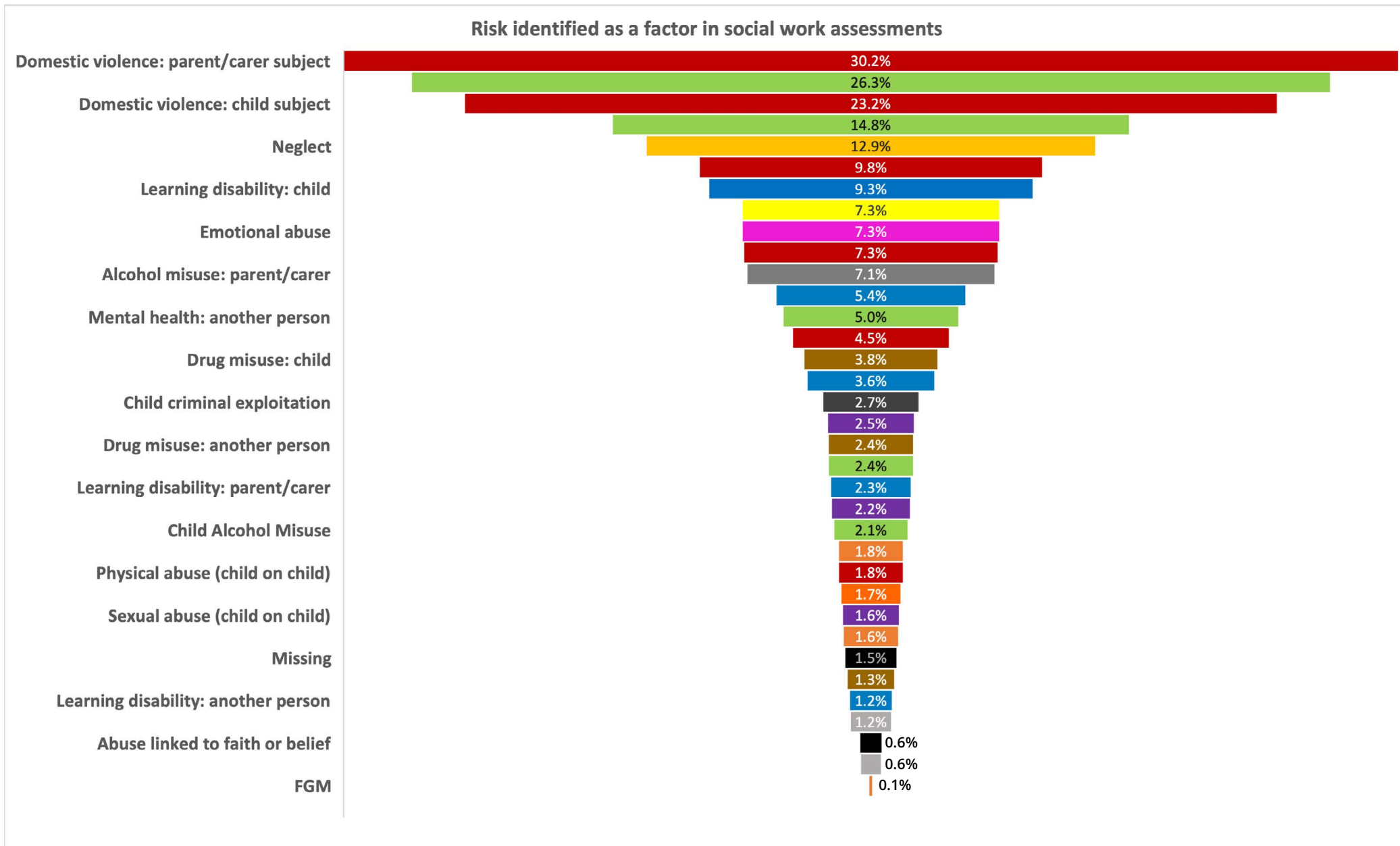
The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the devastating impact that domestic abuse can have on children and specifically provides that a child, (under 18 years old), who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and is related to the victim or the suspect is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse. Impact of legislation has led to the increase in domestic violence child subject risk factor identified during assessment in 2023-24.



Seeking assurance: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) highlighted that the MPS were not clearly differentiating between low risk and high-risk MASH reports.

Due to the high volume of cases, this can cloud high risk cases. To address this, the MPS have been working with local MASH teams to implement a rag-rated system, receiving Level 2 (green) reports as ‘notifications’ and Levels 3 and 4 (amber and red) as ‘referrals.’

The CSCP will ensure that effective arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate the change in advance of the HMICFRS return inspection in autumn.



7

Key areas of safeguarding assurance



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7.1 Child in Need and Child Protection


Child in need (CIN)


A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired without the provision of services, or the child is disabled. In these cases, assessments by a social worker are carried out under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. The CSCP [Children in Need guidance](#), launched in 2023 sets out a framework for multi-agency joint working and service delivery and clarifies the role of the professional network when working with children in need. Frontline practitioners in the CSCP's Quality Assurance (QA) Subgroup reported that the guidance was useful for gathering evidence and analysing a child's developmental needs, as well as the parents' ability to meet these needs within the wider family and community context.

The total number of CIN cases increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, with children and families needing continuing support over this period. The number of open cases reached a high of 2,055 in 2021-22, however, as the pandemic abated and plans were reviewed, allocation numbers decreased in 2023-24, with 1,746 open CIN cases.

Voice of the child

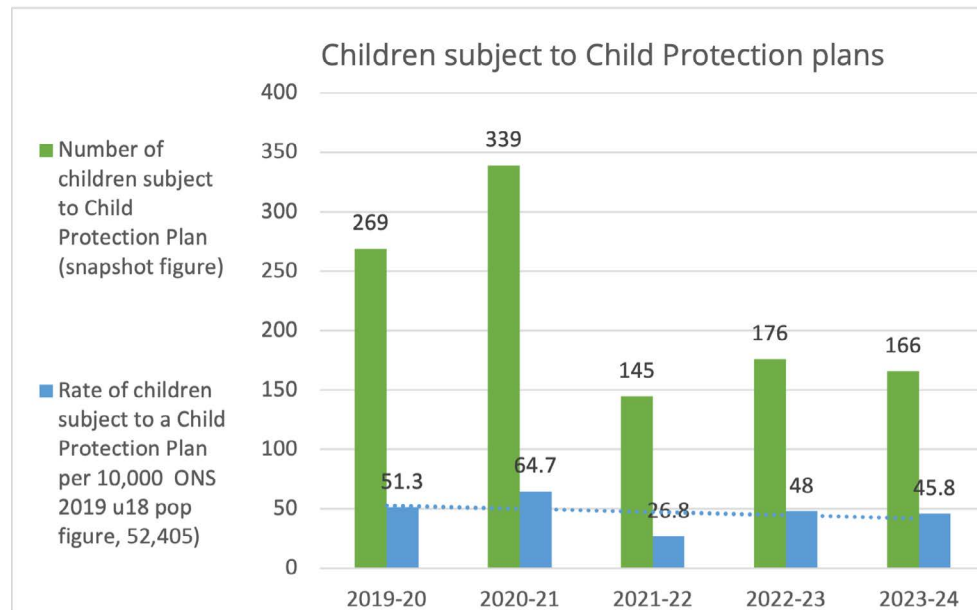
In recognition of the importance of practitioners seeing children alone 82% of CIN had an up-to-date visit recorded at the end of March 2024. This will continue to be an area for scrutiny by statutory safeguarding partners and will be part of an ongoing action plan to address performance which is monitored weekly.

 **Scrutiny:** Ensuring the timely identification of need and support to vulnerable families is an area scrutinised by the CSCP. In 2023-24 there was a 9% decrease in the number of initial visits for CIN referrals carried out within 10 working days to 65%. The CSCP will seek assurance on social work plans in place to address this as this is an area noted for identified improvement.

 **Scrutiny:** Performance information is used on a regular basis to shape systems and support to families. A thorough programme of quality assurance and auditing assures statutory partners that safeguarding practice is effective. An area for improvement has been recognised, linking weaknesses identified in audits to individual supervision. Leaders have put in place an automatic feed through in the case recording system to remedy this. Management oversight is regular, reflective and impactful across all areas of the service and social workers report having a very positive experience of supervision. Senior leader feedback following observation of supervision includes *'Supervision was outstanding. It was relational and systemic. There were no gaps as everything was covered.'*

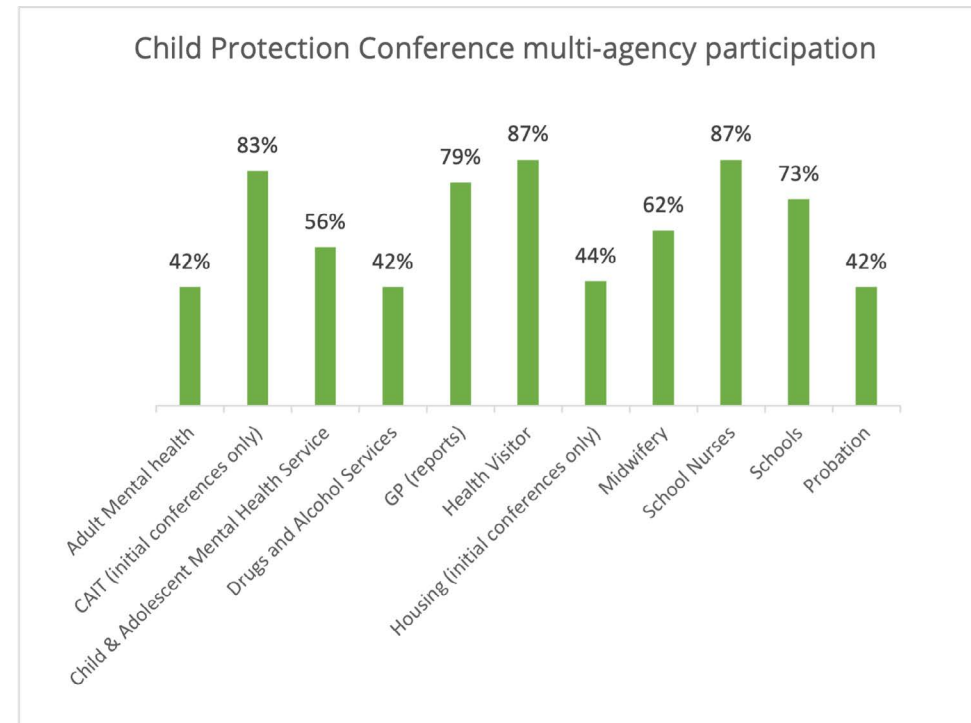
Child protection

In 2023-24, 34% of referrals to children’s social care resulted in a Section 47 child enquiry to assess if the child is suffering significant harm. At the end of 2023-24, there were a total of 166 children subject to a child protection plan which shows a continuous decline from the spike in 2020-21 (339).



Impact of our statutory safeguarding partner arrangements ensure that partners are engaged in the child protection process which enables a holistic view of the child’s lived experience and family vulnerability factors, which subsequently allows for a clear safety plan for the child to be developed.

The commitment of the partnership is evidenced in the range of multi-agency partner contribution to child protection conferences as shown below:

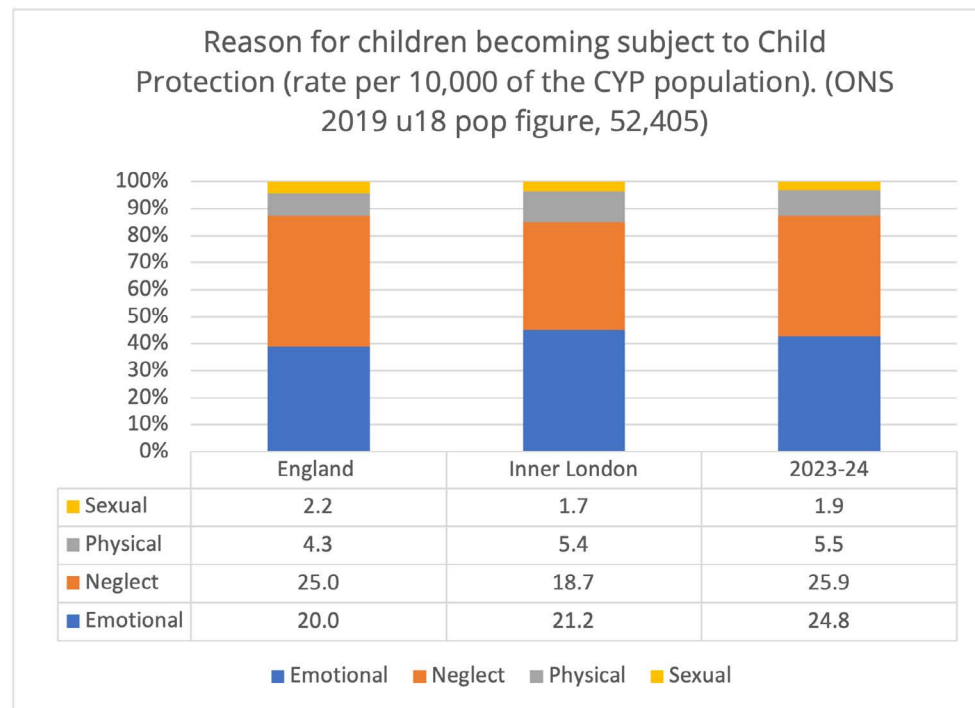


Of initial child protection conferences convened, the proportion resulting in a child protection plan during 2023-24 is 76% which is comparable to 2022-23 figures. Camden holds regular chairs meetings to facilitate discussions between those who chair child protection conferences in Camden to ensure thresholds are scrutinised and remain appropriate and consistent. We continue to strengthen our decision making in relation to child protection thresholds and hold routine consultations where children have previously been subject of a CP plan, or where social workers have complex dilemmas on which framework is the most suitable.

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

Scrutiny: Statutory Partners (SPs) and Deputy SPs lead thinking with the wider CSCP on the most effective ways to support families. There has been a recent trend in child protection (section 47 enquiries) that do not progress to initial child protection conference or a child protection plan. Statutory safeguarding partners have begun to analyse this shift to better understand whether families are being subjected to unnecessary statutory interventions.

The chart depicts the reasons for children becoming subject to child protection plans. The most common reason in 2023-24 is neglect (further details provided in section 7.7) followed by emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. These trends have remained stable across previous years.



Children Safeguarding and Social Work and Early Help Practice Week

Practice Week is a celebration of what we altogether do, but more importantly the difference you make to children and young people's lives at the frontline and frontline practitioners.

Director of Children's Safeguarding and Family Help.

Our statutory safeguarding arrangements ensure that there is a commitment to a learning culture, with valuable, honest multi-agency contributions to understanding lessons from child safeguarding incidents. Quality assurance is in place, with significant auditing activity however, it is recognised that learning is not always cascaded to frontline staff. In addition to our multi-agency conferences workshops and varied multi-agency training programme, as detailed further in this report, the following activities have been established to encourage fluidity between senior leaders.

Practice week enhances our already strong quality assurance programme and provides an opportunity for frontline practitioners to showcase the work they do with children and families. It also provides managers and leaders with an opportunity to seek assurance on how our services ensure the best life chances for children.

At the time of writing this report, the most recent practice week took place in June 2024. Observations were carried out on 50 social work and early help cases. 74% evidenced good to

outstanding practice observed, with feedback also received from 23 family members.

You said, we did:

// *Feedback you can learn from.*

More time to prepare for the week

Feedback from young people and families

Examples of best practice

Collaborative selection of cases

Learning events

Learning from practice will be shared

Showcasing best practice

Observations of practice

Simplified feedback templates //

Voice of the child

96% of cases evidenced that children and their families views were being used to inform the family plan.

Impact: Statutory safeguarding partners were assured that good relationships with the schools and multi-agency partners were evident in observations. Areas for improvement identified include:

- More care and thought to ensure that visits and meetings are not rearranged at short notice.
- More timely completion of reports for children's review meetings.
- Increase attendance of relevant multi-agency professionals at meetings for child/ young person where there is a CIN plan or Pathway plan.
- Ensuring increased feedback about practice from the families we work with.

Thinking Thursdays and staff listening sessions have also been implemented to hear the views of frontline workers about what is working well, where changes can be made, and what frontline workers think should be included in the Camden values. These sessions are also used to disseminate learning from our local serious safeguarding incidents, learning from audits and share good practice.

7.2 Family Group Conference (FGC)

Family Group Conferences (FGCs) have become a cornerstone of relational safeguarding. FGCs are empowering tools that involve the extended family and significant others in the decision-making process, ensuring that the individual's voice is central, and their support network is actively engaged. This collaborative approach

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

promotes the creation of sustainable and effective safeguarding plans by leveraging the strengths and resources of the family and community. The use of FGCs in Camden has shown significant benefits; by fostering open communication and mutual support among family members, FGCs help to identify risks and develop protective strategies that are both realistic and rooted in the individual's everyday life. This process not only enhances the individual's safety but also strengthens familial bonds, leading to improved long-term outcomes. There was a total of 233 FGCs held in 2023-24, with 132 including contributions from father/ male carers and support from advocates in 54 FGCs.

Camden is piloting a new way for families and professionals to work together to keep children safe. Safeguarding Family Group Conference (SFGC) is an alternative pathway to an Initial Child Protection Conference, taking a family-centred approach to decision-making. Initial learning from the pilot research shows that SFGC can work well for families where there is a safeguarding risk, but where the family is willing to work with professionals to co-produce a safeguarding family plan and where relatives and friends are willing to offer support. We are now launching phase two of the pilot which will have a particular focus on contextual safeguarding and on the cohort of young people at risk of extra-familial harm.

7.3 Engaging families in safeguarding

Our partnership recognises the importance of ensuring that the voices of children and their families are integral to our safeguarding arrangements. Camden lead on the Local Authorities that Listen Circle, a national forum to develop and share learning on participation, co-design and inclusive practice

which now has over 30 local authorities taking part in a regular conversation.

Family Advisory Board (FAB)

Camden's citizen-led Family Advisory Board (FAB) has been supporting research, training, policy engagement, and community initiatives to improve outcomes for children and families within the social care system for ten years. All members have lived experience with children's services in Camden. FAB are currently extending membership to young people and adults with social care experience. This group has given a platform for sharing and learning, participation, inclusion and the co-construction of services. FAB members use their experience working on various projects and relationships to shape social work in Camden and beyond.



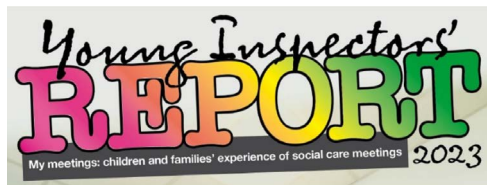
Impact of FAB in 2023-24 includes:

- Developed a workshop which focuses on understanding and improving the father's role in the child protection system.
- Participated in discussions for a research project encouraging local authorities to rethink their safeguarding service delivery models.
- Participated in the evaluation of the Multi-Agency Child Safeguarding Reforms.
- Delivered training to a new cohort of Parent Advocate to support parents to navigate the child protection system and ensure their voices are heard through the Child Protection process.
- Organised the FAB summer event, which engaged with communities and shared information about available services regarding well-being.
- Responded to the Department for Education's proposed reforms to children's social care guidance.

Parental Peer Advocacy

Parental Peer Advocacy in Camden (PPA) is an approach where people with lived experience of a particular issue provide support and guidance to others who are facing similar challenges. Peer Advocates are parents or carers who have accessed statutory services and use their experiences to help others navigate by providing support, information, and advocacy on their behalf. Impact of this service results in parents feeling heard, understood, and empowered, leading to more positive outcomes for families.

Young Inspectors project 2023



The Young Inspectors programme of inspections has been providing input to service planning and development in Camden for the past fourteen

years. The approach of the Camden Young Inspectors is to listen to those with lived experiences of the services. The focus of the inspection for 2023 was on young people's experience of social care meetings.

Partnership with families has a long history in services for children and families and partnership principles underpin the 1989 Children Act. Moreover, the right for children and families to be involved in decision-making about their lives, and for the plans to be focused on their individual needs is well argued in social work literature and practice.' (What works for Children's Social Care 2019).

Our young inspector shared their view on participating and conducting research meetings:

// *It helps us feel more in control and make better decisions about our next steps knowing what our options are".*

"I found interviewing senior members of staff quite challenging as a very introverted person. However, gradually, I became more confident and soon found myself to be comfortable asking questions to senior members of staff. //

// *The most challenging aspect for me was interviewing parents face-to-face, as parents often have much more to say. The project sparked my passion and showed me that I can do much more than I expected of myself.*

*"I enjoyed the teamwork, sharing ideas and working together. The project has helped me to get more confidence to speak English and share my ideas in the group."**//***

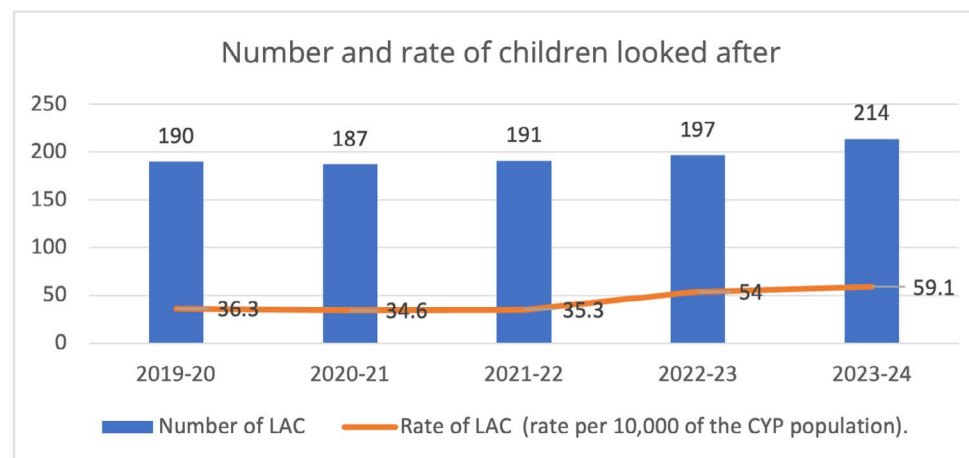
Area of scrutiny: Our statutory safeguarding partners will consider the findings and share with frontline workers for greater consideration when working with young people:

1. Embedding a culture of supporting children and families to attend meetings and enable participation in shared decision-making.
2. Better pre-meeting preparation to ensure that children and families understand the purpose of the meeting and are involved in the planning.
3. Ensure that only key members of the network attend the child protection and children looked after review meetings, to make them less intimidating for parents and children.
4. Providing timely reports to the family and professional network to enable better understanding of the support for the family.
5. Support for and communication with children, young people and families after the meeting to ensure that they understand the plan and to give them an opportunity to reflect and comment on the proposal.

6. Make child protection conferences more supportive for parents and consider simplified, easy to understand reports and plans.
7. Promote meaningful participation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and ensure reports are provided in a more creative way so they are easy for young people to understand.
8. Training on best practice around planning and supporting children and families to participate in meetings.

7.4 Children looked after

There was a slight rise in children becoming looked after in 2023-23 compared to previous years (214 children). 57.5% of children coming into the care of the Local Authority were aged 13 years and above.

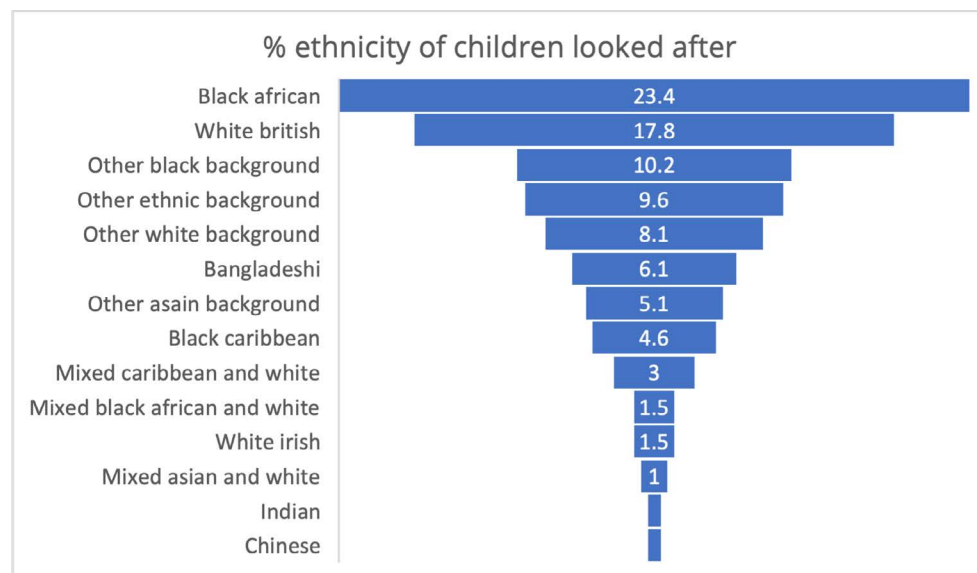


The partnership sought assurance on the number of children looked after with an up-to-date statutory visit in acknowledgement of the important role practitioners play in the lives of these vulnerable children.

