

BROMLEY CIVIC CENTRE, STOCKWELL CLOSE, BROMLEY BRI 3UH



THE LONDON BOROUGH  
www.bromley.gov.uk

TELEPHONE: 020 8464 3333 CONTACT: Philippa Stone

DIRECT LINE: 020 8313 4871

FAX: 020 8290 0608

DATE: Friday 30 September 2011

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER BRIEFING**

**Meeting to be held on TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2011**

### **1 QUESTIONS ON THE CYP PORTFOLIO HOLDER BRIEFING**

The Briefing comprises:

- Annual Update Report on Bromley Youth Offending Team Partnership
- Annual Report of Adoption Activity 2010-2011
- Bromley Safeguarding Children Board 2010-2011 Annual Report
- Childcare Sufficiency Report

Members and Co-opted Members have been provided with advanced copies of the briefing via email. The briefing is also available on the Council website at the following link:

<http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=559&Year=2011>

Printed copies of the briefing are available upon request by contacting Philippa Stone on 020 8313 4871 or by email at [Philippa.stone@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:Philippa.stone@bromley.gov.uk)

***Copies of the documents referred to above can be obtained from  
[www.bromley.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/meetings)***

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London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Children and Young People Portfolio Holder  
18 October 2011

**ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT ON BROMLEY YOUTH  
OFFENDING TEAM PARTNERSHIP**

Contact Officer: Kay Weiss, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Social Care  
Tel: 020 8313 4602 E-mail: [kay.weiss@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:kay.weiss@bromley.gov.uk)  
Elayne Stewart, Group Manager, Bromley Youth Offending Team  
Tel: 020 8466 3080 E-mail: [elayne.stewart@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:elayne.stewart@bromley.gov.uk)  
Chief Officer: Gillian Pearson, Director of Children and Young People Services

1. Summary

- 1.1 This is an annual report to the joint Children and Young People PDS Committee and the Public Protection and Safety PDS Committee on the progress of the Bromley Youth Offending Team (YOT) partnership during 2010/11. This brief report will be followed by a fuller report to CYP PDS and PPS PDS after the planned inspection of Bromley YOT by Her Majesty Inspectors of Probation (HMIP) in November 2011.

2. **THE BRIEFING**

2.1 **Governance**

In October 2010 it was announced that the leadership of youth justice and the specific functions undertaken by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) were being transferred solely to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The transition period is under way and it is estimated that this could be completed next year. The Youth Justice Board is currently continuing to fully support YOT partnerships during the transition period although their performance monitoring role and youth justice development support is likely to reduce in the longer term.

Locally the YOT is situated in the Children and Young People Department with direct line management of the YOT Group Manager through the Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Social Care. The YOT's two tier governance arrangements continue to be strategically and operationally managed through the Executive and Operational Board respectively. The Head of Community Safety was appointed chair of the Operational Board in April 2010 ensuring strong strategic links with the two boards and Community Safety operations. Attendance from the statutory partners and key agencies has been maintained.

## 2.2 Performance

The YOT produces performance reports for both the Executive and Operational Management Boards, the latter containing a detailed breakdown of offending activity and patterns. The Youth Justice Board continues to monitor performance and requires quarterly data reports against key performance indicators.

### **NI 111: First time entrants to the Youth Justice System (FTEs)**

The YOT partnership has a target to reduce first time entrants by 2% each year. This target has been achieved for a third consecutive year. In 2008/09 there were 315 FTEs, in 2009/10 there were 203 and in 2010/11 there were 138. This downward trend looks set to continue as in the first quarter of 2011/12 there were only 20 first time entrants. The YOT police officer stringently manages Merlin notifications via the PENY system and the partnership is confident that its performance data is an accurate analysis of first time entrants activity in the borough, with the exception of notifications from out of borough first time entrants, an issue that all YOTs experience.

The introduction of Triage in October 2010 (a scheme which diverts young people who have not previously offended out of the criminal justice system), has had a significant impact on first time entrants. There were 121 cases referred to YOT between December 2010 and 30 August 2011. In these 121 cases only 5 young people reoffended. A success rate of 96%.

### **NI 19: Rate of proven re-offending by young people who offend**

Good progress has also been made in this area. In 2009/10 the improvement rate was 1% (i.e. target was 108 actual 107) in 2010/11 the improvement rate was 21% (i.e. target was 105 actual 85).

