**Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight in London**

**Purpose: to review oversight and coordination of activity by safeguarding partners to promote adolescent safeguarding**

**Recommendation: to develop an adolescent safeguarding oversight board reporting to the London Safeguarding Children’s Partnership executive**

**Introduction**

As a result of the risks faced by young people in London, adolescent safeguarding in the capital is a high profile and challenging activity. While accountability for safeguarding rests with local partnerships, many of the risks and responses relate to pan-London activity. Currently there is no central point of oversight or coordination for initiatives led by safeguarding partners that go beyond borough or BCU boundaries. As a result there is a plethora of activity but little coherence, meaning that there is both duplication and gaps.

**Proposal**

Developing an oversight board where partners can agree and coordinate their activities to safeguard adolescents in London offers the prospect of a more joined-up and effective response. The Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (LSCP) Executive would continue to provide strategic direction and remain the over-arching governance body in London, but would discharge its responsibilities more effectively with a dedicated sub-group to take forward key activities in relation to adolescents.

The need for dedicated multi-agency oversight and coordination is evident from the range of pan-London initiatives which are underway in 2021 (appendix 1) all of which involve multiple partners, will require sequencing of events and a shared clarity of purpose. These activities include:

* Launch and implementation of the London Child Exploitation Protocol
* Implementation of the Adolescent Safeguarding Practice Framework
* Delivery of the Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme
* Joining-up responses to child criminal exploitation and serious youth violence
* Review of the London Child Protection Procedures in relation to extra-familial harm
* Implementation of the Reducing Criminalisation of Children in Care protocol

A draft terms of reference for a Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board (ASOB) is at appendix 2. It is proposed that the first chair of the board is the ALDCS policy lead for adolescent safeguarding (Florence Kroll, DCS RB Greenwich).

There are a range of existing boards which have an interest in these and related adolescent safeguarding activities but no one board has a dedicated focus on this area and is able to bring together the overlapping strands of activity. Appendix 3 provides an initial scoping of existing structures which relate to adolescent safeguarding. The ASOB will need to be cognisant of the existing partnership architecture and communicate across these structures.

**Recommendation**

The LSCP executive establishes an Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board and receives regular reports on the programme of activity overseen by the Board.

**Ben Byrne Strategic Lead**

**ALDCS London Innovation and Improvement Alliance**

**18/02/21**

**Appendix 1**

**Adolescent Safeguarding in London in 2021**

This paper identifies the key pan-London adolescent safeguarding activities planned by partner agencies for the next 12 months, in order to ensure these are aligned and can coalesce in a shared partnership approach. There will no doubt be activity not captured in this document which will subsequently need to be incorporated.

It is striking that there are numerous initiatives with common aims of seeing children involved in extra-familial harm as, first and foremost, children, who are vulnerable and require safeguarding responses. The key challenge will be to develop shared strategic and operational approaches that balance ‘risks to’ children with ‘risk from’ (often the same) children.

**London Child Exploitation Protocol**: due to be launched in March 2021 this MPS-led protocol is jointly owned by safeguarding partners. The protocol seeks to expand the existing Pan-London CSE Protocol to incorporate wider forms of exploitation, notably child criminal exploitation, to promote a consistent ‘child-first’ response across partners dealing with children who experience forms of exploitation. This shift in practice also has significant ramifications for associated work on reducing racial disparities.

**Adolescent Safeguarding Practice Framework (ASPF)**: in the course of 2019 and early 2020 a range of senior children’s services representatives from across London developed the ASPF as part of the ALDCS adolescent safeguarding priority programme. Engagement with multi-agency partners had begun in order to develop the framework as a shared partner response to safeguarding adolescents but has been put on hold because of the pandemic. The plan for 2021 is to return to shared development and implementation of the practice framework. The ASPF is available to download from the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) website [here](https://www.liia.london/download-file/874).

**Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme (TCE):** this national programme sponsored by the Department for Education aims to promote more effective strategic responses to child exploitation across local and pan-London safeguarding partners. It is proposed that the Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board’s responsibilities include acting as the steering group for the TCE programme. TCE offers external expertise and resource which can support activities such as embedding of the ASPF and Child Exploitation protocol.

**London Crime Reduction Board:** activity is underway to promote strategic join-up of child criminal exploitation and serious youth violence responses, aimed particularly at addressing racial disparities in the justice system. Black boys in London are disproportionately affected by criminal exploitation but are often viewed primarily as requiring criminal justice rather than safeguarding responses. Developing shared and coherent partnership approaches to violence and exploitation will contribute to addressing racial disparities in the justice system. The LCRB has an action plan and a working group seeking to promote this alignment of partner strategy and practice. This work will support the Mayor’s Youth Justice Disproportionality Action Plan which was launched in February 2021.