Impact: Successfully, 94% of visits in 2023-24 were completed within timescales which is the highest achievement across the previous five years.

Scrutiny: The CSCP and Corporate Parenting Board hold Corporate Parenting accountable to develop stronger intelligence and evidence on systemic and structural inequalities, particularly regarding race. This foundation for intersectional thinking aims to address the disproportionality of black children in the safeguarding and care system, exploring how ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, and social factors like poverty shape the identities and experiences of children and families. This will be an area of further scrutiny as part of our **priority for 2024-26 on Children Looked After and those that are Care Experienced.**

The chart below shows the percentage of children looked after by ethnicity.



Voice of the child

Listening, hearing, and taking account of children and young people views shapes every element of our work, and enables us to understand their lived experience, and their experience of the safeguarding system. 99% of children looked after contributed to their reviews in 2023-24.

Similar to the front door, safeguarding partnership members are co-located as part of an integrated service to support children looked after. This includes Social Workers, CAMHS, Virtual School, Mediation, Community Safety, Resources and Fostering to enable a coordinated response:

- Integrated approach with Youth Offending Service (YOS) to working with high-risk adolescents and targeted mental health support to children and asylum-seeking young people.
- Emotional/ mental health support of Children Looked After as they approach 17 so that they can be referred on to a variety of transitional/ adult mental health services.
- Dedicated mental health worker is embedded within the young people's pathway provision to support staff and provide emotional and mental health intervention to care leavers in supported accommodation.
- CAMHS are co-located allowing for collaborative work in this area which requires specialist knowledge and a sensitive therapeutic approach.
- Children looked after health / CAMHS give advice at the initial health assessment and set out emotional, physical needs that would be unique to the experience of UASC and trauma they have experienced.

Impact of our collaborative multi-agency approach to ensuring the health and wellbeing of children looked after is evidenced in 90% of children looked after receiving an up to date health and dental check and 94.5% of children looked after aged under 5 who have received an up to date development check.

As we refresh our safeguarding arrangements, following the publication of WT2023 and Stable Homes Built on Love 2023, the CSCP has sought assurance that children and young people are supported to maintain local connections where safe to do so. 83% of children looked after were placed within 20 miles of their home address and most of our children are in foster care within Camden. Partners have focused attention on moving young people who have been placed out of borough, especially in less diverse areas back into Camden, prioritising those who are isolated and /or experiencing mental health difficulties. As a partnership we aim to increase the evidence of good quality direct work, life journey work, later life letters and memory boxes for all our children looked after. This includes the introduction of *Caring Lives Service*. Placements of children looked after at the end of 2023-24:

- 63% of children looked after were in pre-adoptive or fostering placements
- 37% of children looked after were in residential type placements (including supported accommodation)
- 12.5% of children looked after were placed with relative or friends



Scrutiny: In line with the rest of the country, a small number of children with complex needs may experience several placement moves before a permanent placement is found for them.

Ofsted Focussed Visit 2023 noted that, social workers demonstrate thoughtful and child-focused practice in supporting these children, to mitigate the impact of such moves.

The statutory safeguarding partners noted a slight increase in the proportion of children looked after with 3 or more placements in the previous 12 months. This rose to 13.5% from 9% the year prior.

As a partnership, we understand the complexities often the adolescent cohort can present but as a collective, there needs to remain focus on ensuring that the right help is provided at the right time.

In contrast 57% of children looked after under the age of 16 years have successfully remained in the same placement continuously for 2 years or more.

Voice of the child

Connection and belonging are a corporate parenting board priority. The focus is to ensure children and young people do not experience loneliness and have a hub in the community, that is bespoke to their needs. Young people will be involved in this workstream from the start, by offering employment opportunities to collaborate on service design and delivery.

Impact of the supportive work to enable children looked after to remain in school:

- Impact of the effective virtual school offer is evidenced through 0% of children looked after being excluded from an education provision.
- The Camden average Attainment 8 score of 17.46 which has increased compared to 2021/22.
- The overall attendance of school age Camden Looked After Children was 88.4%, which was down from the previous year's 90.5%.
- 2 out of 3 (238 of 368) Care Experienced aged 17yrs – 25yrs are in Education Employment or Training.
- 94% of pupils were attending a 'good' or 'outstanding' provisions which is an increase of on the previous year.

Challenge: However there also challenges to overcome - CLA school attendance has been a concern this year, with the lowest overall attendance in 8 years. The children with the highest Attainment 8 scores had attendance rates of 91%. We know that placement stability also brings about better outcomes for children. Those in care the longest, receiving more support, achieved the best results. This will be an area of continued scrutiny as part of our **priority for 2024-26 on re-engaging vulnerable children in education.**

7.5 Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children/ former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children make up 18% of the children looked after cohort. Camden has appointed a specialist UASC lead to continue to improve our knowledge and skills in working with UASC and to ensure that age assessments are completed in a timely way. In 2023-24, UCLH developed a clinic for UASC to offer a dedicated service to further explore this cohort's holistic health needs.



Scrutiny: Statutory safeguarding partners remain focussed on developing the following areas:

- Supporting providers in pathway and commissioned supported accommodation to work with the complex needs of UASC, particularly in relation to experience of trauma.
- Arranging appropriate education provision that meets level of need for each child.
- Working to ensure that assessments are timely and better reflect detail of individual experiences, strengths and worries in relation to each young person.
- Developing work around identity within the new UASC specialist service.
- Developing our safeguarding work with UASC to ensure that they are seen as children and afforded the same levels of safeguarding to reduce risks around Modern Day Slavery.
- Track immigration status for all former UASC and ensure Human Rights Act assessments undertake for all young people with All Rights Exhausted status.

WT2023 guidance clarifies that serious incident notifications are made for any safeguarding issues for care leavers up to the age of 25 yrs.

Learning from Reviews:

In 2024, a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPP) was initiated following the death of a care-experienced young adult. A series of multi-agency learning events are scheduled for 2024-25 to reflect on the emerging lessons from the review. The case highlighted good practices, including the timely support provided by the dedicated Refugee Team within CAMHS and the persistent, understanding support from the Personal Advisors and Youth Workers.



Scrutiny: As a partnership, when reviewing a serious safeguarding incident, we remain open and reflective to foster a culture of learning. The following has been identified by our statutory partners as emerging learning which will be further considered as part of the wider LCSPP:

- Supporting placement stability, independent living and better joint working to prevent risk of homelessness
- Impact of lockdown restrictions for Care Leavers in Adults Pathways
- Parallel pathway planning and support with asylum status
- Building accessible support networks for former UASC leaving care

- Access to education and employment for former UASC leaving care
- Adultification bias experienced by UASC

Further details of our collaborative approach to supporting families seeking asylum is detailed in section 7.17.

7.6 Care leavers

Camden's motion to treat care experience as a protected characteristic was passed in January 2024 which means that those care experienced in Camden will be treated as if it were a protected characteristic, such as race or gender. Camden's Corporate Parenting Strategy is being refreshed to raise our ambition even further as a Corporate Parent for our care experienced young people.

There are 330 young people aged 18+ allocated to children looked after & care leavers service at the end of 2023-24. To ensure that our care experienced young people do not experience a 'cliff edge' at the age of 18 years, our Personal Advisors work with young people for extended periods of time and have routinely continued to support them up to the age of 25.

Data indicates that care experienced young people are likely to start families younger. Therefore, this cohort are supported to develop relationships and parenting skills by drawing on support from early help, family hubs and providing programmes to allow a different chance to parenting. New to 2023-24 includes *family stories - intergeneration patterns and behaviour and Limitless* which supports foster and residential carers to complete life story work from 14 years of age and upwards.

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

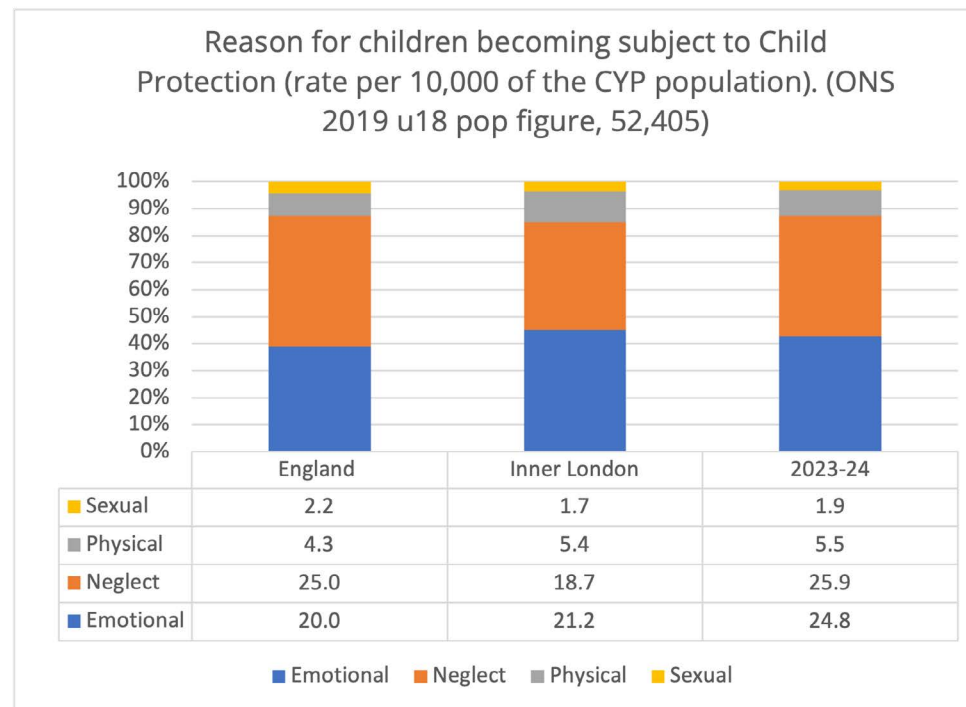
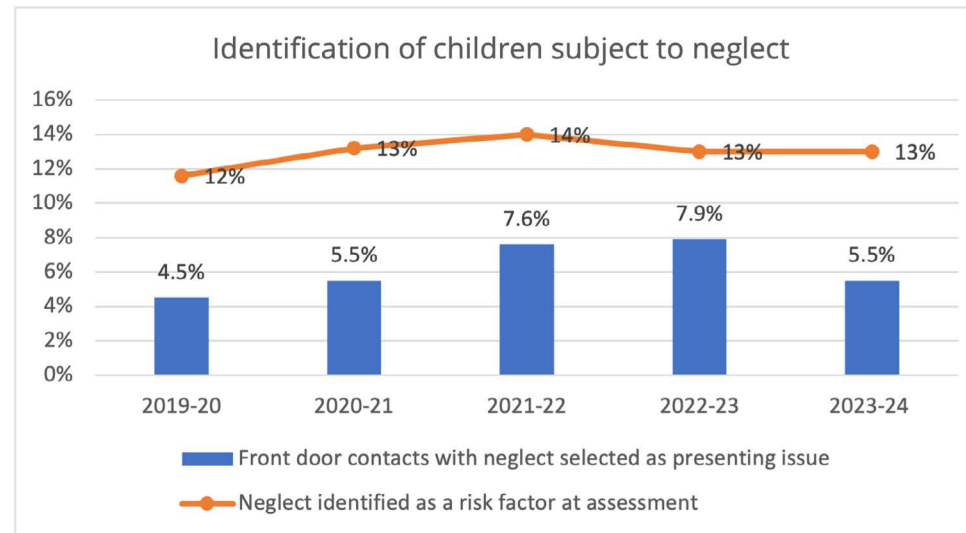
While the local offer to care leavers is comprehensive, statutory partners acknowledge that it needs to be refreshed, and they are working to establish a pan-London arrangement. In the meantime, care leavers receive exhaustive support from the local authority and the rich cultural offer from partners in the community. Priorities which will be overseen by the statutory safeguarding partners include:

- Developing an increased support package for care experienced young people in custody.
- Creating a Care Experienced Panel for young people aged 18+.

7.7 Neglect

The CSCP recognises that neglect is pervasive, and its effects can have long-term consequences for the child's development and outcomes; but it can be the most difficult form of child abuse to recognise. In 2023-24, 5.5% of contacts to the children and family contact service identified neglect as a presenting issue, this increased to 13% of cases identifying neglect as a risk factor during assessment. The increase of identification following assessment evidences that practitioners are well trained with the skills and tools available to better identify children at risk of neglect. The chart shows the trends across the previous five years.

Neglect makes up the largest standalone proportion of children becoming subject of a child protection plan as shown below which locally, is higher than the national and inner London average.



Impact: The CSCP neglect multi-agency audit in 2021 evidenced examples of robust multidisciplinary working across the network around the family. The overall increase in the number of neglect cases can equally provide an indication that the workforce is more attuned and skilful in the identification of neglect. The CSCP's multi-agency neglect Task and Finish Group, tested a number of tools to identify Neglect tools with frontline practitioners across the multi-agency network and recommended a range which is sighted in guidance. This was recognised by Ofsted as good practice of engaging feedback from the frontline based on how they work with children and families to identify neglect.

Impact: In 2022, our statutory safeguarding arrangements influenced the decision to complete a Local Child Safeguarding Practice review in relation to several children within a family who were experiencing significant neglect.

Learning from Reviews:



'Baby G' was a few weeks old when he was taken to hospital by his mother, who reported that they had been vomiting and had diarrhoea. Baby G required critical care. There were concerns about the delay in taking him to hospital and that his condition was life threatening. When Health professionals identified that there were older children in the family, a joint home visit was completed by social work and police. The family home was described as sparsely furnished, unhygienic and in a state of disrepair. The children appeared unkempt and there was no evidence of toys or any form of stimulation for the children. The children were removed under police protection and moved into foster placements and Mother was arrested for 'wilful neglect'. The full LSCPR report which details how our partners responded to the findings and recommendations from the review is published on our [website](#). Section 9 of this report details further how learning was disseminated and practice developed.

Impact: The CSCP continues to deliver multi-agency training on *Developing knowledge on emotional abuse and neglect*. Impact of the training is evidenced in 100% of those who participated in the training agreed that it helped them feel more confident to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.

7.8 Safeguarding in schools

We have continued to strengthen our relationships with the Education sector as a strategic partner, while also collaborating operationally with Designated Safeguarding Teachers. Our Designated Safeguarding Teachers/Leaders Forum meets each term, providing safeguarding updates and an informal networking opportunity to share expertise. This forum not only addresses changes in legislation and informs on national and local safeguarding themes, but also serves as a direct link between our strategic multi-agency partners, who attend and present on various safeguarding topics. Additionally, it ensures that our multi-agency partners can hear the voices of education partners who work directly with children throughout the year. The DSL Forum is well-represented, with typical attendance of approximately 60 school representatives from various Primary, Secondary, Special, ARP, and independent schools.

Impact: Our statutory safeguarding partners were assured that safeguarding arrangements were assessed as being 'effective' in twenty-three Camden schools inspected by Ofsted during the 2023-24 academic year. All schools that were inspected were judged to be either 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. As a critical safeguarding partner, Camden Learning has undertaken further safeguarding reviews and safeguarding work in fifteen schools, which will continue into the next academic year.

Impact: Recruitment of the new education representative co-located into the Children and Families Contact Service in Autumn 2024, will be analysed in our 2024-25 annual report.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads/Teachers Forum meets termly to consider updates to safeguarding policies both nationally and locally, key themes and implications for designated safeguarding leads. Over the last year this forum has met to consider the following themes and issues:

- KCSIE and WT2023 Updates and continued learning from all of our Serious Incidents Notifications and LCSPRs.
- Understanding our Multi Agency Front Door Data, thresholds and what this means for Education settings.
- Enabling and utilising Early Help in Camden and our Good Help for families model to help schools identify and signpost those families who need support.
- Domestic Violence in Camden and the role of an IDVSA from Camden Safety Net – understanding what the service does and understanding why specialist support is essential.

Surveying our Designated Safeguarding Leads to understand what support they need to enable them to further develop their safeguarding knowledge. This includes examining reflective practice spaces and peer to peer support for new designated safeguarding leads in Camden.

Voice of the child

Schools have identified the following safeguarding issues utilising feedback with young people; domestic abuse, school attendance, impact of the cost-of-living crisis, online safety, increased anxiety and mental health issues in children and parents/carers. In addition, the conflict between Israel and Hamas has been an issue for some of our schools this past year, with heightened tensions amongst those who have connections and/or solidarity with people in Israel and Palestine. Schools have had to navigate this sensitively to ensure people feel heard, children feel safe and ensure Antisemitism and Islamophobia are not tolerated. Schools have made use of support and resources from organisations such as Solutions Not Sides to assist with this.

7.9 Elective Home Education (EHE)


Since the pandemic it is recognised nationally and locally, that there has been a significant increase in the number of children being electively home educated. Camden has an established voluntary register of children who are electively home educated. Camden ended the 2023-24 academic year with 352 children on our voluntary EHE register, which is a slight decrease on 362 in 2022-23. There were 139 new cases received during the academic year and within the cohort there is churn with children leaving school for EHE and then returning after a short period of time. Lifestyle choice is given as the main reason why parents/ carers are opting to electively home educate.

Learning from Reviews:



In 2022, two LSCPRs were commissioned by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners which involved children who were being/ had been for periods electively home educated. Our arrangements were strengthened to ensure, within the statutory framework, children being electively home educated are visible and provided with the opportunity to thrive. This includes:

- EHE forms completed by schools have been updated to add increase consideration of the additional vulnerabilities and welfare concerns for children who are being withdrawn from school.
- QA subgroup considered the presentation of educational neglect which led to safeguarding electively home educated children being the theme of the multi-agency audit for 2024-25.
- Camden has been involved in the DfE consultation on EHE.
- Consultation launched in June 2024 to review broadening capacity of Advisor role with Camden Learning, which will involve re-integrating those not in education back into education.
- [National Panel review on children elective home education](#) published May 2024 and shared with QA partners to reflect on learning locally.
- Safeguarding training includes case discussion for a case which involves a child who is home educated.

- Regular review of data of children subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan who are also electively home educated. 
- Introduction of a vulnerability criteria to our voluntary register, has strengthened the identification of vulnerability in this cohort.
- Children with a social worker are reviewed half termly with the Virtual School and children who have an EHCP are reviewed with the SEND team.

Challenge: Camden has an established voluntary register of children who are electively home educated and is well placed to implement the new statutory register, which it is anticipated will be implemented following the passing of legislation. Awaiting a government directive on this area of work is long-awaited by our statutory safeguarding partnership.


Whilst Camden awaits this guidance, our Quality Assurance subgroup have undertaken a multi-agency audit on electively home educated children. The key issue is the timely identification of those children who are electively home educated who may have an increased vulnerability and the impact on the child's health and development and consideration of how best to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. The aim of the 2024 multi-agency audit is to ensure that Camden continues to deliver best practice. We will seek to understand if the Camden's offer for children who are electively home educated, ensures it provides

- early identification of those children whose education may not be suitable,
- high quality assessment and care for children who are EHE in vulnerable groups,

- direct engagement with the child and family in supporting their request for EHE,
- and a joined-up approach that is targeted and inclusive for children who are EHE.

Results and findings of this audit and our independent auditors report will be presented to our CSCP Board in Autumn 2024.

7.10 School attendance and exclusions

 **Scrutiny:** In the 2022-23 academic year provisional data for the Autumn and Spring terms shows that 17.7% of primary and 24% of secondary children were persistently absent from school. This would represent a 4% improvement at primary and a 4.7% improvement at secondary. Due to increased scrutiny through our statutory arrangements, provisional data also shows that there has been a reduction in overall absence this academic year.



There has been a concerted effort this year by schools and other services to improve attendance. At the beginning of the 2023-24 there was poster, leaflet and social media campaign to support the return to school. September 2024-25 will see a new campaign aimed at secondary school pupils involving a video and peer educators.

In December three new officers were recruited to support delivery of the new DfE expectations around school attendance. They work with schools

holding targeted support meetings that look at the reasons for absence and help overcome barriers.

Extensive research has been undertaken to identify that factors that contribute to children being absent from school. Four common factors that were disproportionately prevalent in our persistently absent children cohort include:

- Children with special educational needs
- Children on Free School Meals
- Children who are young carers
- Children who are known to children's social care, particularly those where bullying, mental health or physical health was flagged as an issue.

This research is forming the basis of a wider system look at how absence from school is addressed in Camden schools.

Suspensions and exclusions

Nationally there was an increase in suspensions and exclusions from school in 2022-23. Camden mirrored this increase, though this was at a lower rate than inner London and nationally. During this period, there was one permanent exclusion from a primary school and 16 permanent exclusions from secondary schools. The largest single reason for permanent exclusion was persistent disruptive behaviour, though most exclusions related pupil and/or staff safety for reasons such as physical assault, threatening behaviour or possession of an offensive weapon. There were 39 suspensions from Camden primary schools issued to 33 children and 840 suspensions from Camden secondary schools issued to 522 children.

Challenge: The importance of children accessing education whilst balancing challenging behaviours and the safety of students and staff remains an area of scrutiny for statutory

safeguarding partners. To support schools to reduce suspensions and exclusions, our deputy safeguarding partner, Camden Learning provides schools with access to inclusion advice and guidance when a child is at risk of exclusion. In addition, schools can draw upon interventions and alternative education pathways from Robson House (Primary) and Heath (Secondary), who provide outreach support in schools and a range of time-limited and transitional alternative provision placements.

Impact: Our safeguarding arrangements enabled a multi-agency approach to be taken to support schools to respond to challenges raised by the conflict in the Middle East. Considering the TIPIC roll out to Camden schools, many schools already were able to utilise trauma informed approaches and spaces to share views in a safe environment, reflect and develop critical thinking. Camden Learning facilitated the sharing of ideas and resources and partnered with voluntary sector organisations to offer additional support to pupils. Specialist support was also offered by the Educational Psychologist Team.

This will be an area of continued scrutiny as part of our **priority for 2024-26 on re-engaging vulnerable children in education.**

7.11 Safeguarding children and young people with disabilities with and Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

Practice week was an opportunity for me to go out on a visit with a social worker in CYPD's. I was struck by the person-centred approach the social worker took, to ensure the voice of the young person was privileged.

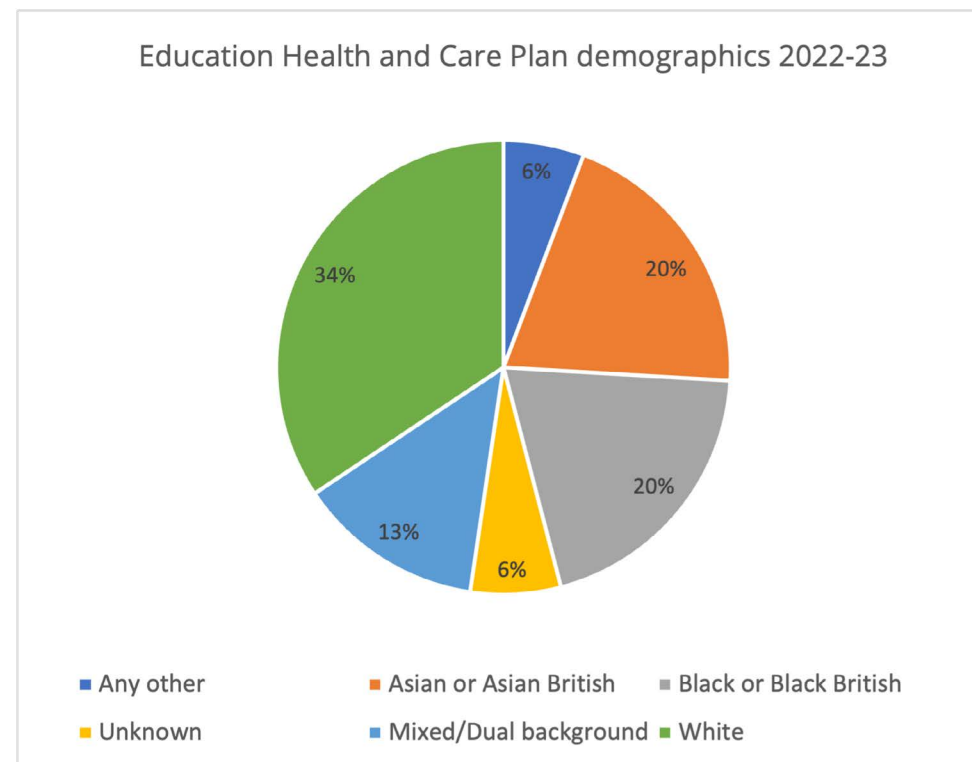
Quote from Director of relational practice.