### **NI 43: Young people receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody**

	<b>Total No of disposals</b>	<b>Sentenced to custody</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Qtr 1 2011/12</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6%</b>

The Bromley YOT target for young people being sentenced to custody is 5%. During 2010/2011 there were 15 custody sentences; this represents a reduction of 7 compared with the same period previous year. As you can see, the total number of court disposals has also gone down. All custodial sentences are reviewed by the YOT to see if an alternative sentencing could have been offered and the YOT continues to discuss with the courts any sentencing we have concerns about. However, it is considered that the seriousness of the offences of the young people concerned make community sentencing as an alternative unlikely.

## **NI 45 : Engagement by young people who offend in suitable education, training and employment**

In 2009/10 there were 78% of young people in education, training or employment. This is higher than the Youth Justice National Indicator family (comparator) performance. Performance in this area fell in 2010/11 to 73%. The target is 90%.

The young people who are entrenched NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) is primarily in the 16+ cohort. The decline in performance comes at a time when the dedicated YOT Connexions Worker was deleted as a result of Government cuts to grant funding. A number of actions are being put in place to reverse the small, but concerning downward trend.

### **2.3 Workforce and Organisational Development**

The workforce has continued to remain relatively stable throughout 2010/11 although there has recently been more use of locum staff to cover some vacancies pending savings required as part of the council wide requirement to make 28% savings as well as changes and reductions to Youth Justice Board Grant funding of 10% in April 2011. These savings have necessitated the deletion of the dedicated YOT Head of Service post in April 2011, the ending of the Youth Inclusion and Support Programme short term contract posts (YISP), and the deletion of the dedicated YOS Connexions post, also in April 2011. The YOT's secondment arrangements with statutory partners have continued to be appropriately supported.

The service continues to access relevant Youth Justice Board training to ensure that YOT Officers are equipped to undertake their tasks. The service has continued to use its internal audit process to assist YOT Officers development and provide relevant material on safeguarding and risk management.

The service team is currently being reviewed and realigned to meet the likely requirements of the Government Green paper, 'Breaking the Cycle'. It is also being brought together under one umbrella with the recently streamlined Integrated Youth Service as part of the Children and Young People Services restructure commencing 1 October 2011. In future, YOT will be managed alongside Integrated Youth Services to form an Integrated Specialist Youth Service.

The Green Paper 'Breaking the Cycle' has completed its consultation process and will be implemented in phases commencing November 2012. The Green Paper places an emphasis on prevention, early intervention, keeping young people out of custody as well as payment by results. There has been some discussion regarding the implementation of "Breaking the Cycle" with members of the Operational Board. The Youth Offending Team will liaise with all relevant partners to ensure that they are up-to-speed and are aware of any implications to their service delivery nearer the time of implementation.

The Triage service was developed in October 2010 with the support of Community Safety funding. It has had a very significant and positive impact on reducing first time entrants to the criminal justice system and will be further developed in 2011 to include those young people who may have previously received a final warning or reprimand. This service has been wholly funded from the YOT budget in 2011/12 and will become part of the establishment in the future realigned service. A number of youth offending teams and police have approached Bromley to look at our Triage model prior to implementing theirs. Bromley Youth Offending Team has acknowledged the critical role of Bromley Police in the successful development and joint working of Triage.

The Youth Offending Team has continued to maintain its relationship with the Courts, the service has participated in awareness/training for the youth bench, attendance at youth court users groups, and court users groups. The youth bench continues to complete quality assurance feedback on pre-sentencing reports, which enables the Youth Offending Team to respond more rapidly to the needs of the court when reviewing service delivery.

Locally changes to Youth Court arrangements will mean that from 2 January 2012 Lewisham and Bromley will be sharing the Bromley Youth Court. At weekends, the Bromley Youth Court will become the main court for the South East London Boroughs of Bromley, Lewisham, Bexley and Greenwich. Negotiations are currently taking place to agree a cross-borough protocol on how best to service the weekend Court, and manage the week day Court. The four boroughs will move to one working together protocol with the Court and liaise to ensure systems and capacity reflect the needs and activity of all partners.

The Youth Offending Team is expecting to participate in the Integrated Offender Manager (IOM) process when it commences in Bromley.

#### **2.4 Her Majesty Inspectors of Probation (HMIP)**

The YJB implemented a revised performance improvement framework in 2010 which required the YOT partnership to complete a capacity and capability self-assessment. The assessment was validated by the Youth Justice Board London Regional Team during their visit in April 2010. The YJB concluded that the self assessment demonstrated the partnership is performing adequately against the youth justice national indicators and has a good capacity to sustain and improve its performance.