**In addition** to these significant work programmes and practice developments, there are a range of other activities which are taking place which can helpfully be aligned. These include:

**London Child Protection Procedures:** these are currently being reviewed to clarify CP responses to extra-familial harm. A working group of London’s leads for social care is shaping recommendations for the London CP Procedures Editorial Board. The aim is to provide clarity on child protection responses for harms occurring outside of the home, particularly in relation to risks from criminal exploitation, gang involvement and associated violence.

**Youth Justice Board:** a range of ‘child first (offender second)’ initiatives including a number of London pathfinder projects on resettlement, alternative to custody accommodation and diversion are being launched in 2021. More broadly the child first approach offers the potential for better integration of youth justice responses with a coherent practice framework for adolescents.

**MOPAC / Violence Reduction Unit:** a wide range of projects working at LA, sub-regional and pan-London level are supported by MOPAC and the VRU to reduce exploitation and violence and to help recovery for those who have been harmed. Effective join-up of these resources with those of local government and other partners is a key objective of the ALDCS programme and work is increasingly integrated with MOPAC / VRU for this purpose.

**Contextual Safeguarding Scale Up:** supported by VRU funding, 4 boroughs are engaged in the scale-up pilot led by the University of Bedfordshire. This programme includes an offer of support for all London boroughs to embed contextual safeguarding approaches.

**Reducing Looked After Children’s Criminalisation Protocol:** this MOPAC led work will be finalised and launched by the London Crime Reduction Board in the coming months. In common with the initiatives above this protocol promotes partnership practice which emphasises diversion, identification of trauma / vulnerability and seeks to get beyond presenting behaviour to deal with underlying causes of children’s offending.

**Transitional Safeguarding :** many London boroughs and partnerships are developing services which support young adults in recognition of the cliff-edge that 18 years of age often presents, in terms of service responses and the continuing needs for support and protection that older adolescents require. The MOPAC-led ‘transitional hub’ approach, which draws together services for 18-25, will be piloted in at least one borough this year.

**For information go to** [**www.liia.london**](http://www.liia.london) **or contact** [**ben.byrne@londoncouncils**](mailto:ben.byrne@londoncouncils)**.gov.uk**

**London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board**

***Draft* Terms of Reference**

Introduction

The London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board has been created to provide dedicated co-ordination and oversight of pan-London work to safeguard young people. The board will report to the London Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (LSCP) Executive. The chair of the oversight board will be identified on an annual basis by the LSCP executive.

Activity and Responsibilities of the Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board

* Agreement and oversight of a coordinated programme of adolescent safeguarding activity in London
* Leading and championing activities agreed by the Board
* Further develop and ember the multi-agency adolescent practice framework
* Development of a shared adolescent safeguarding data-set for London partners to support the identification of systemic gaps, trends and risks
* Oversight of the Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme in London
* Communication and reciprocal links to key safeguarding and community safety / crime reduction structures in London

Membership

The ASOB will be chaired by a senior officer identified by the LSCP executive with membership comprising:

* Local authority director of children’s services x 2 ( including policy lead for adolescent safeguarding)
* Commander / Superintendent Metropolitan Police (safeguarding and exploitation leads)
* Chief nurse (representing CCGs)
* NHS England Health and Justice London Lead
* MOPAC young people’s lead
* Voluntary and community sector x 2

Board Support and Logistics

The ASOB will meet four times a year. An officer will be identified by each of the statutory safeguarding partners to support the work of the board. The programme lead for the Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme will also be invited to attend. Secretariat support for the Board will be provided by the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance programme team.

Review

A review of the Board’s effectiveness and terms of reference should be undertaken after twelve months.

**Appendix 3**

**Adolescent Safeguarding Landscape – Initial Scoping**

**Pan-London Boards**

**London Safeguarding**

LSCP exec and board

CP Procedures group

CP managers network

MASH Managers Network

**ALDCS / London Councils**

Lead Members / Leaders / Chief Execs Committees

ALDCS and adolescent safeguarding work group

London Heads of Community Safety

Youth Justice Service Strategic Leads

**Mayor / GLA**

London Crime Reduction Board

London Criminal Justice Board

MOPAC

VRU – sub-groups / boards

GLA – CYP board

Recovery Board – Young People’s sub-group

London MAPPA Strategic Board

**Health**

London NHS Board

Health - Violence Reduction Board

**Local Boards and Resources**

**Local Partnerships**

Safeguarding Children Partnership

Violence Reduction Partnerships

Community Safety Partnerships  
Integrated Care Partnerships (Health) and sub-regional IC Systems Boards

Youth Justice Management Boards

**Local Resources Deployed Pan-London:**

Safer schools officers  
Youth problem solvers

**Other Key Stakeholders**

**Central Govt / National bodies**

MoJ

Home Office

DHSC

National Probation Service

DfE REACT teams

YJB (inc London YOS HoS group)

HMCTS

Victim Support / Services

**VCS**

Rescue and Response

St Giles

Children’s Society

Barbados

Redthread

Abianda

Safer London

Spark2life

Street Doctors

**Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme** – multi-agency oversight of programme is required

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