Camden is responsible for around 4,500 children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). There are 1,532 children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) who are a resident in Camden. In addition, there are 211 children currently in receipt of an Exceptional Needs Grant and around 3,000 children and young people receiving Special Education Needs (SEN) support. Our statutory safeguarding arrangements require effective support to be established to support this vulnerable cohort. Children and young people with an EHCP represent around 2.9% of our total population of children and young people aged 2 to 18 years, which is lower than the London and national averages.

Scrutiny: Statutory safeguarding arrangements have allowed for investment in a quality assurance tool kit for auditing the quality of EHCPs and how effectively EHCP outcomes are met. There is a cycle of continued training as well as multi-agency dip sampling to embed a joined-up approach to quality assurance of EHCPs and annual reviews.

The majority (72.1%) of those children and young people identified with EHCPs in Camden schools are male. This is similar to the profile nationally and reflects the higher percentage of boys who are identified as being autistic; with social, emotional or mental health needs and social, communication and language difficulties.

The highest proportion (34%) of children and young people with EHCPs in Camden schools are White British or from any other White background followed by 20% Asian or Asian British, 20% Black/ African /Caribbean / Black British and 13% are from a mixed background.



Voice of the child

The [Camden Local Area SEND Strategy 2022 – 2027](#) sets out how our partners plan to meet the needs and aspirations of local children and young people with SEND and their families. Safeguarding is a cross-cutting theme across this strategy, setting out how services will work together as a partnership to enable children and young people to reach their potential at the same time as keeping them safe.

Impact: Camden continues to provide substantial funding which is devolved to mainstream schools each year to enable them to provide support to children and young people with SEND, without requiring an EHCP. However, we know that mainstream schools in Camden are facing an increase in both the number and complexity of pupils with SEND. There are several activities that have taken place over the last year to strengthen our work to keep children with SEND safe. Impact includes the SEND service developing skills and knowledge across the workforce to enable non-verbal disclosure, particularly considering children with SEND who are non-verbal or mainly communicate non-verbally.

New guidance has also been developed on seeking social care advice for all children and young people referred for an education, health and care needs assessment to ensure that everyone referred has their care needs assessed. The Designated Safeguarding Children Officer has facilitated monthly drop-in sessions for Camden's Safeguarding Children and Family Help

Staff to enable them to discuss and receive advice on children and young people and families with SEND who they may be working with.

Challenges to overcome: The CSCP continues to seek assurance on the pace of delivery of the local SEND Strategy implementation plan, with membership of SEND representatives across multiple tiers of our multi-agency QA forums.

The **2024-26 priority to re-engage vulnerable children in education** will push for progress in these specific priority areas, with the influence of Camden Learning and Schools as educational SP representatives in strategic and operations spaces:

1. Strengthen collaboration with Designated Safeguarding Leads to improve identification and response to safeguarding concerns for children with SEND, ensuring timely action and support.
2. Enhance partnerships through Youth Early Help teams to identify and support SEND children at risk of exploitation or entering the criminal justice system earlier.
3. Explore and share effective anti-bullying strategies in schools, settings, and colleges, including restorative justice, assertive strategies, and conflict resolution skills.
4. Adopt the SEND Youth Safety quality mark through Camden Youth Justice Services to ensure robust support for young people with SEND, working closely with key partners.

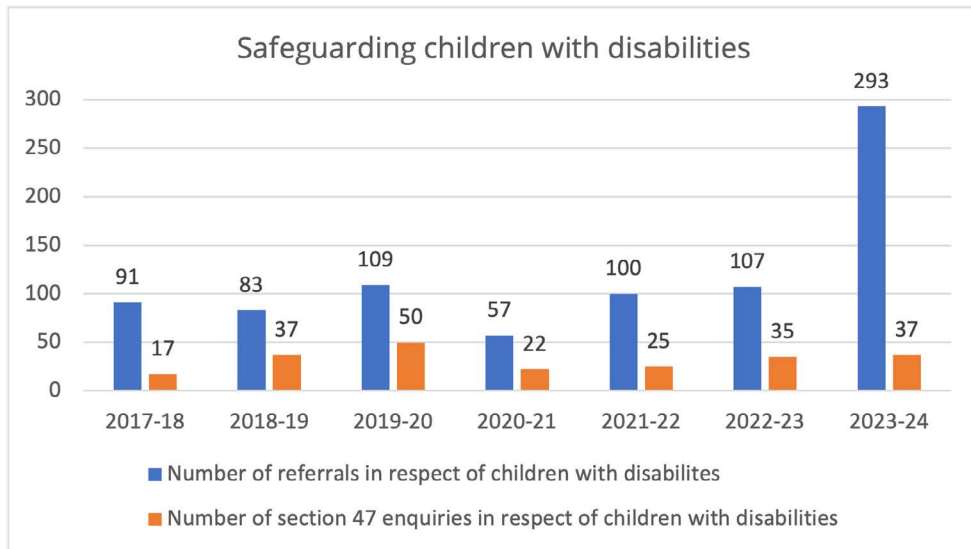
Safeguarding children with disabilities



Scrutiny: It is nationally recognised that children with SEND and/or disabilities are more likely to experience abuse than

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

their peers. In 2023-24 there were 293 referrals to the front door which relates to children with disabilities (4% of all referrals), which indicates a significant increase from 1.5% of all referrals the previous year. During this reporting year, there has been a change to the recording of this measure which is now defined as referrals received for children with a physical or learning disability recorded as a presenting issue, rather than referrals made to the Children and Young People's Disability Service (CYPDS). This has impacted the way the data is measured which subsequently impacts the spike for this reporting year.



Although referrals to the front door has increased, partly due to the change in reporting measure, the number of section 47 enquiries has remained stable.

Camden has an established social work service with integration and co-location of health practitioners to support children and young people with disabilities, Children and Young People

Disability Service (CYPDS). As part of service redesign a named worker for disabled children in need has been identified to develop a system for early assessment, effective planning and sustained statutory intervention. Impact of the service include:

- Integrated and well established 0-25 pathways across social care, health and education that support early identification of need and long-term planning into adulthood.
- Focus on local provision and personalised social care and education provision for those with complex needs, and behaviours of concern.
- Camden has a small number of children with disabilities in care and the targeted short breaks offer, includes a wide range of activities for children and young people during the week, weekends and holidays across 0-25 years.

Learning from Reviews:



- Case reviews and audits of children with complex needs and disability living in the community or in residential settings in 2023, have found strong evidence of multi-agency collaboration, good examples of preparing for adulthood work starting early and a clear understanding of children's needs.
- Comprehensive reviews covering all areas of the children lives and consistency and stability in support network evidenced on files.
- Engagement with families through the quarterly CYPDS newsletter.

Voice of the child

- Short Breaks and Preparing for Adulthood monthly drop-ins for families are multi agency and continue to seek feedback from families, understand impact of work.
- Attendance at Special Parents forum allows for feedback and views of families to be regularly heard and acted on
- Children and young people and their families attend monthly short breaks panels.

Scrutiny: In March 2021, allegations of harm to children living in 3 residential settings outside of London came to national attention. For our safeguarding partners to seek assurance locally, a series of quality and safety reviews were completed for children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential specialist schools, to ensure they are safe, and placements are of good quality (full details of phase 1 described in our 2022-23 annual report).

In April 2023, with the start of Phase 2 of the Review addressing systemic issues and recommendations for better safety, support, and outcomes, the CSCP's ICB, LA, and Education partners have collaborated closely on nationally highlighted improvement areas, as part of working group. Areas in progress include:

- Partnerships working between local and out of borough LAs and Integrated Care Boards in the commissioning and delivery of safe, suitable care.
- A skilled, well-supported multi-agency workforce that promotes a positive safeguarding culture and high standards.

- Improved community support and commissioning practices, including preparation for adulthood and appropriate independent living.
- Enhanced QA and regulation to identify and mitigate risks, including strengthening the role of and joint working of the IRO and LADO.

The statutory safeguarding partners oversee the impact of the action plan through CSCP, SEND and Corporate Parenting Board cross-working to ensure the quality and pace of delivery against these outcomes.

7.12 Child and adolescent mental health



Our statutory safeguarding arrangements has enabled the integration of CAMHS with the front door, a new concept which has enabled streamlined referrals to be sent to MASH which require input from CAMHS. This improved partnership working ensures that families experiencing difficulties with their mental health are supported by multiagency partners in a coordinated way. The CSCP often use

social media platforms to raise awareness on how children's mental health and wellbeing can be promoted.

The NHS' [Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2023](#) report, found that:

- 1 in 5 children and young people aged 8 to 25 years had a probable mental health disorder.

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

- In Camden there has been increase in the number of children with social, emotional and mental health needs (3.9%, one of the highest across Inner London boroughs and neighbours compared to 3.3% nationally).
- 2 in 5 children were living in poverty due to housing costs in Camden. We understand that growing up in poverty can influence a child's mental wellbeing and self-esteem.

Learning from our Rapid Review



Analysis indicates that inequality and discrimination have a significant impact on children's mental health and perpetuated inequality can mean that children from Black, Asian and other minority families, those with disabilities, special educational needs and LGBTQ+ young people are significantly more likely to struggle to cope than their peers.

[Deconstructing the system: Young people's voices on mental health, society and inequality, Beano & Young Minds \(2023\).](#)

The report found that worries about money were the biggest negative influence on young people's mental health, whilst young people actively searching for a job were more likely to feel that their mental health was negatively impacted by issues regarding employment. We asked our **Young Advisors** on their views on what the CSCP should consider:


Young people who face financial difficulties (whether this be through witnessing parents' financial problems or directly being impacted by cost of living crisis are going to want to earn money themselves. When there is a significant barrier to employment and young people's ability to earn income, this could force young people to look for money in risky ways.

CSCP Young Advisor

Challenge to overcome: An area of improvement is to strengthen our safeguarding arrangements to evidence across how partners learn from local reviews, understand intersectionality's impact on children's mental health, and respond to local mental health service demands.


There is a challenge around ensuring partner agencies and families are aware of the range of services available and how to receive input appropriate to level of need. Camden's "integrated front door" model and the Tavistock's online platform "NCL waiting room" goes some way to mitigate this but further dissemination around service provision and self-referral pathways could be beneficial.

Scrutiny of local performance

 In 2022-23, 15% of referrals to children's social care, featured child mental health as a factor, this has remained stable over the past 4 years following an increase in 2020, likely to have been impacted by the pandemic. Through assurance presentation offered to CSCP, it was understood that there is a substantial programme of mental health support in Camden.

This includes:

- Schools Mental Health Support Teams
- Community CAMHS Teams
- Specialist Services (including Early Intervention Service and MOSAIC CAMHS)
- Complex Services (including the Whole Family Team, Whole Family Team Perinatal and the Looked After and Refugee Team)

 **Scrutiny:** CAMHS offered assurance to challenge posed by partners that there has been an increase in the number of CAMHS appointments offered to children within Camden since 2022-23. The number of accepted referrals continues to be consistently high with an average waiting time from referral to first appointment of between 2 – 3 weeks.

Challenge: Our Education and School colleagues championed the importance of being supported to resource CAMHS staff and governor training, staff wellbeing workshops, workshops for parents and carers, the development of senior mental health leads, and support for the iMHARS programme (mental health and resilience in schools).

In response to taking forward learning from Rapid Reviews: The CSCP heard about targeted offer for more at risk groups, including counselling support for Care Leavers through the Brandon Centre, including for former Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. A specific self-harm resource pack has been developed for schools, based around the iThrive model. This resource brings together local and national support available for pupils, staff and parents at all levels of concern.

Learning from Reviews:



Following the tragic suicides of 2 Care Experienced young adults, there was further scrutiny on the management of self-harm and other risk behaviours as part of CAMHS clinical work. Camden patients have the lowest level of presentations for the out of hours crisis services in central north (Camden, Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Islington) indicating good accessibility and responsiveness of CAMHS within the borough. In addition to community camhs, Camden young people who present a risk to themselves have access to intensive mental health support through the CAISS team as well as the NCL wide DBT service and inpatient adolescent units if severity indicates.

Data from Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust for 2023-24 indicates that male children are a higher proportion of those accessing the Complex Care Teams which include Whole Family Team, Whole Family Team Perinatal and the Looked After and Refugee Team. In 2023/24, 52% of referrals accepted by the Complex Care teams were from Black, Asian or other minority ethnic groups. Overall, in the service line, the number of male children from racialised communities who were accessing CAMHS increased by 7% between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

In more extreme cases of mental ill-health, hospital admissions for self-harm in children and young people have increased in recent years. In 2022/23, the rate of hospital admissions as a result of self-harm in young people aged 10-24 was 171 per 100,000 in Camden, higher than the London

rate (160) but lower than England (319). ([Hospital Admissions as a result of self-harm \(10-24 years\)](#)).



To ensure there is an effective response to those in need, the Camden adolescent intensive support service provides intensive support to young people and their families, the service actively works to deliver a reduction in crises by actively managing risk taking behaviours through intensive support.

Impact - multi-agency practice development 2023-24:

To strengthen our partnership approach to supporting children and young people's mental well-being, CAMHS will be further embedded into youth services to enable CAMHS support to be more accessible. This will include:

- **Co-location:** CAMHS is integrated within Camden's Youth Justice Service (YJS), enabling collaborative case reviews and family-focused practice.
- **Support at arrest:** A CAMHS nurse supports children at the point of arrest, offering flexible, community-based interventions.
- **Access barriers:** Ongoing efforts to make CAMHS more accessible include rebranding and creating promotional videos.
- **High-risk support:** CAMHS participates in Youth Justice Service panels to support vulnerable children and provide management oversight.
- **Specialist Services:** CAMHS offers specialised support for looked-after children and refugees, emphasising multiagency collaboration.

- **Suicide Prevention:** A pilot program at the Brandon Centre focuses on care leavers.
- **Care Leavers:** A specialist clinician at the Hive provides therapeutic support for young people 16+.
- **Training:** Camden's Personal Advisors receive CAMHS-led training to better support care leavers' mental health needs.

Voice of families

The Family Advisory Board participated in discussions on children's mental health activities during Camden's practice week in November 2023. Feedback was shared with the service to better understand the views of communities and professionals.

"CAMHS to the Community" - The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust have collaborated with Fitzrovia Youth in Action to develop a programme, co-designed and co-delivered by young people, to support young people when they are discharged from CAMHS. Sessions start as being led by professionals, with youth-led elements slowly increasing as the young people decide the activities themselves. As part of the programme, young people are trained as peer mentors, receiving an AQA qualification which covers skills for peer support and facilitation. Young people have had chances to speak to funders and run workshops with the Tavistock and CAMHS staff as well as provide feedback to the trust to improve young people's experience of CAMHS.

Impact of learning from our local serious safeguarding incidents:

- YJS turnaround initiative: Funded by the Ministry of Justice until March 2025, this initiative provides earlier CAMHS support for children before sentencing.
- Multi-agency response: Community-based Youth hubs offer of support to children at risk of youth violence and exploitation, and families on the edge of breakdown.

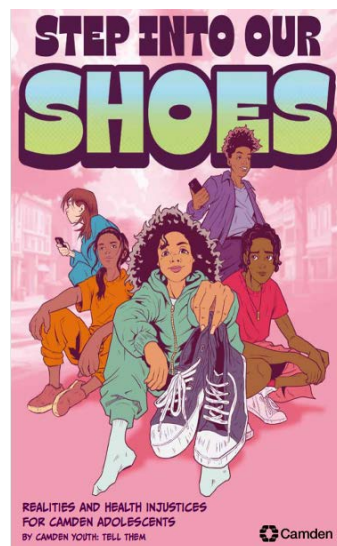
The CSCP alongside our multi-agency partners have organised a workshop in autumn 2024 to further develop practice:

- **Intersectional inequalities:** Focus on suicide prevention by building support networks for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who are Care Leavers, addressing issues like debt, substance misuse, loneliness, homelessness, and unemployment.
- **Access to Therapy:** The Partnership and Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy Group are exploring creative ways for young people to access mental health support, particularly in voluntary and community-based settings, to reach those who may not seek help in formal environments.

Voice of the child

Each year, every Director of Public Health publishes an independent annual report focusing on a health and wellbeing issue affecting local communities. Camden's 2023 report focused on adolescent health and the issues that young people are facing in the borough. The report selected as a national winner in the

Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) Annual Report Celebration 2024. The report was co-produced by *Camden Youth: Tell Them*, a group of local young people aged 16-21, in the form of a graphic novel called [Step into Our Shoes](#).



The report showed that young people in Camden and across the country have been disproportionately affected by the impact of the pandemic and the of the cost-of-living crisis, which has highlighted and deepened inequalities. Adolescents' age impacts how they access health care systems. They don't always know how or where to get the health care they need and are the second highest users of A&E after under 3s. It also showed that a tailored approach is needed for adolescents' very specific needs and to reduce the health inequalities young people in Camden face, and included some recommendations for how the Council and its partners in Camden can work together to achieve this.

Trauma-informed practice in Camden (TIPiC):

For our statutory safeguarding arrangements to remain effective, understanding how trauma affects behaviour and relationships helps practitioners respond better, supporting children and adults in developing self-regulation skills.

Camden continues to build on the improvement of health and wellbeing of children and continues to offer the Trauma-Informed Practice Model to all schools, including the Virtual School, Youth

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

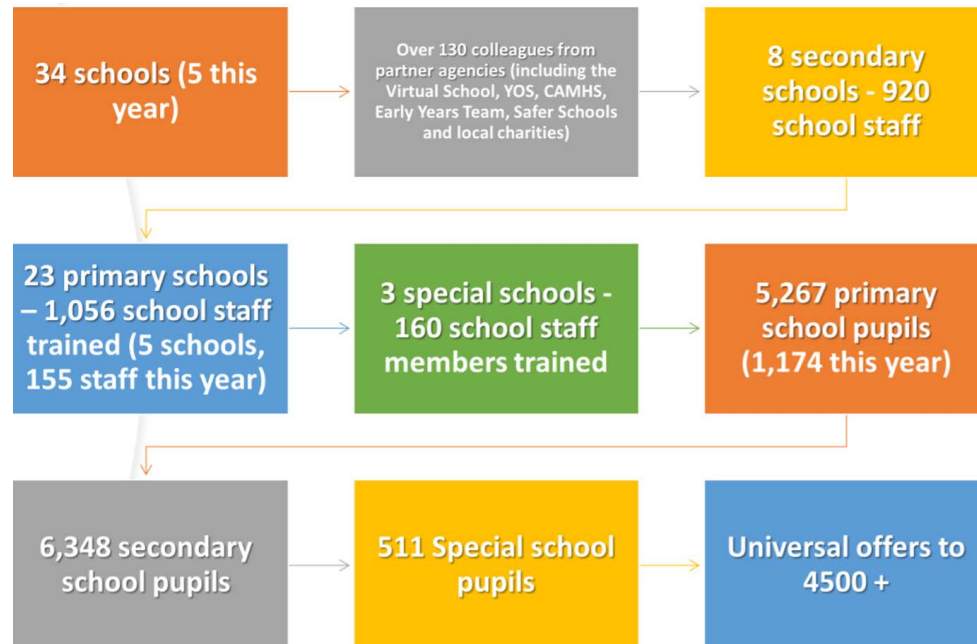
Offending Services, CAMHS, Early Years Team, Safer Schools Officers and local voluntary and community sector. 17 Safer School Officers (SSO) across Camden and Islington took part in TIPiC training, engaging with two days of training so far and utilising the TIPiC audit to identify areas of improvement within their practice and teams.

Voice of the child

The successful implementation of TIPiC Project within one school highlights how developing trauma informed practices by incorporating the child's voice has enabled a cohesive emotional regulation approach and improved individualised support. Their review highlights this, an example of this has been their response and commitment to supporting Afghan Refugee Children in their school: *"The school's response to the cohorts of refugee children was to appoint a new member of staff from the community who specifically spoke Pashto and Dari and could support families as well as the children-this has been invaluable this year."*

Behaviour management policy and systems are trauma informed and responses to behaviour are differentiated to meet the child's needs. Behaviour is seen as communication, not a choice.

The diagram below shows the number of staff and pupils who have been involved in the TIPiC project to date (April 2024):



Impact - Learning from multi-agency audits, serious incident notifications and feedback from children and families

Highlight the importance of trauma informed approaches to practice and how this improves engagement with families. This will be an area overseen by the statutory safeguarding partners through qualitative and quantitative data. Impact from our serious incident notifications led to the CSCP commissioning TIPiC training for multi-agency partners. This is delivered by Camden's Educational Psychology Service. The training aims to support practitioners to understand the link between trauma and behaviour. 75% of delegates who received the training in 2023-24 agreed that the training helped them feel more confident to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.

As well as multi-agency training Camden's Educational Psychology Service has delivered TIPIC training to 17 Safer Schools Officers across Camden and Islington to enable them to engage in reflective practice to further embed TIPIC, gain different perspectives on situations, and problem solve issues that have arisen.

Some of the ways that trauma responses can manifest in the classroom have really opened my eyes to what I need to be aware of, notable the more passive responses/things that often go under the radar.

We spoke with our Young Advisors about their life experiences and what could be better:

// Many young people are scarred by 'system' that's in place to protect them which means the safeguarding system is not working for children. They need to be more trauma informed. //

CSCP Young Advisor

Statutory Partners recognise the vital role positive child and family mental health plays in safeguarding, overall well-being, and school engagement. The 2024-26 priorities emphasise that addressing these cross-cutting priorities with a relational approach to safeguarding could significantly enhance outcomes for our children and families.

7.13 Online Safety

Voice of the child

Internet safety – what children and parents say?

- 65% of 8-17s and 78% of parents and carers want social media companies to do more to help teach young people about online safety as the technology they create changes.
- Just over half (51%) of 8-17s believe that online safety education in schools is keeping pace with changes in technology.
- 80% of 8-17s say young people should be listened to more about changes in technology, such as how it can remain safe.
- 43% young people feel pressure to keep up with the latest social media trends and features, such as filters or TikTok trends, and over a third notice a negative change in their mental well-being when they have been on social media.
- 3 out of 4 parents and carers worry that social media influencers could have a negative impact on the mental or emotional well-being of their child.

Source: Censuswide and Childnet 2023.

Online Safety Bill

The Online Safety Bill in the UK has been a significant legislative development aimed at making the internet a safer place. The bill has passed its final Parliamentary debate and was signed into law on 26 October 2023. It aims to balance the need to protect users, especially children, from harmful content while respecting

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

rights to free expression and privacy. There are new protections designed for children, and platforms are required to prevent children from accessing harmful and age-inappropriate content.

We asked our CSCP Young Advisors on what they would advise their younger selves about social media and the culture of being 'online'. They informed us:

/// We would advise our younger selves to think critically about the content we consume. It's important to remember that not everything online is true or safe. For example, looks, body type, and to also not be influenced by what other people are posting.

Digital footprint – once posted online, it is always online.

I listened to our friends for advice and online safety but parents had to take control of what was being consumed as it had a negative impact on how I saw myself. At the time, I couldn't understand or see what was happening. Now looking back, I can understand that it was pretty dangerous. ///

CSCP Young Advisor

Impact: The Online Safety Act will have impact on social media companies operating in the UK, by holding social media platforms legally responsible for the content they host, particularly in preventing and removing illegal content and material harmful to children. According to the NSPCC, who are members of our CSCP, we understand that the Online Safety Bill will have a profound impact on child safeguarding in the following ways:

1. **Tackling Illegal and Harmful Content:** Tech companies will be required to prevent, detect, and remove illegal content, including child sexual abuse, bullying, and content promoting self-harm or eating disorders.
2. **Regular Risk Assessments:** Companies must assess the risks their platforms pose to children's safety and act by implementing mitigations. Larger companies will also need to publish summaries of their risk assessments, promoting transparency.
3. **Enforcing Age Limits:** Platforms with harmful or age-inappropriate content must use age verification or estimation tools to prevent children from encountering such content. Companies will have to declare which age assurance tools they are using and show that they are enforcing their age limits.
4. **Creating a Safer Online Environment:** The NSPCC views the passing of the Online Safety Bill as a "momentous day for children," marking a new era for children's safety online at a time when online grooming and child abuse image crimes are at an all-time high.
5. **Empowering Ofcom:** The independent regulator Ofcom will work with tech companies to ensure they protect users and comply with the Act. Ofcom has the authority to enforce fines and take criminal action against non-compliant companies or senior managers.
6. **Advocacy for Children:** The NSPCC has called for the creation of a statutory child safety advocate through the Online Safety Bill to give children a powerful voice and representation in future regulation.

This is an area of challenge for 2024-26 - For the CSCP to seek assurance on how the Online Safety Act is mandated by local authority in conjunction with partners to protect children from online harm and hold companies accountable for platform safety:

- Ensure services are safe for children and comply with legal safety duties.
- Identify and reduce potential online risks to children.
- Consult and collaborate with experts and stakeholders to define harmful content and improve online safety.
- Provide clear reporting channels and address user concerns effectively.
- Create policies that make online spaces safer for users.
- Assist Ofcom in enforcing the safety regulations.