Her Majesty Inspectors of Probation (HMIP) will be undertaking a series of planned inspections across London in 2011 and will be visiting Bromley YOT for one week commencing 21 November 2011. The focus of the inspection is a core case work inspection, which will also look at the quality of offence focus interventions and victim work. A YOT Inspection Action Plan has been developed and is being progressed.

Unlike previous HMIP inspections of Youth Offending Team, this inspection will concentrate on case management and is a core case inspection. The main focus will be on case management and will address risk of harm to others, likelihood of reoffending, safeguarding, protecting the public by minimising risk of harm to others, achievement of outcomes and sustaining outcomes. It is the Children and Young People Services understanding that no senior officers or members of the Youth Offending Team partnership will be interviewed as part of the process. The service will have an opportunity to share with HMIP (as a part of the advance disclosure) the joint work that is being undertaken with partners. The Youth Offending Team Operational Manager for Court and Community will be trained by Her Majesty Inspectors of Probation (HMIP) as a local assessor and will be involved in the inspection of one London YOT. The learning from this training should assist in the ongoing service development post inspection.

The Youth Offending Team has identified funding from the Youth Justice Board specifically for Restorative Justice Training, in advance of the green paper which will place a greater emphasis on Restorative Justice and victim engagement. As a consequence all case workers and some specialist Officers will receive training in this area.

Bromley is one of the pilot borough's for the Youth to Adult transition (Y2A). This is a project that is supported by London Probation Trust, Youth Justice Board and the Ministry of Justice. The aim of the project is to improve the way transfer information is shared with the Probation Department when young people transfer from the Youth Offending Team to Probation. On completion of the pilot the process will be embedded across London.

### **3. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 All matters in this report contribute to the priorities identified in Building a Better Bromley 2008–2011, Bromley's Children's Partnership Plan 2011, Community Safety Strategy 2008-11, and the Youth Justice Board Performance Improvement Framework.

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London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Children and Young People Portfolio Holder  
18 October 2011

**ANNUAL REPORT OF ADOPTION ACTIVITY 2010 - 2011**

Contact Officer: Kay Weiss, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Social Care  
Tel: 020 8313 4062 E-mail: [kay.weiss@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:kay.weiss@bromley.gov.uk)  
Ian Leadbetter, Head of Social Care, Care and Resources  
Tel : 020 8313 4116 E-mail: [ian.leadbetter@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:ian.leadbetter@bromley.gov.uk)

Chief Officer: Gillian Pearson, Director of Children and Young People Services

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Adoption Agency Regulations (2005) require that all Adoption Agencies provide an annual report of their key functions, the year's activity and the key objectives for the following year together with the Adoption Agency's updated '*Statement of Purpose*'. There is an expectation that the report is presented to Members for consideration and approval.

2. **THE BRIEFING**

- 2.1 The Adoption Agency Regulations (2005) require that all Adoption Agencies provide an annual report of their key functions, the year's activity and the key objectives for the following year together with the Adoption Agency's updated '*Statement of Purpose*'.
- 2.2 This report provides an account of the work of Bromley Adoption Agency during the financial year 2010/11.
- 2.3 The Bromley Adoption Agency carries out its work through the Adoption Panel and the Safeguarding and Social Care Division, and in particular the Adoption Team, who provide a borough wide service within the Social Care Division of the Children and Young People Service. The Agency has well-developed links with other borough wide services and key stakeholders. The work of the Adoption Team contributes to improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough and is in line with the priorities outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 2.4 The work of the Bromley Adoption Agency is governed by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 [ACA 2002] which was fully implemented in December 2005.

- 2.5 The Adoption Team undertakes a number of core duties. These include:
- adoption and post adoption support services;
  - locating prospective adoptive families for Bromley's children, where adoption is the plan;
  - recruitment and preparation of prospective adopters;
  - provision of advice and guidance to prospective adopters and social workers from Safeguarding and Social Care;
  - provision of birth records counselling;
  - intercountry and step parent adoption;
  - independent support to birth families affected by adoption;
  - attending meetings of the South East Adoption consortium, British Agencies of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) and London Councils adoption and fostering agencies.
- 2.6 Adoption and post adoption support continues to be an area of work to develop and expand in order to meet the needs of adopters, children who have been adopted and the requirements of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- 2.7 The service is continually reviewing the recruitment of adopters to ensure that it reflects the profile of children that need to be placed for adoption. With consortium colleagues the service will maintain a focus on the need to recruit more BME adopters, adopters for older children, large sibling groups and children with complex needs. There will also continue to be a focus on the need to have sufficient numbers of adopters for children outside of the Bromley borough. These priorities reflect the profile of children coming through for adoption and the current profile of approved adopters.
- 2.8 Appendix 1 provides Members with the Annual Adoption Report 2010/2011. The report reviews progress and work around the approval of new adopters, of children placed for adoption and also details the development of adoption and post adoption support services.
- 2.9 During 2010/11 there were 18 (unit) adopters and 25 children presented to adoption panel for approval. 7 children were placed for adoption during 2010/11.
- 2.10 Appendix 2 is the updated Bromley Adoption agency's '*Statement of Purpose*', September 2011.
- 2.11 The Annual Report is a statutory requirement under Adoption Agency Regulations 2005.
- 2.12 The Adoption Minimum Standards were revised in 2011. The Practice Guidance on the Adoption and Children Act 2002 was revised in February 2011.