Police response to the online safety bill:

- The police response to online safety, particularly in relation to child exploitation, is significantly supported by the [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(CEOP\)](#) and will be monitored via the CSCP Subgroup and through continued work with our Schools DSL Forum. To have a positive impact on child safeguarding and child exploitation:
- Rescuing Victims: Actively rescuing children and arresting offenders.
- Educational Programs: Educating to prevent abuse and empower youth.
- Collaborative Partnerships: Working with stakeholders to combat child abuse.
- Global Cooperation: Joining international efforts to safeguard children.

- Independent Operations: Operating under the NCA to focus on child protection.
- Resource Development: Creating tools like “Thinkuknow” for professional training.
- Reporting Mechanisms: Providing ways to report abuse via the ClickCEOP button.

Local impact: what does this mean locally?

Our action plan to collaborate with Camden Learning, schools, police, Health and parents to enhance online safety education through the following strategies:

| Area | Curriculum Integration Keeping Children Safe in Education” statutory guidance, requires to teach online safety as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. | |
|----------------|---|---|
| Action: | <p>Work with schools to integrate online safety into the curriculum across various subjects (ICT/SRE/Citizenship) to ensure a consistent message about safe online behaviour.</p> <p>Through DSL Forum - Ensure that teachers have the knowledge to teach students about e-safety and provide advice on using social media responsibly.</p> | Impact |
| | | <p>Children are more aware of the risks and challenges associated with online activities to help them make safer choices, this includes improving their critical thinking regarding online content and potentially harmful interactions.</p> <p>Gather feedback through CSCP’s DSL Forum.</p> |

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

Area Resource Sharing: Parental Engagement

Action:

Provide schools and parents with access to educational resources to reinforce online safety messages.

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP).

Impact

Teachers, multiagency workforce, parents and children are more equipped to support to run to navigate digital safety.

Area Whole school community training and workshops

Action:

Organise training sessions and workshops for teachers, parents, and students to educate them about online risks and safety practices. Host community events that bring together local authorities, schools, parents, and children to discuss and promote online safety.

Impact

A whole school community approach to empower children, parents, early years/ school workforce to understand how to be safe online and seek help if needed.

Area Policy Development

Action:

Assist schools in developing and implementing comprehensive online safety policies and procedures.

Impact

CSCP model online safeguarding policy for schools will help schools develop policies.

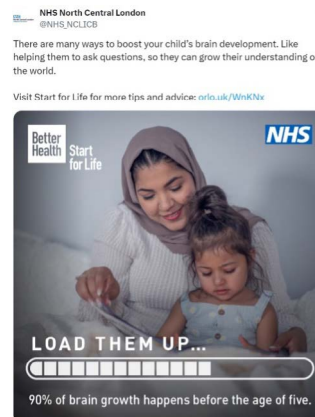
Area Feedback Mechanisms

Action:

Establish feedback systems for parents and schools to share concerns and experiences related to online safety, which can inform future initiatives.

Impact

Schools' student voice feedback systems, LA health related behaviour questionnaire surveys indicate that children understand online safety and know how to seek help.

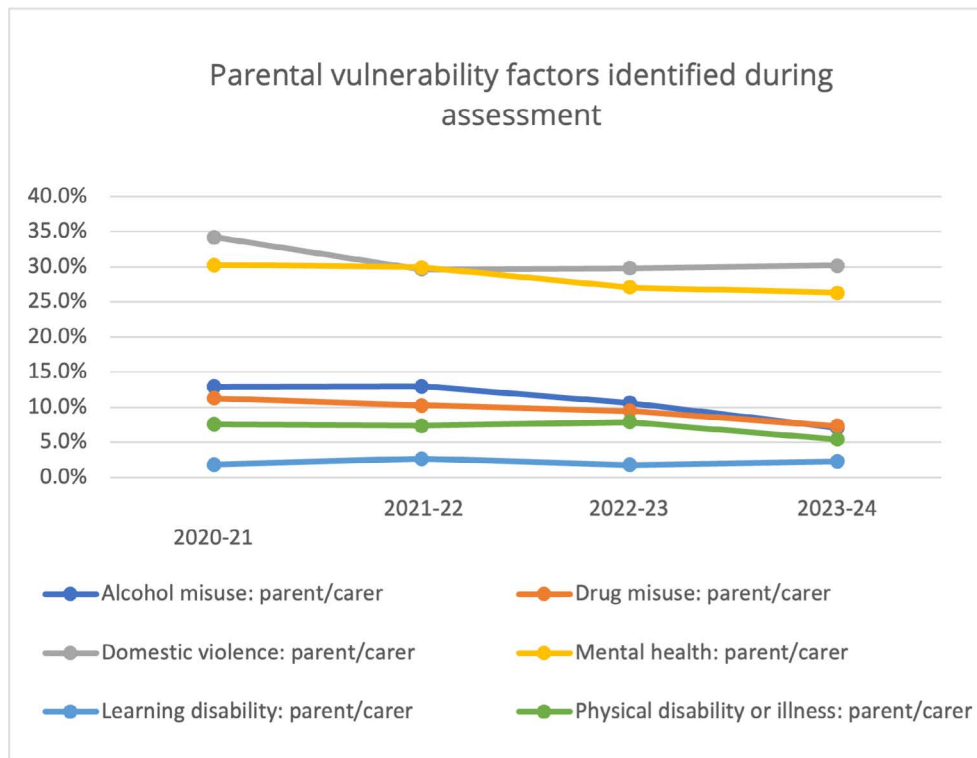


Camden (NHS North Central London ICB post on Safer Internet Day, 7 February 2024:

[NHS North Central London on X: "There are many ways to boost your child's brain development."](#)

7.14 Vulnerable parents and the first 1,001 days

The CSCP [multi-agency pre-birth assessment guidance](#) provides a framework for multi-agency working where expectant parents may need help and support or where there are concerns about the welfare of an unborn child and/or there may be concerns about their care following birth. The chart shows the four-year trend of parental vulnerability factors identified during assessment.



Responding to Learning from Reviews:



Children under the age of two made up the largest proportion of local serious incident notifications over the last six years which led to the development of a [CSCP briefing](#). However, there has been a shift in 2023-24 with only one notification for a child under two years. The notification relates to a baby who died at the age of 7 months. At the time, the death was unexplained, but an initial postmortem showed possible non-accidental injuries, which was not known at the time of death.

Camden has a wealth of resource available to support parents and children in the first 1,001 days as demonstrated in the rapid review:

- Recurrent themes in similar cases had been implemented and/or being developed further (further details can be found in our previous annual reports [published here](#)).
- Collaborative multi-agency response and working with continued dialogue and curiosity regarding injuries and death. This has included considering the everyday experiences and welfare of the surviving siblings.
- Universal services engaged well and proportionately with the family with comprehensive advice provided regarding infant safety and care.
- CP medicals completed in good timeframe for surviving siblings.

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

- Sensitive and thoughtful engagement and direct work with the family by the social and health care workers, including offer of bereavement support for the children.
- Health visiting records demonstrate good follow-up with parents on missed appointments and persistence in communicating appointment details with the parents.
- Records show consistency in providing health promotion advice around ICON coping with crying, safe sleeping, SUDI and FGM implications.

Statutory Partners and Deputies actively promote a collective culture where all serious incidents, allow the opportunity for open and honest multi-agency reflection. In this case there were a cumulative impact of factors that may have contributed to family stress, and which meant that there were occurrences of missed health appointments. They include father's inconsistent presence at home, pressures of a 5-children household, living in cramped conditions and Mother's moderate alcohol use.

Impact of learning from this serious incident has led to the following:

- Multi-agency safeguarding and JAR partners to routinely request skeletal examinations for siblings in the household following identification of non-accidental skeletal injuries on one child.
- Consistent curiosity on the safety and welfare of infants living in overcrowded conditions around the fragility of babies and the needs of infants.
- Internal Housing restructure to deliver improvements to prevention, provision and management.

- As part of taking a 'think family' approach, embed Father-Inclusive practice further in universal services' family work, especially where the Father may not live with the family on a full-time basis. This may enable services to holistically assess family vulnerability and share universal advice and information on caring for infants.

Impact As a result of the spike of serious incidents over the previous six years relating to children under two years, the CSCP commissioned the development of a bespoke multi-agency training programme which considers the learning and themes. Impact of the training is evidence in 100% of delegates who participated in the training confirmed that it helped them to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.

Challenge: The extreme vulnerability of babies under one years is recognised nationally. Our statutory safeguarding arrangements need to retain increased focus in this area ensuring that safety measures are explored in depth with both parents (regardless of whether they live together or are in a relationship with each other).

Camden recognises the importance of investment in developing provision within practices with men and fathers but more needs to be done to embed this further and create a culture of 'Think Family'.

Impact In recognition of the importance of working together and information sharing when working with vulnerable parents, the CSCP will be launching a new joint working protocol with Family help and children’s safeguarding and adult mental health services in September 2024. This protocol has been developed and refreshed considering learning from our local child safeguarding practice reviews.

The protocol aims to help children’s social care staff and mental health professionals to:

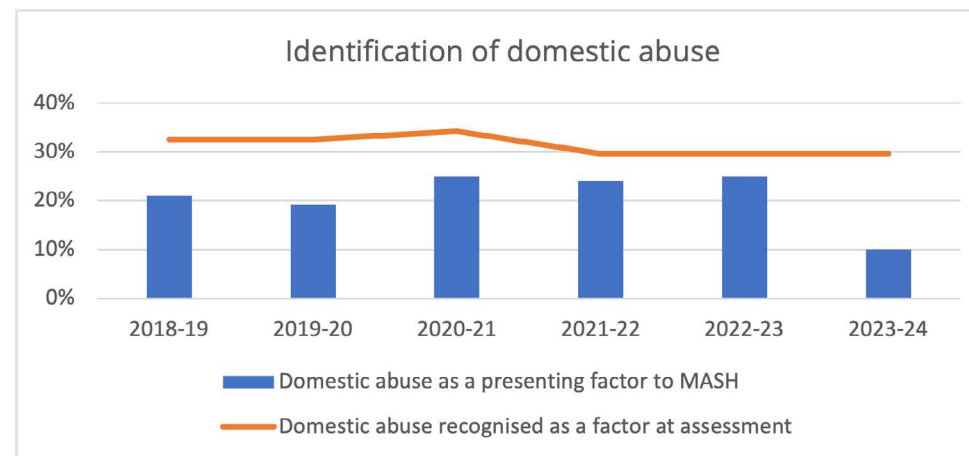
- Understand the impact of parental mental ill health
- Recognise when parental mental ill health may be affecting care
- Make appropriate referrals
- Promote cooperation, information sharing and integrated service delivery

The launch of the protocol will be supported by a series of lunch and learn sessions.

7.15 Domestic abuse

Violence against women and girls was a priority agreed by the statutory safeguarding partners in 2022-24. Section 5 details impact made because of a collective focus on this safeguarding theme across the previous two years. Although this will not be a CSCP priority for 2024-26, there will be a continued focus and commitment to make Camden a borough which is safe for women, girls and men who may experience domestic abuse.

As previously described in section 6, following analysis of front door presenting issues, the most prevalent assessment factor identified in 2023-24 relates to domestic violence parent/ carer (30.2%) and domestic violence child subject (23.2%). The Domestic Abuse Act 2022 recognises the devastating impact that domestic abuse can have on children and specifically provides that a child, (under 18 years old), who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and is related to the victim or the suspect is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse. This has led to the increase in domestic violence child subject risk factor identified during assessment in 2023-24.



Impact: The chart depicts the level of referrals made to MASH due to parental domestic abuse concerns in contrast to the increasing number of assessments which identify parental domestic abuse as an issue. This evidences the effectiveness of assessments when identifying additional safeguarding concerns which were not previously raised during initial contact.

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

There have been 237 domestic violence cases discussed at MARAC where there is a child in the household. This multi-agency approach allows for holistic safety planning ensuring that both victim and children in the household are safeguarded.

Camden MASH has fostered enhanced collaborative ties with colleagues from Camden Safety Net, thereby bolstering the effectiveness of our statutory safeguarding arrangements. Recurring collaboration serve as platforms for constructive dialogue, facilitating mutual support and the exchange of valuable insights, with active engagement by partners in the Drive Partnership, focusing on perpetrator intervention.

Our statutory safeguarding partners have cross-over membership with the newly developed Violence Against Women and Girls Board to enable flow of information sharing and strengthening the joint commitment in this area.

Impact: Operation Encompass continues to be embedded in Camden schools which allows information sharing between Police and Education when a domestic abuse incident has been reported to the Police and there are children in the household. This is active in 56 Camden state schools.

Impact: In addition to our multi-agency training programme, the CSCP has developed an [introduction to domestic abuse e-learning](#) module accessible through the website. This bitesize training enables wide reaching access to strengthen community understanding of domestic abuse.

In May 2023, a serious incident notification was submitted to the National Panel in relation to a shocking case of serious violence

that happened in the family home where Father repeatedly attacked the Mother, in front of the children. Mother has since recovered but sustained permanent impairment. The attack resulted in severe emotional trauma for both her and the children.

Although, this did not progress to a full LSCPR, our statutory safeguarding arrangements allowed for a flexible approach to joint working across CSCP, Camden Community Safety Partnership, Camden Violence against Women and Girls Board and Camden Safeguarding Adult Board (SAPB) to commission a Serious Incident Domestic Abuse Review (SIDAR). An independent reviewer was commissioned and spoke with Mother during the review process to ensure that the review reflects they family's lived experience and views. A full report and summary are to be published and the following recommendations are being implemented and overseen by LCSPR Subgroup (jointly chaired by the Deputy SPs).

Serious Incident Domestic Abuse Report (SIDAR) Recommendations:

- Seek assurance that staff are equipped to assess children and families who experience multiple oppressions and disadvantage and evidence GRACES in practice and in supervision. Seek assurance that there is sufficient training and expertise across the partnerships to support practitioners' knowledge and understanding of intersectionality so they can confidently identify and consider these factors when assessing and managing the risk to children.
- Develop a joint strategy for domestic abuse including those in teenage relationships.

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

- Ensure the training strategy covers working with young people where domestic abuse or coercive control is a factor.
- Complete an audit of families who are the subject of referrals to MASH/Front Door services due to concerns about coercion and control.
- Produce a comprehensive approach to Adultification bias which includes training, briefing documents and prompts in assessment to remind practitioners of the importance of this.
- Consider how PHSE curriculum on healthy relationships including coercive control can be expanded and delivered to young people in other educational settings and for those not in education.
- Oversee an extension to the current good practice in maintained nurseries regarding transitions and information when children transfer from nursery to school, is extended to include private and independent nurseries.
- Camden Safety Net to devise a programme of work to support schools' understanding of coercive control and domestic abuse.

Impact: Section 5 on responding to Violence against Women and Girls summarises the progress made against the actions taken forward.

Challenge: Our statutory safeguarding arrangements require increased scrutiny in how to address issues of domestic abuse and coercive control in relationships. The law is clear in terms of the types of behaviours that would be defined as coercive control. Practitioners understanding of the roots of coercive

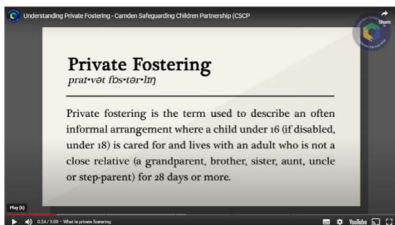
behaviour and a comprehension of the trauma will help provide constructive work with families. This will be further considered through cross-board working with Adults Safeguarding Partnership Board and Violence Against Women and Girls Board.

Impact: Over 2023-24, the statutory safeguarding partners strengthened relationships with the Local Authority's Housing service to seek assurance on the measures in place to support those experiencing domestic abuse. It is widely known that on some occasions housing services, including repairs may be one of the only professionals who have access into family homes and witness children's lived experiences. The statutory safeguarding partners were assured of the following preventative and supportive activities taking place by Housing services:

- Working towards domestic abuse housing alliance accreditation (DAHAA)
- New Neighbourhoods DVA approach launched, with a bespoke procedure and refreshed toolkits.
- Co-produced resident facing Housing and DVA policy and Survivor's toolkit.
- Bespoke Level 1-3 DVA training offer for Housing staff
- DVA Points Panel embedded, bringing housing and DVA experts together to assess and awards housing points for DVA cases.
- DVA Early Detectors network for repairs and caretaking staff formed.
- DVA specialist workers in the homelessness and neighbourhood team.

- DVA policy being embedded and Anti-Social Behaviour policy and procedure.
- DVA housing reps at Camden MARAC, Violence Against Women and Girls Board and multiple-disadvantage training delivered to Community Safety.
- DVA awareness, trauma informed practice and safeguarding included in housing Skills Framework.
- DVA case management and oversight framework agreed and in place for Neighbourhoods.

7.16 Private fostering



The CSCP continues to promote Private Fostering reporting requirements through our social platforms and has developed a [film](#) to raise awareness, which has had almost 500 views. In addition, a

[Podcast](#) with Voluntary Action Camden has enabled community organisations to be reached.

Voice of the child

Children living in Private Fostering arrangements are visited and seen alone by the social worker on a regular basis. This provides them with an opportunity to indicate what support they might need. Children's views and wishes are sought and clearly recorded.

Area of scrutiny: There were four private fostering notifications received in 2023-24, relating to four children between the ages of 10 -15 years. Of the four notifications received, there were 3 cases which satisfied the criteria of a private fostering arrangement. This is a decrease from the previous year where there were 12 private fostering notifications received, as response to war in Ukraine. Considering the low numbers, statutory safeguarding partners have been assured of internal changes to strengthen joint working between the private fostering service and children's front door.

Impact: The statutory safeguarding partners were pleased to note that one of the private fostering notifications were received directly from the family which evidences impact of the significant awareness raising campaigns. In addition, a dip sampling on the private fostering cases took place in February 2024 and found that children under private fostering arrangements and being supported and seen regularly, and new notifications are progressed and assessed timely, with a decision made.

Camden's Private Fostering Lead is part of the North London Fostering and Permanency Consortium (NLFPC), a partnership of six Local Authority fostering agencies. They work with the NLFPC and other Local Authorities to observe trends and analyse the state of Private Fostering locally and nationally. This involves attending regular meetings to share updates and compare findings. In 2024-25, Camden's Private Fostering Lead will undertake activities to further strengthen private fostering awareness. They include:

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

- Deliver multi-agency workshops on private fostering through the CSCP training programme.
- Access support from the North London Fostering and Permanency Consortium's dedicated Private Fostering Support group.
- Inform privately fostered children and young people about their right to an advocate, and seek their wishes and feelings on every visit.
- Review Camden publication materials and consider extending language options.
- Promote private fostering during "Private Fostering Week" and "Foster Carer Fortnight."
- Visit schools, Children Centres, NHS community trust, and local language schools in Camden to raise awareness of private fostering and referral processes.
- Camden Fostering team have included a section on Private fostering in the pre-approval 'Skills to Foster' training course.

7.17 Responding to asylum seeking families in the borough

The statutory partners have maintained oversight of asylum-seeking and refugee families in contingency hotel accommodation in the borough. The children of asylum-seeking families are potentially some of the most vulnerable and therefore, a pan London steering group has been established to ensure that hotels for asylum-seeking families have appropriate safeguarding arrangements for children.

To ensure that *Clearsprings* (the company which holds the Home-

Office contract for the provision of the asylum accommodation) is held to account for the discharge of its safeguarding responsibilities, our statutory safeguarding arrangements refresh for 2024-25 will include Clear Springs listed as a relevant agency. A Section 11 audit is scheduled to commence in autumn 2024, to seek assurance and provide support to raise safeguarding standards.

Impact: Work has been developed with wider partners to develop a contingency hotel safeguarding action plan which included Early Help being embedded within these settings during the early stages of development. At CSCP meetings, partners offered assurance on the effectiveness of a comprehensive and planned response to support children and families to have a safe start to life in the UK. Family Early Help Service and Adults Social Care continue to offer initial welfare checks for families. Although, concerns about the welfare and safety of displaced migrant children, families and vulnerable adults, safeguarding assurance visits have taken place across contingency hotels based within Camden.

Multi-agency partners came together to seek assurance on the hotel's safeguarding standards. Three key lines of enquiry were identified in regard to safeguarding arrangements, as follows:

- To ensure that the managers and current staff are aware of their responsibilities and the requirement to report safeguarding issues
- To assure ourselves that there are no unreported children living in accommodation intended for adults
- To ensure that vulnerable adults are being appropriately safeguarded.

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

Scrutiny: During the visits, concerns were raised about safeguarding practice and knowledge of those working in the hotels. As a result, several actions have been agreed across the children and adult partnership, which will be overseen by the statutory safeguarding partners, to maintain oversight of progress made to improve understanding and adherence to safeguarding standards within the contingency hotels. This will include Clearsprings being represented at local Partnership meetings and access to local safeguarding children training. A fortnightly meeting with Clearsprings and local partners has already been established to improve collaborative working and our ability to provide assurances on issues raised.

Ongoing Action plan overseen by the CSCP:

| Action | Objective | Status/Outcome |
|--|---|---|
| Safeguarding Training | Ensure all site staff and Clearsprings leads are trained in safeguarding. | Training facilitated by Camden has been completed with hotel staff. Further training opportunities are available. |
| Safeguarding Oversight Meetings | Conduct fortnightly meetings with Clearsprings, the Home Office, and adults and children's social care. | Address specific safeguarding issues, ensure accountability, and adhere to PAN London procedures. |

| Action | Objective | Status/Outcome |
|---|--|---|
| Fortnightly Drop-ins | Provide information, advice, and guidance to hotel residents. | Early Help and Adult Social Care have commenced drop-ins at the five hotels. Two adult male hotels have closed; three mixed occupancy hotels remain. Increased referrals to MASH and Early Help casework. |
| Access to Service User Information | Ensure named Camden staff have access to occupant lists and health, immigration, and accommodation status. | Improved service delivery plans and targeted support for families, including housing support applications and case escalations. |
| Community Partnerships | Involve VCS in supporting hotel residents. | Care 4 Calais, Red Cross, and Salvation Army, along with local VCS, have been active. Regular forums with VCS and Borough of Sanctuary partners continue. |
| Multi-Agency Forums | Hold 6-weekly forums to discuss issues regarding contingency hotels. | Participants include environmental health, fire services, education, police, Home Office, etc. |

7. Key areas of safeguarding assurance

| Action | Objective | Status/Outcome |
|--|--|---|
| Homelessness Health Visiting Services | Identify and contact pregnant women and women with newborns at the hotels. | Services remain consistently active. |
| School Attendance | Ensure all children are in educational provision. | Early Help data team triangulates data to identify children not on a Camden school roll. Targeted work with parents at hotels to ensure school attendance. All children of statutory school age are now in educational provision. |
| Children Under 5 | Refer all children under 5 to IEYS for health services and provision. | Referrals are ongoing. |
| Support for Young People | Link young people to Connexions services for college and training opportunities. | Ongoing support provided. |
| Additional Support Funding | Schools can apply to Camden's refugee panel for additional support funding. | Ongoing since the contingency hotels opened. |

| Action | Objective | Status/Outcome |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Needs Assessment | Conduct a detailed needs assessment for asylum-seeking children and their families. | Raised with Camden Public Health. Regular health forums and specialist drives are in place. |
| Coordination with Home Office | Maintain ongoing dialogue with the Home Office regarding the contingency estate in Camden. | Coordinated by the Refugee Programme Office under the Director of Inequalities. |

Challenging Areas to Overcome 2024-26:

1. Information sharing and safeguarding referrals remain the central concern of the Council with Clearsprings, hindering our capacity to support and safeguard vulnerable service users.
2. Internal and collaborative audit and governance will continue to be facilitated with London Council and London Strategic Migration Partnership colleagues.
3. Welfare support will continue for all family and single adult service users, facilitated by Early Help and Adult Social Care.
4. Strategic planning and collaboration to continue with Housing colleagues in efforts to support families receiving positive decisions and looking to move into the community in Camden.
5. Efforts to support families in dispersed accommodation in the borough to continue with joint requests with London Councils to have.

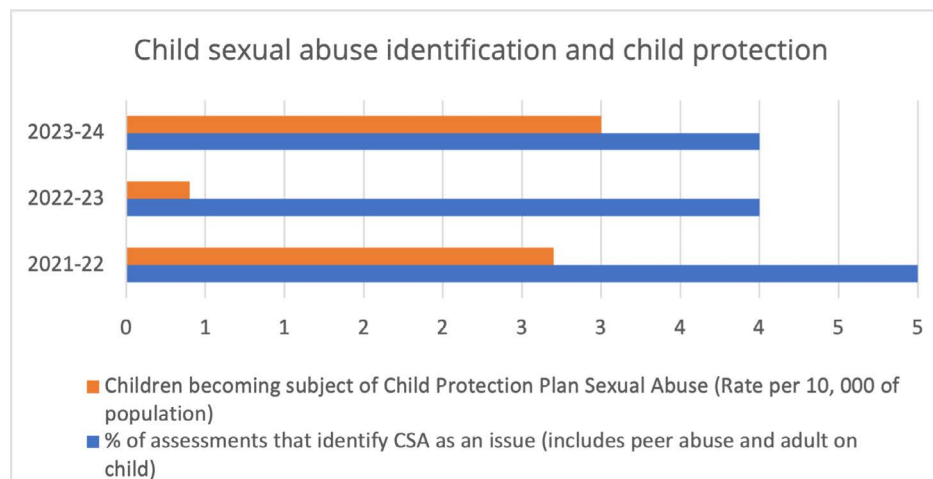
7.18 Child sexual abuse (CSA)

National data: The statistics in the diagram have been lifted from research by the [Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse](#) (2022-23) and reflects that it can be assumed that nationally and locally that only a small minority of the child sexual abuse that occurs in our society is reported, when the victim is still a child.



Insights from our LCSPR has highlighted the importance of partners being trauma-informed to better identify the signs of CSA.

Local Data: In 2023-24, the percentage of child and family assessments that identified CSA as a presenting issue remained stable at 4%. However, the proportion of children becoming subject of child protection for sexual abuse (rate per 10,000 of population) has increased to 1.9 demonstrating the impact of changes in societal awareness, and in professionals' understanding and confidence to identify and respond to child sexual abuse. The rate is higher than the 2022-23 inner London figure (1.7) but consistent with the rate across England.

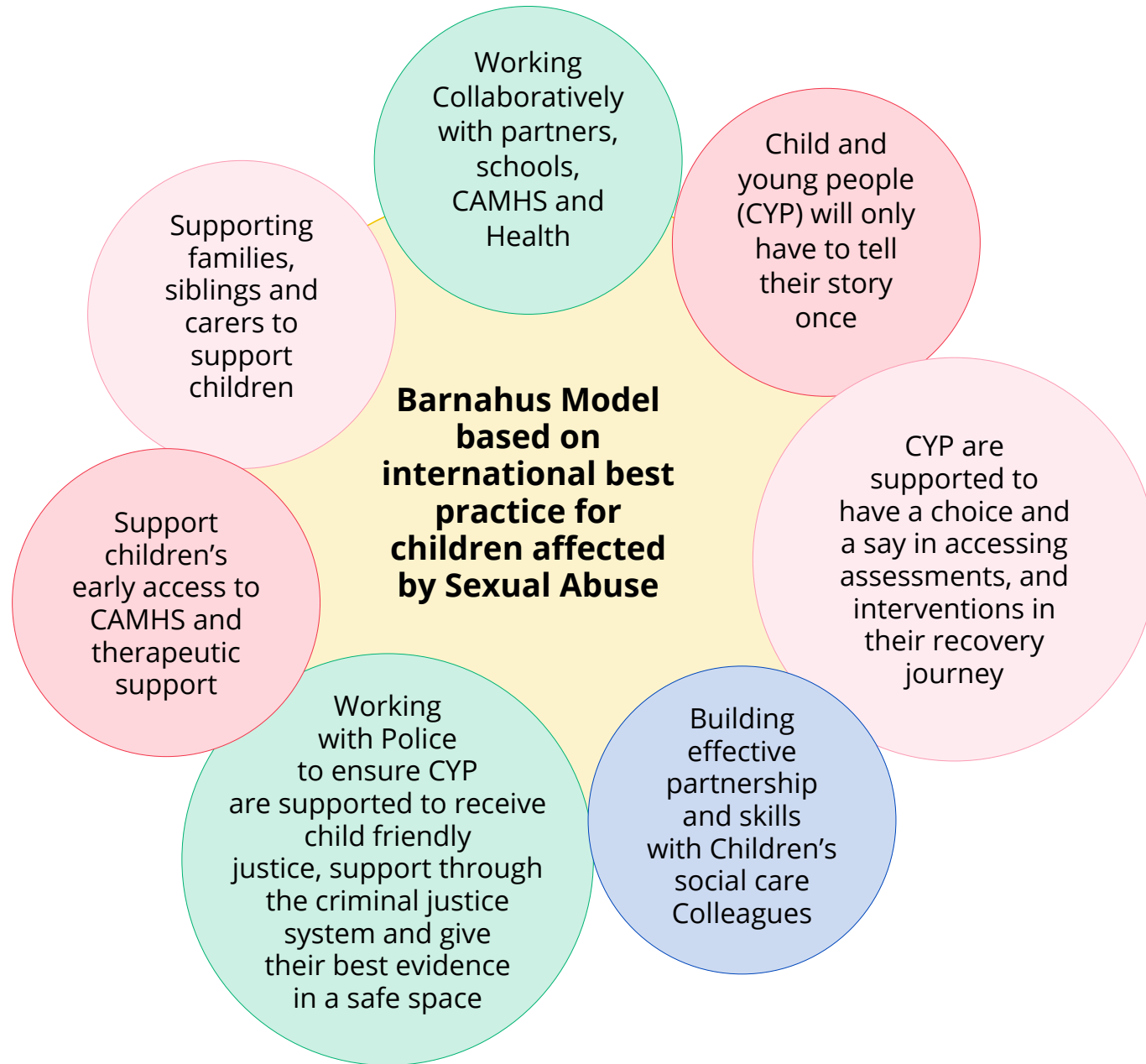
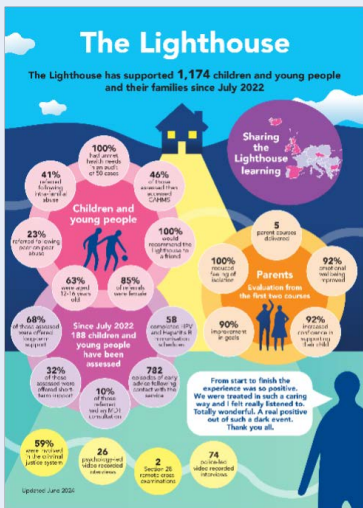


Spotlight on practice:

[The Lighthouse](#) is the UK's first Child House and is based on the international 'Barnahus' model to provide a safe space to support children and young people, from 0-18, in their recovery from sexual abuse or exploitation. It is a multi-agency service offering a child-centred approach, providing guidance and support to help children and young people on their journey of recovery. The focus is on getting children the right help at the right time, by putting everything they need under one roof. This service is available across north central London boroughs. In 2023-24, Camden made 44 referrals to the service (18% of all referrals to the service across NCL). Intra-familial sexual abuse was the highest reason for referrals followed by extra-familial sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation. It is nationally recognised that girls are disproportionately affected by sexual abuse, which is mirrored locally with females making up the largest proportion of the cohort. See diagram on next page.



A place of hope and support for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse.



Voice of the child

The young person's advocate will guide children and their families through their journey towards recovery. This helps make sure they receive all the support they need easily and quickly. They will also support children and young people through the court process.

43% of Camden cases referred to the Lighthouse were for children from an Asian or British Asian or Black and Black British background. The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse have published a full report on Child sexual abuse of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage children.

Impact of Lighthouse intervention on children:

- 70% of children have a criminal justice investigation at point of referral
- 68% open case had video recorded interview in a police station
- 97% of children experience trauma symptoms to some degree and receive therapeutic support
- 62% of children had at least one unidentified health need and 94% of those went on to receive health-intervention at the Lighthouse.

Learning from Reviews:



The CSCP has commissioned The Lighthouse to strengthen the multi-agency response to children experiencing sexual abuse by:

- Deliver training to Camden Schools on understanding the impact of trauma of sexual abuse on pupils and staff in schools, attended by 25 frontline staff in 2023-24. This training was designed utilising learning from our local safeguarding reviews and aimed to support school staff to understand the role of the Lighthouse in Camden, understand statutory guidance and the role of schools in the Camden CSE Pathway.
- Deliver multi-agency training on 'Thinking the unthinkable – multiagency responses to working with child sexual abuse for 2024-25 training programme. This session will examine national and local prevalence of child sexual abuse and offer practical guidance to support practitioners to develop best practice in recognising and responding to children who have been sexually abused.

Child on child sexual abuse and harassment in schools

Peer on peer harassment made up 16% of referrals to the Lighthouse in Camden 2023-24.

Voice of the child

A NSPCC survey of children and young adults found that harmful sexual behaviour by other children was less likely to be disclosed than abuse committed by adults: five out of six respondents abused by another child had not told anyone about it prior to responding to the survey (Radford et al, 2011)

Voice of the child

We asked our CSCP Young Advisors on their views of the culture highlighted by *Everyone's invited* of sexual harassment in schools. They reflected on the impact of social platforms and informed us:

Sexualised behaviour is normalised, so that filters down to how children treat each other, due to technology and how images/ videos are readily available and shared. Sexualised imagery and videos that go viral are readily available to children. Ideas of what consent is altered by normalising the extreme. Children should have more basic phones.

CSCP Young Advisor

Our statutory safeguarding arrangements distil a range of activities to support frontline practitioners to be aware of the

impact of sexual abuse on children. This includes acknowledging that children can, and sometimes do, abuse other children in this way and that this can also disproportionately affect women and girls. Examples include:

- Development and roll out of *Healthy Relationships* programme in all Camden Secondary Schools to ensure children understand what healthy relationships look like.
- NHS funded training offer for multi-agency practitioners on child sexual abuse delivered by the Lighthouse.
- CSCP commissioned multi-agency training on child-on-child sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour. 100% of delegates who attended the session in 2023-24, sustained a good level of knowledge and confidence after the session. Impact to work includes *'Difference this training will make in my work with children and their families is that I will be able to confidently identify patterns, behaviours young people I work with speak about, explain what I think they are saying, discuss making a safeguarding alert or signpost them to help.'*
- CSCP continues to use the Designated Safeguarding Lead Forum to work with schools to inform them of best practice and supporting schools to continue awareness of child sexual abuse and the support available to staff and pupils in Camden.
- Camden Safety Net presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Forum on how schools can be better supported when working with Camden Safety Net as the Single Point of contact for domestic and sexual violence services in Camden but also understanding the role of MASH and the Police in running parallel investigations and support effective multi-agency cooperation in relation to sexual assaults.

8

Safeguarding vulnerable adolescents



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8.1 Child exploitation

The CSCP's Vulnerable Adolescents – Risk and Exploitation Strategy Group oversees and coordinates the multi-agency response to risks faced by young people and young adults in Camden. This work area has maintained its prominence with the consistent chairing by (Statutory Partners) the Executive Director, Children and Learning and Detective Superintendent, Central North Basic Command Unit of the MPS. The strategy group is also attended by our health and education deputy statutory partner representatives. This is a unique group that brings together the work of frontline practitioners and strategic leads. A robust multi-agency strategy and action plan supports the workforce in developing knowledge and skills in safeguarding children and young people at risk of extra-familial harm. The Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy Group is responsible for the implementation of the strategy and action plan, which has a 5 pillared approach; Prevent, Identify, Support, Disrupt and Enforce/Prosecute. The work of the group is across three key areas of exploitation which is mirrored in the [Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy](#), refreshed in 2023. They include:

1. harmful sexual behaviour and child sexual exploitation (CSE);
2. youth violence, child criminal exploitation (CCE) including trafficking/ modern slavery;
3. radicalisation and forms of extremism leading to terrorism

The CSCP's multi-agency guidance [Safeguarding children at risk of extra-familial harm and child exploitation](#) provides a framework for multi-agency working so that professionals working with children can recognise extra-familial harm and forms of child exploitation, identify the children who are vulnerable to and

experiencing harm and exploitation and the actions to be taken to ensure children are afforded the protection they need.

Impact: Our multi-agency tactical response to child exploitation is delivered through the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel. Through the Victim Offender Location Theme (VOLT) model, MACE explores tools to disrupt exploitation and reduce risk for all children. In 2023-24, tools utilised with positive impact include:

- Child Abduction Warning Notices
- Anti-Social Behaviour Legislation
- Letters of concern
- Closure Orders for licensed premises.

Impact: MACE oversaw proactive responses to emerging themes and trends through the development of contextual location plans, escalation of strategic concerns through the Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy Group, development of cross borough action plans, network mapping and through awareness raising as part of Child Exploitation Awareness Week 2024.

The police Child Exploitation Team undertook a week of action across Camden and Islington including Operation Makesafe visits to hotels and food outlets, as well as targeted police disruption.

Camden's day of Action in 2024 was held at Euston station alongside partners from Network Rail, British Transport Police, The Railway Children and station contractors.

CE Awareness raising 2024



Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership
@CamdenSCP

...

To mark Child Exploitation Awareness week, Euston youth safeguarding partnership are raising awareness at Euston Station. Colleagues from Camden Council, British Transport Police, The Railway Children, Network Rail and Skanska are raising awareness to recognise/ report concerns.



2:38 PM · Mar 21, 2024 · 81 Views

[The event](#) included raising awareness on how to report concerns regarding potentially vulnerable children who may pass through this national rail station, as well as raising awareness with the public through Camden's #breakingthecycle boards which Camden's Detached Team displayed on the station concourse.

This event also prompted a further west coast day of action in August, linking stations and rail networks up the coast of the UK to raise awareness of missing and exploited children. Training opportunities were provided to staff during the awareness week through a full day training delivered by ECPAT UK on Child Exploitation, Modern Slavery and the National Referral Model, as well as a lunch and learn session on working with vulnerable children at risk from youth violence and exploitation.

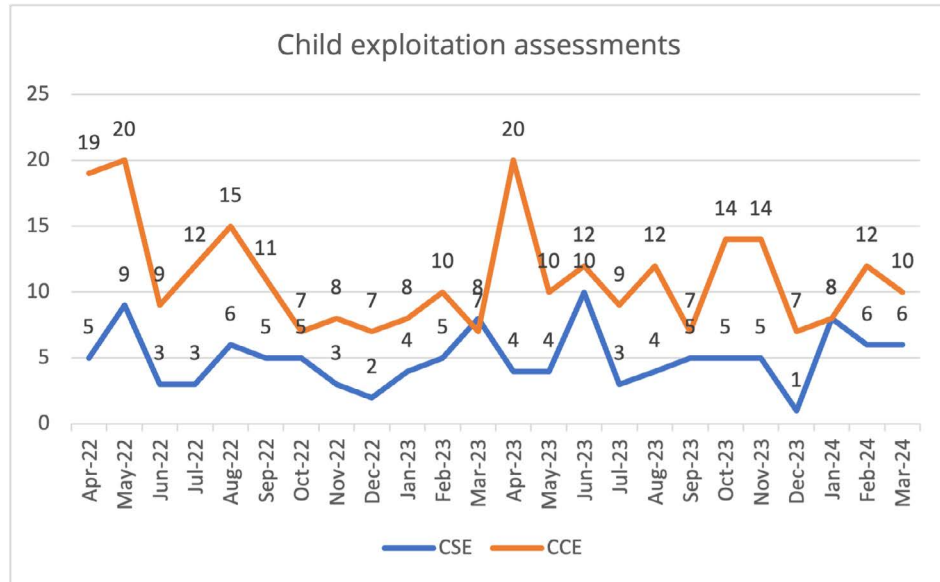
Camden utilises bespoke Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) risk assessment tools to support practitioners with identifying indicators of exploitation. To ensure consistent identification of child exploitation risk across services, these tools are used by lead professionals. Our statutory safeguarding arrangements stipulate, that when the threshold is met, a Child Exploitation response meeting is triggered with police and key partners to identify the contextual factors impacting on the child's exploitation, and to develop a tailored CCE or CSE plan to reduce the risk to the child.

Voice of the child

Parents and children are key partners when responding to exploitation and are invited to support in developing these plans.

8. Safeguarding vulnerable adolescents

This chart illustrates the monthly figures for risk assessments completed over the past 2-year period which evidences a downward trend in assessments completed.




Understanding the child's lived experience: To better understand vulnerabilities impacting local young people, models of exploitation are identified. In 2023-24 online exploitation was the most frequently identified model of exploitation for children experiencing CSE (29% of assessments), especially those aged under 14 years.

For CCE, children were exploited through gangs and youth violence (62% of assessments), through drug related offending (16% of assessments) and acquisitive offending (10% of assessments). The CSCP recognises that the following vulnerability factors have consistently been prevalent in assessing child exploitation; Unstable family background or a history of abuse (85% of CSE and 63% CCE assessments); child

mental health (59% of both cohorts), Frequent missing episodes (47% of CSE and 27% CCE assessments), Reduced engagement in education (59% of CSE and 49% CCE assessments), Suspected misuse of drugs or alcohol (50% of CSE cohort and 56% of CCE cohort).

Impact: CSCP continues to commission multi-agency training delivered by Barnardo's which focuses on our refreshed approach to responding to exploitation, including contextual safeguarding and working with vulnerable young people. By commissioning this training, it enables our frontline workforce to have a greater understanding of local risks, trends and support available. Impact is evidenced in 100% of delegates who participated in the multi-agency training agreeing that it helped them recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns. Delegate feedback includes *'This session was informative and engaging. I learnt lots of strategies and various organisations to help with child exploitation. Good general exploration of the topic with time given for individual stories & experiences'*.

In 2024, the Online Safety Act was introduced to implement increased regulation of what children can view and experience online. Ofcom have the duty to enforce the new regulations and to hold internet service providers accountable. With the new tools available Camden's Exploitation and Missing Team will be reporting any online safeguarding concerns directly to Ofcom so they can be investigated and responded to accordingly. In addition, they have introduced information about the Online Safety Act and updated information on potential risk experienced by children online via their training offer.

 **Scrutiny:** In June 2023, HMICFRS carried out an inspection of MPS response to Child Exploitation. HMICFRS audited 240 cases (44 rated good, 79 requiring improvement and 121 were inadequate). Central North Basic Command Unit responded immediately to all local cases which required safeguarding action. Findings following the inspection were published in February 2024 and the following recommendations were identified:

1. The force should improve its investigation when children are at risk of, or harmed by, criminal or sexual exploitation;
2. The force needs to improve how it identifies and assesses risks, and how it responds, when children are reported missing;
3. The force needs to make sure its officers and staff, at all ranks and grades, understand what victim blaming is and how it affects the service they provide.

To address the recommendations, timescales have been agreed to develop the missing and exploitation delivery plan which aims to:

- Develop clear missing persons and exploitation reports
- Strengthen governance arrangements and partnership working
- Increased child exploitation and missing training for all officers

The Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy Group will seek assurance on the effectiveness and impact of the MPS response to the HMICFRS recommendations and subsequent action plan.

8.2 Modern Slavery

The Modern Slavery Act places a statutory duty on Local Authorities as 'first responders' to identify potential victims of Modern Slavery through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). In 2021, Camden was successful in securing a joint bid with London Borough of Islington to become one of the first adoption sites for devolved Home Office National Referral Mechanism (NRM) decision making.

This has resulted in a cross-borough multi-agency panel assessing potential child victims of Modern Slavery. This has positively impacted children by significantly reducing the decision-making time, with lead professionals sharing the child's lived experience.

The impact of an NRM referral includes consideration of Modern Slavery as part of Court matters which allows increased access to specialist support.

There were 36 NRM referrals received by the panel in 2023-24 which is an increase from 21 the year previous. The majority of referrals were completed for males (89%) compared to females (11%). CCE is the most frequently identified type of exploitation (63%), which is often identified more frequently for males. CCE can be the clearest type of exploitation to objectively evidence for the NRM threshold, due to the presence of police arrests and investigations. Victims were also referred due to experiencing forced labour and CSE.

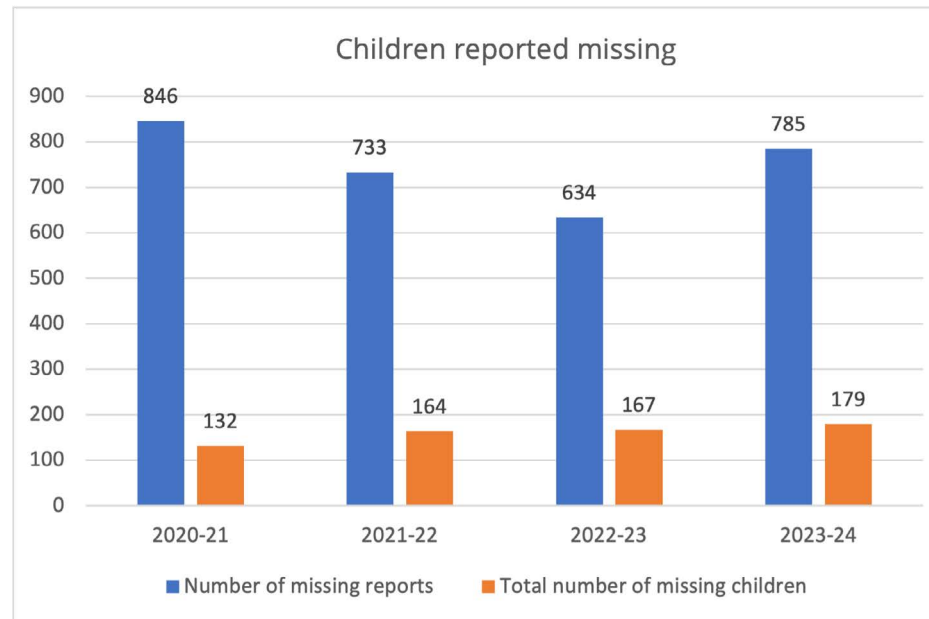
Impact: The NRM has enabled services to respond to targeted exploitation in the following ways:

- Developed an intelligence product to better understand the victims, offenders, locations and themes.
- Introduction of a tri-borough response to contextual safeguarding where there are links and disclosures of harm.
- Data compiled for children targeted for exploitation in the UK and their experience prior to arriving in the UK.
- Multi-agency partnership group to share intelligence and progress action plans.
- Liaising with colleagues across Europe to understand the drivers behind missing episodes and exploitation.
- Police partner escalation through Tackling Organised Exploitation (TOEX)

8.3 Missing children:

In 2023-24, 179 young people were reported missing 778 times with 79.4% of missing episodes lasting 24 hours or less.

To further understand the lived experience of the child an adapted safeguarding arrangement for Camden's children missing service, offers internal return home interviews to children reported missing since December 2022.



Impact: The new service has resulted in improved relationships with placements and carers, increased information sharing especially for children placed outside of Camden and an increase in successful RHI's. All children reported missing are offered a Return Home Interview (RHI), with 82% receiving a successful RHI.


Understanding the child's lived experience:

Children have shared the following push and pull factors impacting on their missing episodes:

- Wanting to see their friends and family and often stay overnight. This is the most common pull factor for children who are missing. Recognising this pull factor and enabling

opportunities for children to spend time with people important to them in a positive way is a key tool to reducing missing episodes.

- Inappropriate or unknown friendships. Some children share that they are visiting or staying with friends who they do not wish to provide further information about. This can be because they want to retain a sense of independence or control over their lives, because they don't want these people to be contacted or due to wider extra familial risk. This reflects the importance of building trusted relationships with our children, whilst also recognising indicators or vulnerabilities which may be indicative of extra familial harm.
- Missing 'home time' at their placement. Children are encouraged to keep in touch with their placement when they are running late for their home time so that placements can make an informed decision on whether a child should be reported missing. Children sometimes reference not having access to their phone, including limited battery or data. Access to phones is key to ensure children can contact professionals if they feel unsafe.
- Not liking their placement - this can include the location, the professionals supporting them or their living arrangements. Some children who are placed outside of Camden have been drawn back to the communities and services they are familiar with. Others have found it difficult to settle into a new placement.
- Conflict or difficulties they are experiencing in their life - for example disputes with family/friends or feeling bullied at school. Children's voices shared within RHIs can be used to inform their plan and implement appropriate support.

 **Scrutiny:** Our statutory safeguarding partners recognise that there is a disproportionate number of children (72% of the missing cohort) from Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Camden being reported missing.

This disproportionality is impacted by the number of Children Looked After who are reported missing, as well as a cohort of our Unaccompanied Minors who are at increased vulnerability to missing episodes. Children are more likely to be reported missing from care, due to protocols in place, compared to children living at home.

The Reducing Criminalisation of CLA protocol and the Philomena Protocol both drive our work to address disproportionality for missing children, centred on the development of trusted relationships. Children at risk of exploitation also continue to be at increased vulnerability of missing episodes.

Moving forward partners continue to advocate for children to ensure that missing procedures are used effectively and that push and pull factors are used to reduce the risk of future missing episodes.

8.4 Serious youth violence and gangs

Our statutory arrangements allow an understanding of the local contexts of youth violence in Camden which is vital to prevention and support to those affected. The CSCP continues to develop an understanding of the relationship between serious youth violence and criminal exploitation, whilst continuing to identify other underlying causes and triggers. The effective sharing of information and joint thinking allows for the most appropriate response and intervention to be utilised to protect young people. Ongoing analysis of the contexts of serious youth violence has

also highlighted key changes in the profile in the borough. The causes of this change are wide-ranging, and include:

- The pandemic acting as a 'circuit-breaker' that interrupted patterns of violence
- The cost-of-living crisis leading to changes in offending types and vulnerabilities
- Police enforcement action against drug supply in Camden removing some exploiters and contributing to the slowing down of the reformation of gangs

Whilst drug supply continues to be a key model of exploitation in Camden, theft and robbery have become increasingly common. Sometimes these involve serious youth violence and group-offending. Whilst offending 'groups' are starting to re-emerge; these differ from our previous understanding of gangs in Camden. Increasingly, smaller peer groups of children who are exploited and/or involved in ongoing conflict leading to serious youth violence are emerging, but these groups are more fractured and less stable than would be associated with a 'gang'.

Impact: To monitor the prevalence of gangs in Camden, the multi-agency daily gangs risk briefing, and Camden's Gangs Partnership continues. Conflict between peer groups has been identified as an indicator of subsequent risk of youth violence and exploitation.

Voice of the child

We asked our young advisors for their view on the terminology of 'gangs' and distinguishing between typical gatherings and gang activity:

“ We agree that there needs to be a differentiation between normal social gatherings and serious gang activity. Labelling all groups of young people as potential gang members can lead to unnecessary criminalisation and could lead the young people to exposure to something that wasn't even on their mind. Misunderstanding this can result in young people being unfairly targeted and alienated, potentially pushing them towards actual gang involvement. It creates an environment of distrust and fear between young people and authority figures, such as the police, teachers, and others. Instead of seeing these figures as protectors, young people may start to view them as adversaries, leading to a breakdown in communication and a reluctance to seek help or guidance when genuinely needed. Stereotyping certain demographics for example race and drawing influences based on common conceptions. ”

CSCP Young Advisor

Learning from incidents of youth violence in the past 12 months shows how complex risk can be for some children and young people:

- Children who are identified as being at risk of youth violence in one context (e.g. criminal exploitation) can be involved in youth violence in other contexts (e.g. peer group conflict).
- Acquisitive crime such as theft and robbery can involve youth violence. Sometimes the violence appears as the motivating factor, rather than financial gain. This is apparent in some crimes where the victim and perpetrator are known to each other.

- Retaliatory incidents can happen many months after the previous incident.
- Incidents of violence can be attributed to the escalation or continuation of previously identified conflict between peer groups and school groups.
- Peer groups and friendship networks can extend across groups, schools and boroughs meaning that the impact of serious incidents can be very wide.
- Serious youth violence can be used in the grooming process or as a way of controlling children and young people.

Impact: MOPAC knife crime with injury (excluding domestic abuse) data is used to measure youth violence. In 2018, there were 101 knife crime with injury incidents in Camden. This peak was driven by gangs, specifically inter-gang violence that led to the most serious incidents. This had a wider spread and knock on impact. The statutory safeguarding partners requested assurance from the serious youth violence deep dive which evidenced that violence was mostly connected to the nighttime economy and after school. During the pandemic, there was a significant reduction of knife crime with injury, however following lifting of the restrictions, this began to rise as expected. However, there is a continued overall downward trend of knife crime with injury in Camden compared to the 2018 spike.

Learning from Reviews:

Taking forward learning from the CSCP and YJS Extended Learning Review



Challenge: Despite the borough-wide approach to reducing serious youth violence in Camden, this is an area requiring further focus. In July 2023, there was a shocking death of a Camden young person who was 17-year-old when he was fatally stabbed in another London borough, and led to a joint extended learning review with CSCP and Youth Justice Service to better understand how we can support young people vulnerable to serious youth violence. This learning event was attended by 60 multi-agency workers

The following Recommendations are being taken forward and learning disseminated:

1. Enhance Practice in Community/Early Help Responses:

- Identify a trusted worker/adult to support the child.
- Consider the child and family's history, including strengths, adversities, and traumatic experiences. This includes taking into account intersectional identities such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, sense of belonging, religion, sexuality, socio-economic, and cultural factors.
- Reflect on responses during critical moments.
- Review the significance of repeated referrals/contacts.

2. Collaborate on Intensive Multi-Agency Responses:

Develop appropriate responses for children at risk of violence and exploitation.



3. Utilise Daily Discussion/MASH Meetings:

Enhance risk management for concerns like exploitation, serious youth violence, increasing offending behaviour, and home difficulties.

4. Review and Develop Tools:

Assess the CCE tool and consider the need for Serious Youth Violence tool to analyse vulnerabilities and risks.

5. Offer Accessible Community Therapy:

Create more accessible therapy options in the community to encourage engagement.

6. Review Joint Working Protocol:

Audit and gather practitioner feedback on the Joint Working Protocol

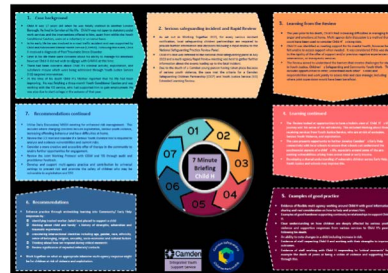
7. Support Multi-Agency Practice:

Promote multi-agency contributions to prevent risk and ensure the safety of children vulnerable to exploitation and serious youth violence.

Impact: Following this Extended Learning Review with CSCP and Youth Justice Service (YJS) a multi-agency conference took place in April 2024. This was attended by **90 multi-agency partners** including co-facilitation by young people and community services. The event shared our local approach to serious youth violence and exploitation to provide practitioners with relevant information to consider in their

practice with young people. Young people presented on their lived experience of being in the criminal justice system, transitions to adulthood and working in the community. Our young advisor spoke about his care experience and shared the positive impact of having trusted relationships with professionals who contact to check-in without requiring anything in receipt. He explained that having these trusted relationships has enabled succession in his education and employment.

Considering the effectiveness of our response to national learning



Since October 2023, the theme for Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) focuses on serious youth violence. This is a partnership focused inspection and therefore requires consideration of the inspection framework and criteria and reflection on findings from other

boroughs who have already been subject to the inspection. The Quality Assurance Subgroup sought assurance from partners on the inspection criteria framework and collected evidence on how partners meet each criterion locally. New to 2024-25 includes the commissioning of [Khady's Dream](#) (an innovative support service designed to provide a comprehensive safety net for young people at risk) to complete one to one work with young people and complete an in-depth analysis and survey with young people to strengthen the voice of young people in service delivery.

8.5 Children held in custody

Area of Challenge to overcome: The CSCP's objective is to ensure the safety and well-being of children in custody, minimising the time spent in police cells and ensuring adherence to safeguarding policies. To maintain oversight, the CSCP usually monitors the figures for children held in custody overnight and assesses that the Local Authority and Police partners are collaborating effectively to keep children safe in custody. This has been a challenging area, and we are working with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Data Team to obtain borough-level data on Camden children held in custody, as well as out-of-borough children held in custody at our police stations. With the aim of reducing the number of children held overnight, increase training completion rates, and receive positive feedback from children and families, the following action plan will be taken forward and reviewed every six months.

| Key Areas | CSCP to seek assurance that: |
|--|--|
| Immediate Assessment and Transfer - Conduct an immediate assessment of the child's needs upon arrival at the police station. | Swift identification of suitable local authority accommodation to avoid overnight stays in police cells. |
| Training and Awareness - Provide regular training sessions for police officers and custody staff on child safeguarding and the specific needs of children in custody. | Increased awareness and adherence to safeguarding policies. |
| Data Monitoring and Reporting - Implement a robust system for monitoring and reporting the number of children held in custody, including the use of restraints. | Improved transparency and accountability. |
| Partnership Collaboration - Strengthen collaboration between police, local authorities, and child protection agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to safeguarding children. | Enhanced communication and joint decision-making. |
| Support Services - Provide access to mental health and support services for children in custody. | Addressing the emotional and psychological needs of children. |
| Regularly review safeguarding practice on the disproportionate number of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic children being remanded into custody and seek feedback from children and families. | Continuous improvement of safeguarding measures. |

8.6 Youth Early Help

Voice of the child

We asked our CSCP Young Advisors what's exciting about being 17-18 years of age:


Self-discovery of Identity | **New Independence**
 Technologies | Responsibility
 Personal freedom | new experiences
Accountability
 Coming to new spaces | Financial freedom

We also asked them what's challenging about being 17-18 years of age:

futures
 uncertainty
 adult adulthood
 support child self-discovery
 services challenging nerve-wracking
 responsibility working scary
 transition responsibilities transitioning
 safely push pull
 independence around manage
 effectively

In 2023-24, youth early help processed 1,077 referrals. The impact of our statutory arrangements is evident in the referral source, 57% of referrals were received from the police followed by schools, primary health and self-referrals. 19% of the referrals progressed to exploration and engagement stage, 10% were accepted on Engage Youth Diversion programme, 5% passed on to FWD young people's substance misuse team and 61% advice and information was given.

To further understand the lived experience of the child, presenting needs are monitored at the referral and assessment stages. The top five presenting needs identified amongst young people were mental health issues 20%, parenting issues 10%, children missing education 8%, drug misuse 7% and young people exhibiting problematic behaviour 7%. The needs identified compare similarly to last year when mental health and parenting issues were also the most common needs identified. 48% of young people to access the service were females and 52% were male. Youth early help saw a 15% increase in females accessing the service and 15% decrease in males accessing the service compared to 22/23. The service has seen an increase of males entering with an increase of 45% from the previous year.

 **Scrutiny:** We have identified the following area requires us to accelerate that pace of progress made, 42% of family closures successfully completed their programme which is a 20% reduction compared to last year when 62% of young people successfully completed their programme. Although the service saw fewer successful closures this year, 35% of those open to the service presented high risk warranting statutory intervention and were therefore stepped up to social services. 3 % were transferred to the YJS due to receiving a substantive outcome for an offence they had committed. Due to these cases being transferred they were unable to complete their programme with Youth Early Help.

In 2023-24 Youth Early Help saw 8 young people who were previously closed to the service return to Early Help and Social Services for further support.

Impact: A key measure in Youth Early Help is to reduce offending rates for young people in Camden. To measure this, we have tracked each young person for twelve months following their start date to monitor if they offend/reoffend and it is assuring to note that 97.4% of the cohort did not offend.

Youth hubs and engagement

Understanding the importance of youth engagement is a priority in our safeguarding arrangements. We aim to encourage 25% of the youth population to have contact with a youth centre or project each year, however 14.6% was achieved in 2023-24 (3,714 young people between 11-25 years of age attended youth projects across the borough 45,733 times). Whilst reach and contact targets were not met our youth services exceeded the target on recorded and accredited outcomes.

A high proportion (33.6%) of the young people who attended the centres were classified as having a White ethnicity, 20.41% were classified as Black or Black British, 12.65% were classified as of being Mixed ethnicity and 10.64% were classified as Asian ethnicity.

Impact: This year has seen a 14% increase of females accessing youth project. This increase could be attributed to focusing on establishing bespoke girls and young women sessions to encourage greater participation amongst young women.

Camden has three established Youth Hubs which deliver a variety of activities to young people. Understanding the importance of youth employment, our youth hubs offer accredited programme and volunteering opportunities for young people. In 2023-24, 14 young people achieved a Level 1 Youth work course and 6 Level 3 youth work apprenticeships.

Impact: Stop and Search Peer education programme was delivered by the Somers Town Youth Hub in partnership with Met Police and Safer Neighbourhood Partnership.

Engage

The Camden ENGAGE project has a target to engage with 200 children following their arrest. In 2023-24 ENGAGE made 278 contacts for 253 children. Contact included carrying out welfare checks, completing Edinburgh Warwick Wellbeing and Score 15 Family Functioning Screening Tools, offering information, advice, guidance, and signposting children to their local support services. 91% of children in the Camden cohort were aged between 14 and 17 years old and 91% of children seen were male.

Impact: To analyse the reoffending rate amongst the ENGAGE cohort, offending history 12 months after coming to contact with ENGAGE was reviewed to determine whether any of these children reoffended and or became first time entrant and 89% did not receive any youth justice outcomes following their involvement with ENGAGE. This shows the early intervention is working well as 89% children remain free of youth justice outcomes. Analysis of Camden children suggests that Engage project is having an impact on the rate of reoffending and FTE.

8.7 Adolescent substance misuse

In Camden, a multi-agency approach to reducing substance misuse is undertaken through a borough wide drug action plan which mirrors the vulnerable adolescents 5 pillar approach and aligns to the national drug strategy (From [Harm to Hope Strategy](#), a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives, HM Government).

In 2023-24, FWD received 243 new referrals (25% increase from the year previous). Of these referrals, 58% were tier 2 intervention and 48% structured tier 3 interventions. There was no re-representation of clients accessing support from FWD.

Impact: The CSCP offers multi-agency training on adolescent substance misuse and FWD referrals. The impact of the training is recognised in the variety of referral sources to the service. **207** professionals accessed substance misuse training in Camden, exceeding the annual target of 120. FWD have been actively reaching out to social care and have delivered training to professionals enabling them to identify substance misuse concerns and make appropriate referrals, therefore FWD continue to see a good proportion of referrals from the service. In 2023-24, the agencies to make the most referrals were Children and Family Services which are made up of Early Help and Social Services, young people housing and Universal Education Settings.

Embedded within youth early help is the FWD young people substance misuse service. FWD works closely with CAMHS to ensure young people receive both support for their substance misuse issue and therapeutic support and are also available within hospitals to provide support and information to young people.

FWD provide the following offer in educational settings to ensure a wide reach of young people:

- 1082 young people and parents' access FWD workshops, exceeding the annual target of 200.
- 100% of young people and parents were satisfied with the workshops delivered by FWD.
- FWD have been working with schools on the targeted 6 week programme (Wellbeing and Me) this programme explores issues around self-esteem, decision making, risk taking behaviour and the wider impact of substance misuse. Impact includes five students who originally refused one to one support and ended up agreeing to accessing Tier 3 intervention by the end of the wellbeing and me programme.

Impact: Statutory safeguarding partners were assured that 100% children looked after who had identified substance misuse problems received an intervention for their substance misuse problem.

8.8 Safeguarding children from radicalisation and extremism

London continues to be a high-risk area for radicalisation into terrorism. It is recognised that those between the ages of 0-25 years are the highest at risk. Multi-agency and cross borough working remains a high priority to safeguard and provide an early intervention for those at risk. A recently formed tension monitoring group, which meets fortnightly, is allowing for a more accurate assessment of emerging tensions and a proportionate multi-agency response.

Camden sees higher than average safeguarding against radicalisation referrals. The types of concerns are varied, showing young people vulnerable to Extreme Right Wing, Extreme Islamist and other ideologies. Concerns often include Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Misogyny and grievances around Government strategy and international events as drivers into radicalisation.

Camden has worked with the police and the DfE to identify the following local priorities which are drawn out of the threat and risk identified in Camden. All activity is aimed at reducing the risk of radicalisation.

Priority 1

Local or national issues, with resonance in Camden which may play on highly emotive drivers to promote divisive rhetoric or extremist thinking.

Priority 2

The internet as an enabler for radicalisation. Radicalisers are becoming slicker at targeting children, attempting to expose them to harmful and illegal content. There is ever increasing ability to access the internet leaving children easily exposed to conspiracy theories and misinformation. Self-radicalisation is more prevalent in this area.

Priority 3

Diverse and ever-expanding range of ideologies which are increasingly motivated by grievance, violence or intolerance towards protected characteristics, toxic masculinity, anti-migrant or anti-western narrative.

Priority 4

Adverse childhood experiences and impact on vulnerability. There is evidence that domestic abuse and bullying are drivers to radicalisation. Locally, trauma informed approaches include consideration of radicalisation.

Priority 5

Permissive environments where extremist narratives undermine community, local or organisational values.

Impact of multi-agency activity to safeguarding against radicalisation in 2023-24:

Development of training for Designated Safeguarding Leads on using the Counter Terrorism Local Profile to inform Schools Risk Assessments as part of the Prevent Duty.

- Reflection sessions for staff with a mother who talked candidly about her sons experience to radicalisation. Impact includes 58 attendees agreeing that the session would encourage them to seek help at an earlier stage.
- Grass roots Camden community projects delivered Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities training across 60 sessions. This ran alongside work in schools and with community leaders.
- Session on Misogyny and Domestic Abuse and potential link to radicalisation. Sessions attended by approx. 60 multi-agency professionals. The session challenged practice and encouraged practitioners to reflect on and adapt practice.
- Quality Assurance of resources and workshops for students, received positively by many Camden schools.
- Camden Channel Panel have hosted a joint training for Panel members with Islington, delivered by the Home Office. 41 attendees, new members found it a good induction whilst more experienced members found it useful to challenge practice.

- Camden worked in partnership with voluntary sector experts in the field of online safety to raise the profile of online radicalisation and communicating with more diverse/ less heard audiences. A poster has been produced with tips for staying safe and training sessions run for holiday activity providers in partnership with voluntary sector organisations.
- Regular training and support offered to schools through Designated Safeguarding Leads and Physical Social and Health Education Leads. This year the Home Office have released a refreshed Prevent Duty and so schools have been given additional support in this area.



Area of scrutiny: Statutory safeguarding partners were informed of the decision that Camden ceased receiving funding from the Home Office for implementation of the Prevent Duty in April 2023. However, Prevent remains a statutory duty for local authorities and preventing radicalisation is a priority for Camden. Our statutory safeguarding partners were assured of the joint commitment to ensure that internal posts and funding will remain in place to support this ambition.

9

Learning from local safeguarding reviews

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| 9.1 Aggregated learning from local Rapid Reviews and Practice Reviews | 87 |
| 9.2 Taking forward learning from national Child Mortality Database and Child Death Overview Panel | 95 |

9.1 Aggregated learning from local Rapid Reviews and Practice Reviews

Camden Statutory Partners (including Education) and/or designated deputies meet to discuss and reach consensus on each serious incident notification, rapid review, including jointly reaching a decision on whether to progress with a further Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review or alternative methodology of learning. Through the work of the QA and LCSPR Subgroup, the statutory partners maintain oversight on the quality and timely progress of Reviews. The independent scrutineer is involved in every stage and acts as a further layer of governance to ensure a culture of transparency and shared accountability.

One use of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangement (MASA) funding was to commission independent scrutiny to evaluate the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements for cases meeting the criteria for serious incident notifications (SIN), rapid reviews (RR), and LCSPRs. We have utilised a range of experienced safeguarding reviewers to offer independent challenge and analysis on the effectiveness of our safeguarding arrangements.

Throughout this report, in the context of the safeguarding subject area, we have used QA tools to further analyse, and evidence improvements made as a result of SINs, RRs and LCSPRs. For ease of reference, we have highlighted these in our 'Learning from Review' textboxes. This includes how we have shared key themes and practice recommendations, as well as how scrutiny on data and practice is conducted to understand its impact, along with feedback from children, families, and the multi-agency workforce.

It is noteworthy that this is the second consecutive financial year since the pandemic that has seen an increase in the number of notifications submitted. The trend analysis indicates that this pattern is likely to continue into 2024-25. Camden LA, representing the CSCP, submitted six serious incident notifications in the calendar year 2023-24. These resulted in further learning through:

- 3 LCSPRs
- 1 Ext Learning Review with YJS
- 1 Serious Incident Domestic Abuse Review (SIDAR) with Safeguarding Adults, CSPB or VAWG.

All our Reviews have involved children/or their family's engagement so that their experiences are reflected in the Review.

Here is an aggregated summary of key themes shared at a strategic level for scrutiny to advance systemic and practice learning.

| Child | Domestic abuse incident involving parents | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Learning identified via Serious Incident Domestic Abuse Review (SIDAR) carried out in conjunction with Violence Against Women and Girls Board/ Community Safety Partnership | | | |
| Local strengths in practice | Local learning | National context and recommendations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Health Social and Economic (PSHE) curriculum which is delivered within schools has vastly improved in the last 10 years. • Good safeguarding practice in maintained nurseries, including information sharing when transitioning to school. • Positive work by Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) on Healthy relationships. • Victim of domestic abuse felt supported by a range of frontline workforce. • Good information sharing and joint working initiated by GP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are equipped to assess multiple oppressions and disadvantages. This includes developing practitioners' understanding of intersectionality. • GRACES should be evident in practice and supervision across partnerships. • Agencies need to develop or review a joint strategy for domestic abuse, with training to ensure practitioners are confident in handling cases involving domestic abuse or coercive control. • CSSW will audit families referred to MASH/ Front Door services due to concerns about coercion and control. • A comprehensive approach to adultification bias. • With Camden Safety Net, consider expanding the local PSHE programme to other educational settings to create a programme to support schools. • Extend good practice in transitions and information sharing from maintained nurseries to private and independent nurseries. | <p>The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has made several key recommendations on domestic abuse learning, based on their thematic analysis of rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews. Here are some of the main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced Multi-Agency Collaboration: Emphasising the need for better coordination and communication between agencies to ensure a holistic approach to safeguarding children affected by domestic abuse. • Training and Awareness: Recommending comprehensive training for professionals across all agencies to recognise and respond effectively to signs of domestic abuse. • Early Intervention: Highlighting the importance of early identification and intervention to prevent escalation and provide timely support to affected children and families. • Consistent Risk Assessment: Advocating for the use of standardised risk assessment tools to ensure consistent and thorough evaluation of domestic abuse cases. • Support for Victims: Ensuring that children and families receive appropriate and sustained support, including mental health services and safe housing. | |

| <p>Child</p> | <p>Serious Youth Violence Incident of a Camden Young Person Learning identified via Rapid Review and CSCP and YJS Extended Learning Review.</p> | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Local strengths in practice</p> | <p>Local learning</p> | <p>National context and recommendations</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good intervention and support from school settings including understanding needs and support from the mental health and well-being lead. • One to one support from a local faith-based community mentor to help with emotional wellbeing. • Positive engagement through Camden’s Community Youth programme this trusted space created positive opportunities to share feelings and consider their future. • Good assessments and plans in place with adequate referrals made and discussions at High-Risk Vulnerability Panels. • Good identification of peer group in response to the incident which may inform the safeguarding response to children affected by this incident. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to think differently about the accumulated pattern of contextual safeguarding risk. • Consideration of family breakdown and the impact of the emotional dysregulation this may cause young people. This could factor in planning and support. • Use of contextual safeguarding and tools for better identification of serious youth violence. • Impact of intersectionality and self-identity on engaging with systems of support and intervention for young people. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was hard to escape: Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation 2020. Identification of individual children who are at risk of serious harm through use of data, mapping exercises, local practitioners’ knowledge and work with communities to get a detailed picture of those at risk. • Comprehensive risk management plans which are reviewed frequently and in response to changes or heightened risk. Understanding the drivers of violence are complex and can be difficult to evidence solutions. • Close work with parents to provide dedicated support to help them manage the risk in a way which is perceived to be supportive and empowering. • Children who are male, black, neurodivergent or from low-income households are particularly likely to be stigmatised. • Thresholds for accessing supportive services (e.g. mental health services) are narrow. • Trust, respect, empathy and stability within relationships with practitioners are key to helping children to feel safe and disclose their need for support. |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Child</p> | <p>Death of an international student, boarding at an independent school outside of London, who died during a summer residential placement in our local area.</p> <p>Joint LCSPR to be published in autumn 2024 with national recommendations in consultation <i>with National Panel</i> and the DfE.</p> | | |
| <p>Local strengths in practice</p> | <p>Local learning</p> | <p>National context and recommendations</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good pupil records which enabled the joint rapid review to understand the child’s lived experience whilst at boarding school. • The child was seen by a medical professional each day whilst at boarding school to administer medication, which offered some assurance that mental health and well-being was considered by a medical professional. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability of boarding educational placements for highly vulnerable children with complex medical needs. • Managing consent, thresholds for intervention, information sharing, multiagency practice on how agencies worked together to safeguard. • Suitability checks and governance arrangements for Education Guardians, including appropriateness of LADO regulations. • Safeguarding arrangements and opportunities for professional curiosity, challenge, and escalation. • Safeguarding and information sharing arrangements when working with residential out of school education settings (holiday placements). | <p>The following documents were considered by the Rapid Review and Statutory Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping children safe in Education 2022 - How international children studying/ boarding in English independent schools are safeguarded, under the Independent Schools Inspectorate. • The Legal Framework and Statutory Guidance of Children attending Boarding School (2022) - How assurances are sought that appropriate information about pupil vulnerability, additional needs, medical history and welfare needs are adequately shared and responded to. • AEGIS Standards for Educational Guardians - The role and regulations for Education Guardians. • Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings: code of practice -Education residential settings, specifically those who may host international students. | |

| <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-right: 10px;">Child</div> <div> <p>Suicide of Care Experienced Young Adult who was a former unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC).</p> <p>Learning identified via Rapid Review.</p> </div> </div> | | |
|--|--|---|
| Local strengths in practice | Local learning | National context and recommendations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated mental health support and timely identification and referral. • Persistent support from Personal Advisor for placement access, education, work, budgeting, mental health, substance misuse and contact with family abroad. • Positive joint working and planning between Supported Housing and Children’s Safeguarding and Social Work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting placement stability and independent living. • Impact of lockdown restrictions for Care Experienced young people and adults. • For former UASC, parallel pathway planning and building accessible support, education and employment, and support with asylum status. • Impact of racism and adultification bias experienced by UASC. • Development of suicide prevention partnership work to strengthen response for care experienced adults. | <p>2018 the Children’ Society commissioned a report - Distress signals: Unaccompanied young people’s struggle for mental health care. Recommendations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More comprehensive tools for assessing mental health need. • Creating centres of excellence to share learning and good practice. • Ensuring that young people are linked in with high quality advocacy services. • Providing a range of adaptable resources to allow young people to communicate their mental health needs. • Improving complex and traumatising immigration and asylum processes. • Ensuring that holistic support is available for young people to be reunited with family members. |

| <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: #004a99; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-right: 10px;">Child</div> <div> <p>Unexplained death and non-accidental injuries to an infant.</p> <p>Learning identified via Rapid Review.</p> </div> </div> | | |
|--|---|--|
| Local strengths in practice | Local learning | National context and recommendations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative multi-agency response and working with continued dialogue and curiosity regarding injuries and death. • Universal services engaged well and proportionately with the family. CP medicals completed in good timeframe. • Sensitive and thoughtful engagement and direct work with the family, including offer of bereavement support for the children. • Health visiting records demonstrate good communication with parents including providing advice around coping with crying, safe sleeping, SIDs, tummy time, vitamin D supplements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To routinely request skeletal examinations for siblings in the household following identification of non-accidental skeletal injuries on one child. • Curiosity on the safety and welfare of infants living in overcrowded housing conditions and the impact this has on family life and infant safety. • Embed Father-Inclusive Practice further in universal services. | <p>Out of routine: A review of sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI) in families where the children are considered at risk of significant harm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do we understand the views of parents about safer sleep information: format, accessibility, timing, key messages and ‘conversations’ with practitioners? • Underlying social and environmental factors (deprivation, overcrowding and adverse childhood experiences) may have an effect on SUDI independently of risks such as low birth weight or smoking in pregnancy. • Timely and accessible preventative services have a key role in supporting families in these circumstances. Preventative and early help provision to respond to social and environmental factors forms a base on which to develop wider initiatives for prevention and protection. |

| <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px;">Child</div> Allegation of sexual assault perpetrated by a new worker at a placement. Learning progressed through LADO Review and Ofsted Inspection of placement. | | |
|--|---|---|
| Local strengths in practice | Local learning | National context and recommendations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong advocacy by children’s social work to ensure child’s rights, wishes and wellbeing were being prioritised. • Good multi-agency response following allegation of child sexual abuse, with timely criminal investigation, LADO process and medical examination. • Good consideration of risk by multi-agency network posed to other young people within the setting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to better enable children to disclose sexual abuse, when there have already suffered a history of child sexual abuse, physical abuse and trauma. • DBS checks only provide assurance at a point in time, and therefore greater supervision of staff is required, especially during the new starter probation. • Greater curiosity and increased safeguarding measures when previous offences are not disclosed. • Management oversight and lone working procedures. • Explicitly stating CSE risk within children’s plans to allow for a trauma-informed response to safety plan to manage risk of harm. • Timely sharing of sensitive information with the wider network whilst handling the sensitive nature of the allegation. • Importance of keeping adultification bias in mind, when considering how the child’s welfare remained paramount in multiagency safeguarding practice. | <p>The following documents were considered by the Rapid Review and Statutory Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (2022) • Independent review of children’s social care • Stable Homes, Built on Love: Implementation Strategy and Consultation Children’s Social Care Reform (2023) • Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding (justiceinspectors.gov.uk) (2022) |

This word cloud depicts key themes identified by frontline practitioners in rapid review and LCSPR focus groups:

Learning from LCSPRs are published on our website: <https://cscp.org.uk/professionals/local-safeguarding-practice-reviews/>. From our we analytics, we know that these pages have received over 750 views, and is a good measure of wide dissemination of learning.

All potential serious incident notifications are discussed against WT2023 criteria by the statutory partners and/or deputies, and an agreement is reached on whether the criteria have been met for the notification to be submitted.

We adopted a relational approach to learning, using alternative methodologies to collectively learn during practice reviews. Based on practitioner feedback from previous LCSPRs, our auditors/reviewers conducted reflective focus groups, appreciative enquiry workshops, and learning events to elicit and disseminate learning in key practice areas. The aggregated analysis below was carried out to aid the statutory partners in considering opportunities for systemic and practice learning areas.



9.2 Taking forward learning from national

Child Mortality Database and Child Death Overview Panel

Our statutory safeguarding arrangements encourage both national and local learning and reflection. In 2024, CDOP informed the statutory safeguarding partners of six actions which have arisen from the national child mortality database (NCMD). The NCMD gathers information on all children who die in England, so that themes can be identified and improve and save children’s lives in the future. The following details the NCMD recommendations alongside impact of our statutory safeguarding arrangements:

National child mortality database recommendations

Review the effectiveness of current programmes in **averting deaths and serious violence**, especially involving knives and firearms.

Impact of local statutory safeguarding arrangements:

(Section 8.4 details our partnership approach to reducing serious youth violence)

- Vulnerable adolescent strategy group retains strategic focus our 5 pillar approach is *Prevent, Identify, Support, Disrupt and Prosecute*. A detailed action plan is monitored to assess the effectiveness of our local approach to harmful sexual behaviour, serious youth violence and preventing radicalisation.
- Youth Safety Taskforce.
- Learning from recent serious safeguarding incidents involving children at risk/ involved in serious youth violence and subsequent ongoing action plans.
- Child criminal exploitation assessment tool updated to include a serious youth violence lens to allow for effective risk-assessment.
- Red Thread established at UCLH. UCLH Level 3 safeguarding training integrates serious youth violence and domestic abuse.
- Early identification of children presenting with assaults is part of the Royal Free Hospital paediatric liaison service. A referral is made to children’s services if a weapon is used, or other risk factors are identified.
- The Royal Free Hospital will attend serious incident response meetings if they are working with a young person where there are concerns.
- Level 3 training regarding serious youth violence and adultification is embedded in the Royal Free Hospital training offer.
- Established MACE co-Chaired with Local Authority and MPS.

National child mortality database recommendations

Prioritise measures to safeguard and protect children under one from **non-accidental injury** in line with the recommendations made in the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Report “The Myth of Invisible Men”.

Impact of local statutory safeguarding arrangements:

(Section 7.14 details our partnership approach to vulnerable parents and the first 1,001 days)

- A cycle of lunch and learn and webinar sessions have taken place with multi-agency partners to embed key messages across all services working with children under 2 years of age.
- A dedicated CSCP webpage developed which highlights the increased risks to children under 2 years and shared the CSCP briefing reflecting on local and national reviews.
- Assurance received that CP conference for all children under 2 years now effectively explores safer sleeping arrangements and shares safer sleeping advice which is reflected in safety plans for children.
- Hospital Midwives have developed a briefing on abusive head trauma for children under 1 year of age. This also provides advice to parents about coping with crying, SUDI and safer sleeping.
- Health Visiting and Neonatal outreach teams have embedded ICON (a programme that provides information about infant crying and how to cope) and safe sleeping into their discharge talk with all parents.
- Multi-agency review of national learning from Societies Report: *First study of fathers and re-current care proceedings* and reflection on current practice. This included the development of an ‘Promoting father inclusive practice leaflet’.
- Engaging fathers in safeguarding CSCP multi-agency training.
- Family Hub/ IEYS father’s event 15th June 2024, Camden dad’s stay and play drop in sessions, Camden dad’s online first aid training for fathers/ male carers.
- Review of SCR recommendations from Child B, Child C and Child D.
- UCLH quarterly safeguarding peer review discussing acute presentations with a safeguarding concern, including babies with injuries.
- The Royal Free Hospital were part of the development of a ‘bruising in mobile and non-mobile children’ policy.
- Maternity information on patient visible portal to include Safer Sleeping, ICON and risk of SUDI which can be translated to multiple languages.
- Quarterly audit regarding use of ICON in maternity discharge.
- Bedroom and risks explored at New Birth Visits/home visits.

National child mortality database recommendations

Ensure that the importance of **safe bathing** techniques, including the adult always staying within arm's reach of young children at bath time, is a public health focus in accident prevention.

Impact of local statutory safeguarding arrangements:

- Accident prevention discussed at birth as part of routine postnatal care.
- Referrals to health visitor for any under 5 presenting with injury/accident.
- Importance of safe bathing techniques, including the adult always staying within arm's reach of young children at bath time, is a public health focus in accident prevention.
- Public Health reference the standard advice available on the Healthier Together website: [Washing and bathing your baby: Healthier Together \(what0-18.nhs.uk\)](https://www.healthier-together.org/what0-18.nhs.uk)
- Information shared at key health visitor contacts and within children's centres.
- Health promotion shared within children centres.

National child mortality database recommendations

Start dissemination of **water safety advice** earlier in the year to ensure those accessing water in the spring are also aware of safety messages.

Impact of local statutory safeguarding arrangements:

- Accident prevention discussed at birth as part of routine postnatal care.
- Referrals made to health visitor for any under 5 presenting with injury/accident.
- Dissemination of water safety advice earlier in the year to ensure those accessing water in the spring are also aware of safety messages. NCL has produced resources.
- There is useful information and downloadable posters on the Swim England website <https://www.swimming.org/learntoswim/downloadable-water-safety-posters/> as well as The Royal Life Saving Society UK <https://www.rlss.org.uk/certificates-and-posters>. The LGA have produced some useful materials too <https://www.local.gov.uk/national-water-safety-forum>. This has been promoted on CSCP social media platforms, with web analytics demonstrating engagement.
- Assurance received in QA/Health Subgroup that key themes have been shared at key health visitor contacts and within children centres.

National child mortality database recommendations

Ensure all children and young people between 10 and 18 years are provided with evidence-based, age-appropriate **drug and alcohol education**, with health and wellbeing education throughout primary school.

Impact of local statutory safeguarding arrangements:

(Section 8.7 details our partnership approach to reducing adolescent substance misuse)

- Multi-agency approach to reducing substance misuse is undertaken through a borough wide drug action plan which mirrors the vulnerable adolescents 5 pillar approach and aligns to the national drug strategy.
- Multi-agency training on adolescent substance misuse and FWD referrals. Impact of the training is recognised in the variety of referral sources to the service.
- FWD works closely with CAMHS to ensure young people receive both support for their substance misuse issue and therapeutic support (mental health was an accompanying factor in 25% of cases).
- 97% of young people reported that they were happy with the service they received from FWD and successfully there were no re-representation from young people.
- Widespread use of HEADSS, psychosocial history taking tool when seeing young people and opportunities for child to be spoken to alone <https://paediatricpearls.co.uk/headsss-tool/>
- Redthread service for risk reduction work with young people.
- FWD drop-in service for students.
- Information sessions/workshops for parents (coffee mornings).
- Group workshops addressing specific substances misuse amongst students.
- Targeted programme-Wellbeing & Me (6-week programme).
- 1-1 psychosocial intervention (Tier 2 & Tier 3).
- Children and young people who attend hospital following alcohol and substance misuse are offered drug and alcohol services for education and support.

National child mortality database recommendations

Review and improve the **information sharing** and communication between local authorities and between agencies, e.g., in the cases where children and young people move between areas due to family moves or moves between care placements.

Impact of local statutory safeguarding arrangements:

- CSCP multi-agency information sharing workshop on 1st October 2024.
- Established protocols within MASH to enable information sharing for transferred cases.
- Information sharing agreement with partner agencies.
- Updated consent statement available on CSCP website: [Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership CSCP](#).
- Where a child or young person attended ED or the hospital, and it is identified that they may have moved area, the paediatric liaison service will inform the new borough's 0-19 service of the transfer in. Policies for children aged 10 to 18 seen at emergency departments (ED) in Camden hospitals align with broader NHS guidelines and standards for paediatric emergency care. This includes, how initial assessments are conducted, involvement of children in care, creating a child-friendly environment, managing transition of care for 16-18 year olds and ensuring support services are identified.
- Cross-borough joint working following serious safeguarding incidents, cross-borough LCSPRs and cross-borough attendance at rapid reviews.
- MASH Health has developed and implemented the MASH Standard Operating Procedure and MASH Health Template devised to support information sharing.
- Level 3 Safeguarding training highlights multi-agency working concerning information sharing.

Child Death Overview Panel 2022-23 (CDOP)

All Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships are required to have a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of children and find ways to prevent further child deaths. Camden's CDOP geographical footprint covers North Central London (NCL) to enable learning through capturing broader data via the National Child Mortality Database, to inform changes in policy and practice. The CDOP process asks the panel to consider whether, through the assessment, one or more factors are identified in any domain, which may have contributed to the death of the child and which, by means of locally, or nationally achievable interventions, could be modified to reduce the risk of future child deaths. The presence of modifiable factors is associated with preventability. Due to the lengthy data collection required for CDOP, this section will analyse performance for 2022-23.

In 2022-23, 90 child deaths were reviewed across NCL, which is an increase of 15 deaths (20%) in comparison to 2020-21. Modifiable factors were identified in 25% of the reviews. 88 cases were presented to the Child Death Overview Panel and findings for 2022-23 are as followed:

- Since 2019-20, the rate of child deaths across NCL has slightly but not significantly increased and remains similar to the four-year NCL average.
- 71% of neonatal deaths were of babies born at a premature gestational age (before 37 weeks).
- Over half of child deaths were in children aged under 1 year old (61%) and 60% of these deaths occurred in the first 27 days.

- The rate of child death was significantly higher in boys compared to girls.
- The child death rate was highest among Other White ethnic group, followed by Black or Black British and Asian or Asian British.
- 26% (55 deaths) of child deaths among those aged 28 days or above were recorded as having a disability.
- The most common primary category of death was perinatal/neonatal event, followed by chromosomal, genetic and congenital anomalies.

Scrutiny: The government has aims to achieve a 50% reduction neonatal mortality by 2025 (a rate of 1.5 per 1,000 live births), based on rates in 2010. For more information: [Better Births Four Years On, A Review Of Progress \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/betterbirths/). This will be an area monitored through our statutory safeguarding arrangements.



Parent feedback: Some parents fed back that they found communication from healthcare professionals overwhelming at times, and expressed interest in having a single point of contact for discussions regarding their child's care.

Following discussion at CDOP there were several learning points which includes:

- Increased use of interpreters
- Parental involvement in decision-making
- Communication around viability threshold
- Communication around processes after death
- Coordination of care and early palliative care involvement with parents

9. Learning from local safeguarding reviews

- Co-sleeping was identified as a key modifiable factor in several cases of SUDI (sudden unexpected death in infants).
- Medical training and equipment for schools

Statutory safeguarding partners have been sighted on the action plan developed to respond to the learning points arising from CDOP which includes a bespoke training programme for key professionals, identifying single point of contacts for parents and improving how information is shared and communicated with families. The QA Subgroup and LSCPR Subgroup has multi-agency CDOP representatives in attendance to help push forward progress against action plans and report back on scope of success and any impact measures. At the time of writing this report a NCL CDOP learning event for 100 North Central London colleagues had been held to share learning and reflect on multiagency working from child and adult reviews:



Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership @CamdenSCP · Jul 5 · ...

Thank you to @NCL_ICS for bringing together multi-agency colleagues from North Central London (Camden, Barnet, Islington, Enfield and Haringey) to learn and think together on safeguarding and supporting vulnerable people across the life span.



[\(Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership on X\)](#)

10

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)



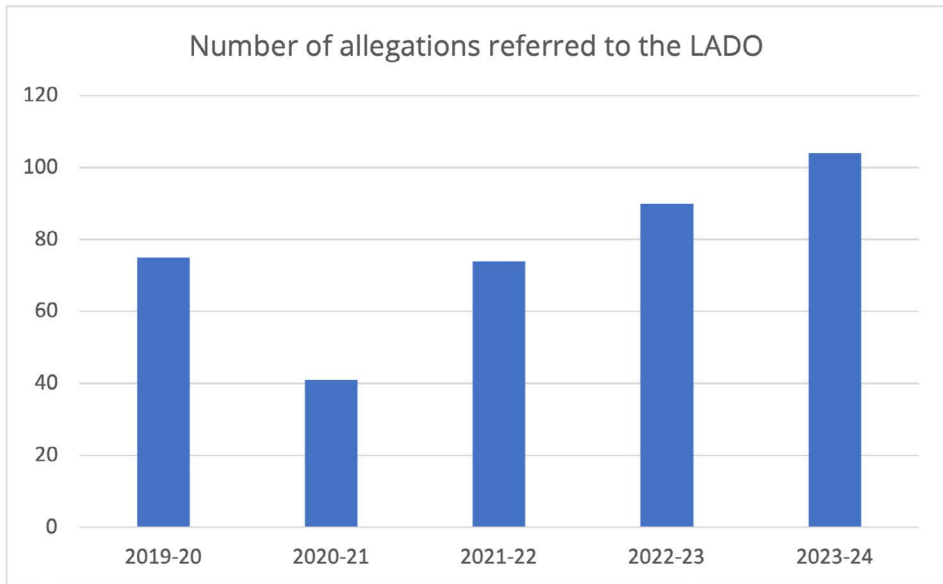
[Working Together 2023](#) stipulates that *local authorities should ensure that allegations against people who work with children are not dealt with in isolation. Any action necessary to address corresponding welfare concerns in relation to the child or children involved should be taken without delay and in a coordinated manner. Local authorities should, in addition, have designated a particular officer, or team of officers, to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children.*

Camden has a social work qualified dedicated Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns about staff and volunteers who work with children in Camden. The [CSCP webpage](#) provides advice and information on managing allegations about staff and volunteers including policies for local partners and referral details. The police and the LADO continue to work closely together with a named detective sergeant responsible for LADO. Impact of this arrangement ensures that information sharing is effective between the police and the LADO and means prompt decisions are made regarding abusive adults.

Engagement in safeguarding arrangements: Consultation and referrals from agencies

Our local arrangements enable informal consultations to take place prior to making a LADO referral to enable advice to be sought. In 2023-24, 177 consultations took place which is a 55% increase from the year prior. The large proportion of consultations received this year were from schools and nursery settings (78.5%).

2023-24 saw a continued increase in the number of referrals made to the LADO with 104 referrals compared to 90 the year prior. The LADO referrals are now equivalent to the pre-covid rate of referrals.



Impact of our statutory safeguarding arrangements is evident in the wide referral source. The highest referrer are schools and nursery settings with the remainder of referrals from health, voluntary sectors and other settings including faith settings, child minders and private tutors.

The most prevalent factor for LADO referrals related to physical abuse or chastisement (46.1%), followed by sexual abuse/sexual harassment (29.8%), emotional abuse (17%) and neglect (2.8%).

Impact: A newly implemented LADO referral feedback form has provided positive feedback from those requesting consultations and the new electronic system supports referring organisations to have their information available and retrievable. The new electronic system recording has enabled robust data collection to enable the LADO to identify trends and outcomes. This has allowed the LADO to shape services and training to support organisations who require further support to implement more robust safeguarding processes and procedures in relation to managing staff and volunteers.

Impact: The CSCP multi-agency training programme includes a bespoke *managing allegations about members of staff* training session which is facilitated by Camden’s Designated LADO. Impact of the training is evidenced in the higher number of referrals. In 2023-24, 100% of delegates who attended the training, indicated that the training had supported them in feeling more confident to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.

Scrutiny: Statutory safeguarding partners seek assurance of timeliness of LADO investigations and were pleased to note that in 2023-24, 80% were completed within the 3-month timescale (54% within one month). This year, the number of ongoing LADO investigations significantly dropped from 17% to 5%. It is recognised that the timely resolution of all LADO investigations can be impacted by ongoing criminal investigations. Continued improvements to LADO data reporting will enable more timely reports on open cases and ensure these are reviewed within the one-month timescale guidance provided from the National LADO procedures.

The LADO continues to monitor historical allegations and the outcomes of associated investigations. Research shows that adults who make allegations of historical abuse had attempted to disclose the abuse at the time it was happening, however, not all

disclosures were listened to or acted upon. In 2023-24, the LADO received a small number of referrals of historical abuse, of which all were regarding allegations of sexual abuse.

Outcomes of referrals

Investigations can conclude with multiple outcomes depending on the circumstances of the case, outcomes for 2023-24 include:

- 12 cases resulted in a Police investigation
- 13 cases resulted in disciplinary proceedings/ employer action and resignation
- 34 cases resulted in a LADO investigation
- 17 cases advice was given
- 24 cases resulted in no further action

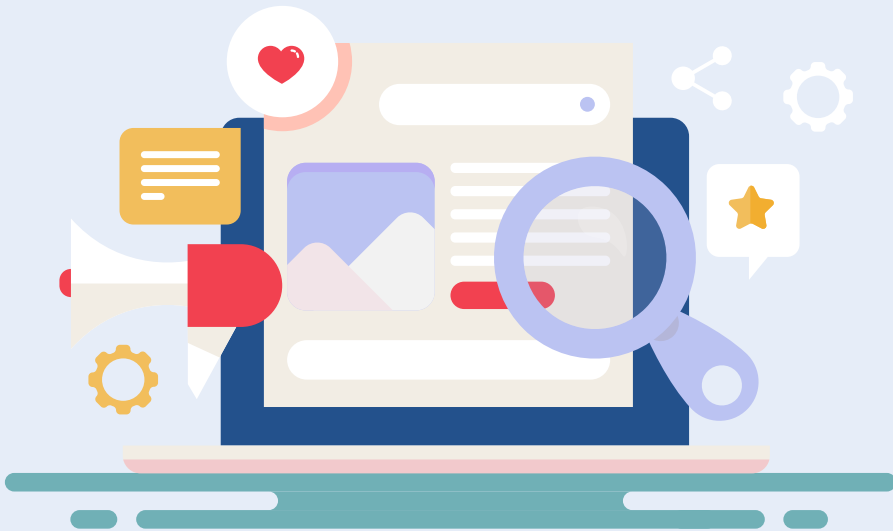
Impact: In 2023, Camden reported a serious incident involving a child's sexual assault allegation against a new worker in an out-of-borough placement. The out-of-borough LADO reviewed the case, collaborating with our local LADO and criminal investigation. With the clout of the statutory safeguarding partners and independent scrutineer, this case resulted in increased scrutiny, strengthened recruitment/ selection/ and induction processes for similar case/ settings, with specific work taking place in:

- Strengthening of policies and procedures within the setting to include clear statements for lone working, risk assessment and training requirements which are signed by all workers and senior management.

- Strengthening of information gathering to ensure that all new workers provide 5 years of professional references.
- Information sharing on safer recruitment raised at Pan-London LADO forum.
- Workshops delivered by [Survivors Trust](#) to promote sensitive and informed responses to sexual abuse survivors.
- Identified resources to consider the therapeutic needs of children and young people who have experienced abuse and exploitation.

11

Communication Strategy Assurance



As a partnership, we understand that effective communication is essential for sharing our vision and mission across the Camden community and for developing our multi-agency safeguarding workforce.

This involves everyone, from senior roles to those working directly with children, young people, and families. Our communication and engagement strategy aims to support the delivery of information, enhances learning, raises awareness, and promotes policy and practice development, including training. This includes disseminating the learning from these reviews, which has involved multi-agency learning events reaching over 250 delegates, which we see as crucial for enhancing daily practice and safeguarding children and young people.

Methodology of our approach to deliver key messages to the multi-agency frontline leaders, middle managers and frontline and workforce:

| Quality Assurance - Input | Mode of Dissemination | Evidence of Impact |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single / Multi-agency audit activity • Feedback from national, regional and local workforce surveys • Evaluation by Independent Scrutineer and Young Advisor • Feedback from families and young people • Multi-agency Dataset • Single and Joint Inspections • Serious Incident Notifications, Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs • LSCP self-evaluation: Annual Report and Business Plan • Training need analysis • Multi-agency escalation of professional differences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single and multi-agency training • 7-minute briefing • Multi-agency workshops/ focus groups • Regional conferences (London or North Central London) • Speaking at Forums and Service meetings (DSL, GPs and Children's Services) • Partnership and Subgroups meetings (linking strategy and operation) • Lunch and Learn Sessions • Voluntary Action Camden - Commission of safeguarding awareness raising in community settings • Website, e-newsletter and social media/ X • Films/ Recordings • Sector-Led Improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding thresholds maintained • Statutory partners lead local safeguarding arrangements • Outcomes for children and families • Multi-agency Dataset • Key Performance Indicators • Feedback from families and young people • Feedback from multi-agency partners/ workforce • Development of practice seen in audits, serious incident notifications, Rapid Reviews, and LCSPRs • Involvement in national reform research • Training Evaluation Feedback |

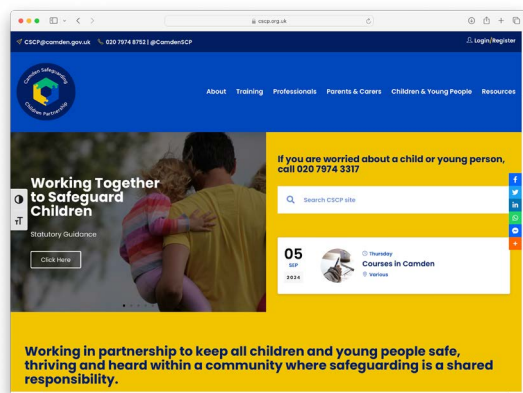
Impact:

Engagement on our website: www.cscp.org.uk

Web analytics is a valuable tool for the CSCP website, providing insights into areas of interest, learning needs, the most sought-after information, and gaps in our current communication and training methods.

The data below helps us understand volume and impact of our most visited pages, enabling us to understand the reach of our safeguarding arrangements across the statutory and voluntary workforce.

Between 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024



66,827
page views



13,322
visitors to the
CSCP website



5,569
monthly
average visitors

85%

UK based visitors

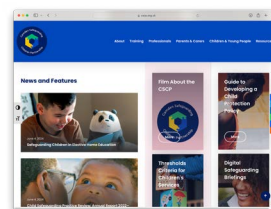
15%

Global visitors

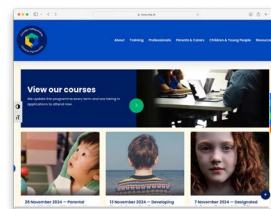
Impact:

Most popular pages:

This insight allows the CSCP to target our communication more effectively. For example, by analysing search terms and the most popular pages, the CSCP has developed new resources in high-demand areas:



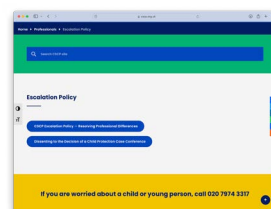
6,620 Total Home Page views
www.cscp.org.uk



4,348 Training Page views
[https://cscp.org.uk/training/calendar-of-events/Resources - Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership CSCP](https://cscp.org.uk/training/calendar-of-events/Resources-Camden-Safeguarding-Children-Partnership-CSCP)



1,346 Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers & LADO views
[Allegations-against-staff-a-guide-for-childrens-services-in-Camden.pdf](https://www.cscp.org.uk/resources/allegations-against-staff-a-guide-for-childrens-services-in-Camden.pdf)



2,767 Safeguarding Policies Page
[Escalation Policy - Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership CSCP](https://www.cscp.org.uk/resources/escalation-policy-camden-safeguarding-children-partnership-cscp)

12

CSCP Multi-agency training 2023-24

Leadership: Inter-connectivity between quality assurance and training

The inter-connectivity between the CSCP’s Learning and Improvement Framework and its training strategy supports our aims to ensure provision of a broad and high-quality programme of learning and development for multi-agency staff as identified through our evaluation and audits. The purpose of our varied safeguarding training programme is to upskill staff and volunteers working in Camden to strengthen their ability to identify and support children at risk.

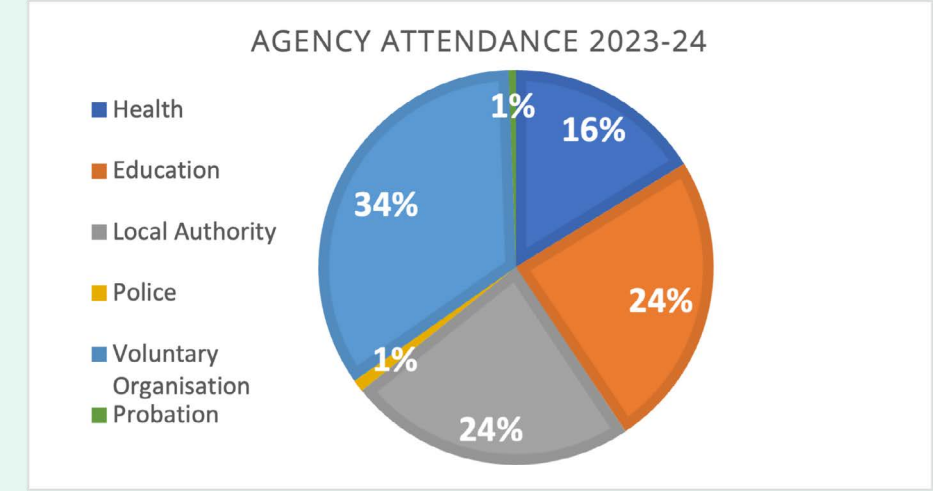
The Learning & Development Subgroup is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding training needs are identified, and an effective training programme is delivered, through our detailed Training Needs Analysis, utilising performance data, feedback from frontline practitioners and young people and learning from serious incidents and audits. The group has an overview of emerging safeguarding issues, both locally and nationally to ensure learning themes are reflected in our

varied training programme. The MASA funding was utilised to specifically enhance the training offer to strengthen multi-agency working in areas identified as requiring further focus in Reviews and Audits.

Impact: CSCP multiagency-safeguarding training delivery 2023-24

The CSCP held 25 safeguarding children training courses and two workshops in 2023-24, training 561 multi-agency professionals.

Both virtual and in person training was delivered. Trends in the proportion of agencies attending training has remained similar over the years mirroring our statutory safeguarding arrangements. A breakdown of agency attendance for CSCP training courses (this does not account for workshops) is provided in the chart:



Scrutiny: Our statutory safeguarding partners have identified that low take up of multi-agency training from Police colleagues requires increased focus as this has been identified as a recurring theme. Assurance has been sought that the MPS have a robust safeguarding training programme, however, the importance of collaboration in multi-agency training forums is important to build relationships and understand wider issues across multi-agency services. Ensuring greater take-up of multiagency training by MPS colleagues will be an area of focus for our statutory partners in 2024-25

Impact of our training offer: How we deliver against our training needs analysis

Throughout the report, each section shares greater information of our varied safeguarding children training programme and the impact this has on frontline practice. The CSCP's child safeguarding training programme is constantly reviewed and amended to meet local needs. A proportion of training courses are routinely commissioned and included on the training programme each year. However, due to the changing face of safeguarding, considering the work of the CSCP, the following courses were identified through the training needs analysis and subsequently commissioned in 2023-24:

| Learning from | Commissioning CSCP multi-agency training: | Outcome |
|--|---|--|
| Learning from serious incidents: Discrimination and unconscious bias | Safeguarding children and young people experiencing discrimination and unconscious bias | To ensure an overall commitment for partners to understand the impact of children’s religion, race and ethnicity on their vulnerabilities and experiences, the CSCP commissioned the development of a new training programme. This was delivered by local partners in conjunction with young people. The course will continue to be delivered alongside single agency training opportunities. |
| Learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Identifying child sexual abuse and sexually harmful behaviours | Thinking the Unthinkable - Multi-agency responses to working with Child Sexual Abuse | It is nationally recognised that there is a gap between recorded experiences of CSA and the actual experiences of children. Local trends in Camden, mirror the national picture, children are less likely to be on a child protection plan for CSA as the primary category. To maintain focus, the CSCP has commissioned a local provider (The Lighthouse) to deliver CSA training to enable reflection of local context and support methods. A bespoke session has been commissioned for education settings and another for multi-agency partners. These sessions will take place in 2024-25. |

| Learning from | Commissioning CSCP multi-agency training: | Outcome |
|---|---|---|
| Learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Supporting adolescents at risk of self-harm and suicide | Adolescent mental health and self-harm | In January 2024, Camden submitted a serious incident notification in relation to a suicide of a former child looked after. In recognition of learning highlighted from this case and the ongoing impact of the pandemic on young people’s mental health the CSCP has re-commissioned this course for 2024-25. The training provider will ensure that learning from this case is shared through the multi-agency training. |
| National Learning: Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people | Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people | Following feedback from our partners and findings from our health-related behaviour questionnaire with children and young people, the CSCP has commissioned this new training course for 2024-25. This training promotes understanding, inclusivity, and sensitivity which is crucial in creating a more respectful and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ children and young people. |

Impact: Workshops are also organised throughout the year to ensure frontline professionals are up to date on emerging issues and themes arising from serious safeguarding incidents. Workshops allow the opportunity for multi-agency professionals to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by services and plan ways of collaborative working.

In April 2023 our Designated Nurse and Designated Doctor co-facilitated a learning event with health agencies across Camden to disseminate key areas of learning from recent LCSPRs. This was attended by 30 health practitioners and enabled reflection on recommendations in relation to our local health services. Following this event, our Children’s Services and Adult Mental Health joint working protocol has been updated to consider emerging learning. A series of lunch and learn sessions will take place in 2024 with frontline practitioners to share key messages and protocol changes.

Following a joint Extended Learning Review with CSCP and Youth Justice Service (YJS) a multi-agency conference took place in April 2024. This was attended by 90 multi-agency partners including co-facilitation by young people and community services. The event shared our local approach to serious youth violence and exploitation to provide practitioners with relevant information to consider in their practice with young people.

Voice of the child

Young people presented on their lived experience of being in the criminal justice system, transitions to adulthood and working in the community. Our young advisor spoke about his care experience and shared the positive impact of having trusted relationships with professionals who contact to 'check-in' without requiring anything in receipt. He explained that having these trusted relationships has enabled succession in his education and employment.

Evidencing impact on safeguarding practice

The CSCP evaluation model consists of a three-stage process to evidence impact on practice.

Stage 1

A baseline for each participant's level of knowledge pre-attendance

Stage 2

End of course evaluation form demonstrates what the participant has learnt from the training session

Stage 3

To ascertain whether the course has had impact on their work

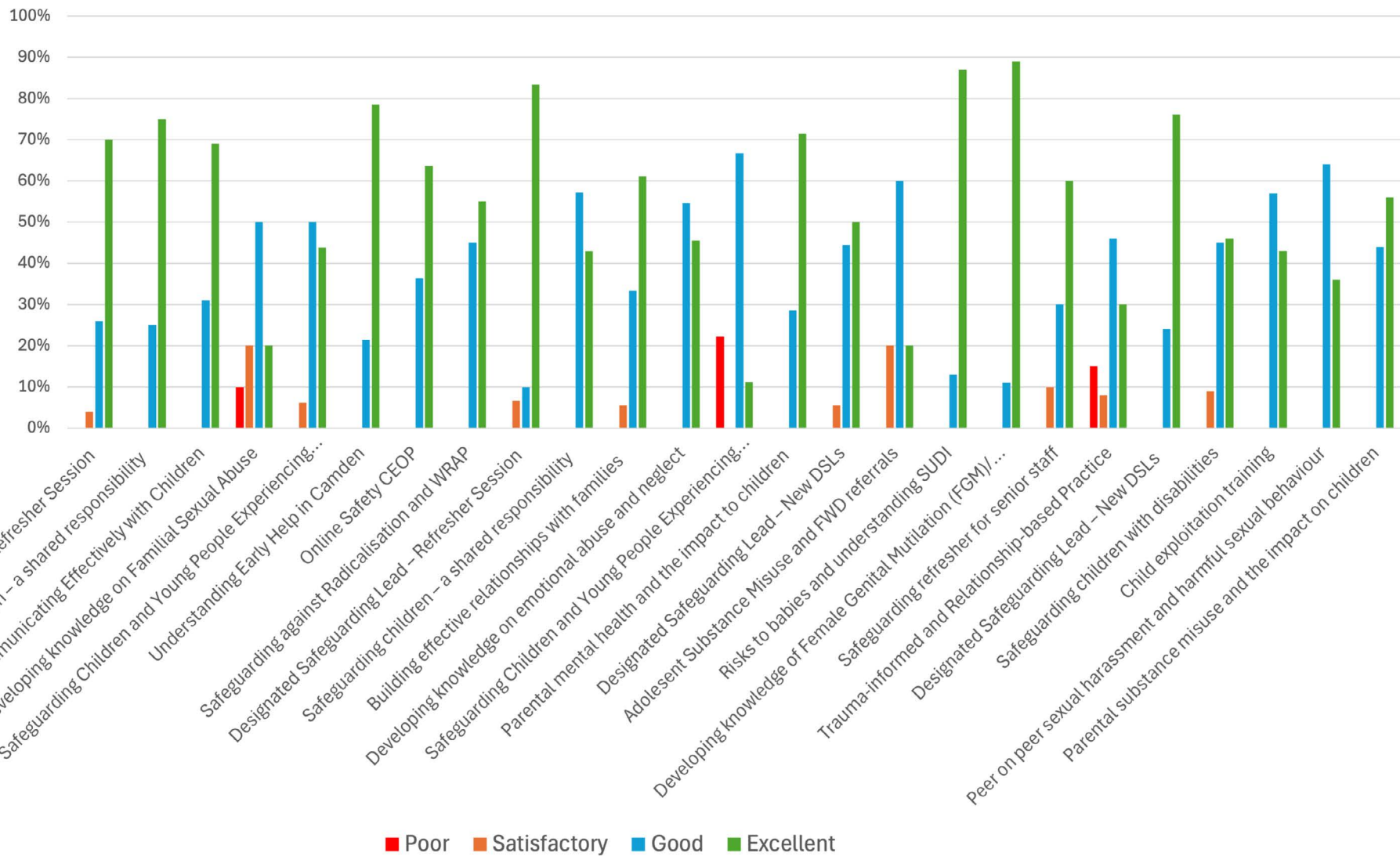
Impact: Through the three-stage evaluation, it is evidenced that a high proportion of delegates sustain a good level of knowledge and confidence 6-8 weeks after the course and can evidence on how attending the training session has impacted their work with children and families. 94% of CSCP training courses are evaluated as good or excellent, evidencing that safeguarding training delivered to multi-agency professionals is delivered at a high standard and reflects on local and national learning.

When a 'satisfactory' or 'poor' rating is provided for a course, the Learning & Development Subgroup reviews delegate feedback to suggest improvements to the trainer to consider and implement in future training being delivered. This ensures that all CSCP safeguarding training:

- ✓ Is in line with best practice, current research and local knowledge
- ✓ Meets required standards and local needs
- ✓ Supports the CSCP Business Plan objectives and priorities
- ✓ Enables the development of a skilled and competent multi-agency children's workforce

See CSCP TRAINING OVERALL SCORE 2023-24 chart on the next page.

CSCP TRAINING OVERALL SCORE 2023-24



Impact: The work of CSCP takes an intersectional approach to ensure our work is based on the understanding that individuals and communities have dynamic, fluid identities and diverse circumstances. This includes actively tackling racism, thinking about what anti-racist safeguarding practice means in partnership working, relational safeguarding and tackling the drivers of family vulnerabilities. To achieve this, our local demographics are shared with our CSCP trainers to ensure that training content and case studies are reflective of Camden's population. Throughout our evaluation model we seek feedback on how each course has effectively promoted equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, in 2023-24, 96% of delegates agreed that CSCP training promoted this.

Impact: The overall aim of delivering a wide range of safeguarding children training opportunities is to ensure that staff and volunteers working with Camden children can effectively identify safeguarding concerns, are skilled to provide a safeguarding response and can capably work with children and their families. Our evaluation process seeks impact of attendance at CSCP safeguarding children training, delegates are confident to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns. In 2023-24, 94% of delegates agreed that attendance at CSCP training enabled this.

Feedback from frontline practitioners: Example feedback from delegates on the impact of CSCP training:

// I found the content very relevant and applicable to the area I work in. {the trainer} was able to provide invaluable information and teachings about the course content that will positively impact my clinical practice. //

// I felt confident that I was receiving high quality training. It was a very good opportunity to get to know about services that are out there, and to mix with others from different agencies and organisations. //

// Great speaker and super valuable to have a person with lived experience on the course. There should be more courses like this available. //

// Great speaker and super valuable to have a person with lived experience on the course. There should be more courses like this available. //

// *This was one of the most interesting safeguarding training sessions I have attended over the many years working for Camden. {the trainer} was absolutely brilliant and clearly extremely knowledgeable on the subject and safeguarding as a whole. //*

// *Fantastic course, it was good to hear about the services available in Camden that can collaborate and offer to support to families facing challenges. //*

// *Really valuable training which has helped me to have a deeper understanding of FGM and the complexities around it. I feel more confident in being able to start conversations about it with families. //*

// *This session was informative and engaging. I learnt lots of strategies and various organisations to help with this. Good general exploration of the topic with time given for individual stories & experiences. //*

Governance: Auditing the local safeguarding training offer

Out safeguarding arrangements ensure that our safeguarding children training offer remains up to date and reflective of local needs and therefore CSCP training courses are subject to audit. Following focus from the partnership on a particular theme, the associated courses are identified for auditing to ensure that learning from the exercise is incorporated, ensuring that key messages reach wide-ranging frontline staff.

Engaging the community in safeguarding children training

Voice of the community: Voluntary Action Camden (VAC) has a long-standing partnership with the CSCP and has been at the forefront of tailor-made safeguarding training and support which is flexible to the needs of our local communities for the last 16 years. The project continues to evolve in accordance with the needs of the sector; responding with innovative, adaptive, and preventative training solutions and support to improve the lives of children and their families in Camden. This has been achieved by being a critical friend and conduit in channelling information from statutory service providers to BME (black, minority and ethnic) community leaders, micro-community organisations and faith groups. This enables communities to have a safe space to deconstruct narratives which will subsequently allow help to be asked for earlier when faced with safeguarding challenges.

Impact: VAC delivered 34 safeguarding children training sessions to voluntary organisations in 2023-24, training a total of 298 delegates. The evolving and ever-changing nature of the safeguarding landscape ensures the project remains responsive and flexible, allowing voluntary organisations to grow, influence and develop.

Impact: The shocking kidnapping and murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 sparked widespread debate about the importance and priority of women's safety and violence against women in the UK. A report commissioned by the government in September 2021 after the murder of Sarah Everard, found "inconsistencies at every level in how the police respond to violence against women, girls and victims" – a view that was supported by members of the Black and ethnic minority communities in Camden following the incident. In response, VAC commissioned *Women and Girls Safety training*. Volunteers, community leaders, staff and managers from thirteen different organisations and groups were all able to attend. A translator was provided for the session which allowed several of the women's groups and marginalised communities she supports to access this vital safety information.

Effectiveness of single agency safeguarding training

A responsibility distilled by the statutory safeguarding partnership to the Learning and Development Subgroup ensures that all agencies are providing regular and good quality single agency safeguarding children training. Each year, CSCP partners complete an exercise to provide an overview of their safeguarding children training programme, priorities, and compliance figures to provide the CSCP with assurance that high quality safeguarding training is available within single agencies. Impact of this sharing of information allows single agencies to compare training programmes, identify any gaps in training provision and support the commissioning of additional courses.

Assurance was received that a high proportion of staff across the network were effectively safeguarding trained and those that were not trained, there were plans in place to address this.

Impact: To maintain connectivity with Camden schools and ensure a consistent level of safeguarding awareness, CSCP commissions Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training. This includes both refresher courses for those DSLs requiring a biannual training update and a full session to provide new DSLs with the skills and knowledge to become an effective safeguarding lead within their school setting. By providing this unique offer, the CSCP is assured that education settings understand local needs, trends and learning from incidents are widely shared. In 2023-24, the CSCP trained 93 education professionals ranging from early years providers to further education settings. Impact of this training is evidence in 100% of delegates agreeing that the training has helped them to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.

Feedback from frontline practitioners:

“ I can now understand the early signs of safeguarding and know how to apply my training to speak to the young person regarding a concern. I know the procedure of handling a safeguarding concern, including both the specific language to use when speaking to the young person, and how to get as much information about the incident as possible without asking uncomfortable questions. ”

13

CSCP financial arrangements

Partnership funding by Local Authority, Health, Police and national Probation Service has maintained similar levels to previous years. This financial year all LSCPs were awarded £47, 300 to strengthen multi-agency leadership for reform, to support the implementation of Working Together 2023 and the Children’s Social Care National Framework.



Camden local authority contributed to 66% of the income, with ICB contributing 13% and DfE grant making up 18% and the Police 2%. Partners have continued to contribute resource through their engagement at multi-agency safeguarding subgroup, assurance meetings, audits, learning reviews and through the delivery of CSCP training and workshops.

The CSCP is committed to delivering value for money outputs to ensure funding/ partnership resource is utilised with careful consideration to:

- **Efficiency:** Ensure the cost of any commission/resources is competitive to market rate, procurements standards and quality. For example, CSCP business unit performance and development is appraised and overseen by leaders, through close monitoring on the delivery of the CSCP Business Plan and workstream action plans.
- **Efficacy:** Ensure that deliverables focus on outputs and impact on improving safeguarding practice. For example, audits and review ToRs identify clear quality outputs and timelines within defined cost-parameters.
- **Evaluated:** Impact-measured: Ensure evaluation tools measure if intended outcomes are achieved, and delivering the expected results. For example, training is evaluated at 3 stages to measure impact, and audited to improve quality of delivery.
- **Equitable:** Ensure that the CSCP’s efforts encompass all segments of the local population, enabling us to verify safeguarding practices across the borough’s diverse demographics.

Breakdown of partner contributions and expenditure:**Description £**

| Description | Expenditure |
|---|------------------|
| Staffing cost: 1 CSCP Manager, 1.6 CSCP Development Officer, including maternity costs and CSCP Young Advisors x 3 (casual hours). | £171, 778 |
| Fees for Professional Services: LCSPR Independent, Reviewers , Independent Multi-Agency Auditors and Independent Scrutineer and temp/P/T Project Officer to develop arrangements. | £57, 340 |
| Multi-agency Training of training 25 courses and 2 workshops training 561 multi-agency workforce | £13, 829 |
| Other: Provisions for website hosting, development, membership to TASP maintenance, digital publications and IT software/hardware purchases. | £18, 209 |
| Total Expenditure | £260, 056 |

Income and Contributions

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Camden Local Authority | £173, 806 |
| NCL ICB | £33,450 |
| MOPAC | £5,000 |
| National Probation Service | £1,000 |
| Department for Education Grant for strengthening Multi-Agency Leadership for reform: Supporting the Implementation of Working Together and the Children's Social Care National Framework | £47, 300 |
| Total | £260, 056 |

14

Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership membership 2023-24



Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership membership 1 April 2023- 31 March 24

Statutory partner representatives

| Agency | Job title |
|--|---|
| Camden Council | DCS and Exec Director for Children and Learning |
| Camden Council | Director of Children's Prevention, Family Help and Safeguarding |
| NCL Integrated Care Board (ICB) | Director of Safeguarding |
| MPS Central North Camden & Islington BCU | Chief Superintendent / BCU Borough Commander |
| MPS Central North – Camden & Islington | Detective Superintendent |
| Camden Learning | Senior Adviser Safeguarding & Inclusion, Camden Learning |
| Camden Learning | Chief Executive Officer |

Relevant agencies

Camden Local Authority Departments

| Agency | Job title |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Camden Council | Violence Against Women and Girls Lead |
| Camden Council | Director of Public Safety |
| Camden Council | Head of Integrated Youth Services |
| Camden Council | Head of Neighbourhoods |
| Camden Council | Head of Children's Quality Assurance |
| Camden Council | Head of service SEND and Inclusion |
| Camden Public Health | Director of Health and Wellbeing |
| Camden Public Health | Consultant |

| Camden Health NHS Trusts and Services | |
|--|---|
| NCL Integrated Care Board (ICB) | Designated Nurse for Safeguarding |
| NCL Integrated Care Board (ICB) | Named GP Child Safeguarding |
| Camden and Islington Mental Health Trust | Consultant Psychiatrist |
| Central North-West London NHS Trust | Head of Safeguarding Children |
| Great Ormond Street Hospital | Chief Nurse |
| Great Ormond Street Hospital | Named Nurse |
| Great Ormond Street Hospital | Nurse Consultant Safeguarding & Named Nurse |
| Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust | Interim Safeguarding Children Lead |
| Tavistock and Portman Trust | Named Doctor, Consultant Child Psychiatrist |
| University College London Hospital | Lead for Children & Young People's (CYP) Safeguarding |
| University College London Hospitals | Consultant Paediatrician |
| Schools | |
| Fleet Primary School | Headteacher |
| William Ellis School | Headteacher |
| National Probation Service | |
| National Probation Service | Head of Service |

| Independent Scrutiny | |
|--|---|
| Independent | Independent Scrutineer |
| Independent | Young Advisors x 3 |
| Independent | Lay Members x 2 |
| Camden Council Cabinet Member | Councillor for Best Start for Children and Families |
| NSPCC Local Services - London and Southeast | Assistant Director |
| Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership Officers | |
| Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership | Service Manager |
| Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership | Development Officers x 1.6 |