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT ON ADOPTION ACTIVITY  
2010-2011



# **ANNUAL REPORT ON ADOPTION ACTIVITY 2010-2011**

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## **1. BROMLEY ADOPTION AGENCY**

- 1.1 The Adoption Agency Regulations (2005) require that all Adoption Agencies provide an annual report of their key functions, the year's activity and the key objectives for the following year.
- 1.2 The Bromley Adoption Agency carries out its work through the Adoption Panel and the Safeguarding and Social Care Division, and in particular the Adoption Team. Full details of the services provided are detailed in the Adoption Agency's 'Statement of Purpose' This report will provide detail of the adoption work undertaken from April 2010–March 2011, including information on adoption activity and compliance with the national adoption standards.
- 1.3 The work of Bromley Adoption Agency is governed by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 [ACA 2002] which was fully implemented in December 2005.

## **2. BROMLEY ADOPTION TEAM**

- 2.1 The Bromley Adoption Service is a borough wide service managed within the Social Care Division of the Children and Young People Service. It has developed close links with other borough wide services and key stakeholders. The work of the Adoption Service contributes to improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough and reflects the priorities outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 2.2 The Adoption Team is responsible for all the adoption work undertaken within the Department. This involves domestic, inter-country and step-parent adoption; birth parent counselling; post placement and post adoption support and a range of intermediary services.
- 2.3 The Adoption Team, managed by the Group Manager, sits within the Care and Resources service area. The Adoption Team has a total of 9.0 FTE managerial and social work staff. Additionally the team has 2.0 FTE administrative staff who administer the Adoption Panel, letterbox contact arrangements, and archiving of files.
- 2.4 The managerial and social work staff within the Adoption Team take lead responsibility for different aspects of the service, namely adoption support services, family finding, and the recruitment and preparation of prospective adopters. The team provides a duty service for prospective adopters and to social workers from Safeguarding and Social Care. Team members take lead roles in providing other services such as birth records counselling, adoption support work and inter-country and step-parent adoption. The Group Manager acts as the Agency Adoption Adviser and directly manages staff that have a dedicated role in providing post adoption support services including letterbox, support to direct contact arrangements and independent support to birth families affected by adoption. The Deputy Manager, directly manages the staff involved in family finding for children and adopter recruitment. One of the two adoption support senior practitioners is the nominated Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA).
- 2.5 The Adoption Agency Advisor plays a key role in ensuring the effective running of the Adoption Panel, providing a quality assurance role in relation to reports being prepared for panel and for providing specialist advice to staff within Safeguarding and Social Care in relation to adoption work.
- 2.6 Bromley continues to be a member of the South East Adoption Consortium. The Group Manager attends the quarterly meetings of the Consortium Managers as well as representing Bromley at the British Agencies of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) and London Councils quarterly meetings of London adoption and fostering agencies.

### **3. CHILDREN APPROVED FOR ADOPTION**

3.1 In 2010/11 there were 25 children presented to the Adoption Panel compared to 14 in 2009/10. The higher figure reflects the steady increase in the number of panel bookings for children in 2010/11. The likely increase of children needing adoption needs to be seen in the context of the overall increase in the numbers of looked after children in Bromley.

### **4. CHILDREN MADE SUBJECT TO ADOPTION ORDERS**

4.1 Twelve children were made subject to Adoption Orders in 2010/11.

### **5. CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION IN 2010/11**

- 5.1 There were seven children placed with prospective adopters during the year. Five of the children placed with adopters were White British; one dual heritage and one black child. Four of the children were placed with in-house adopters, two with other local authority adoption agencies and one with a voluntary adoption agency.
- 5.2 The Team continues to strive towards recruiting more BME adopters and adopters for older children and sibling groups. These two areas again remain priority recruitment target areas for 2010/11 in terms of putting more energy into focusing on current children waiting for adoptive families and children who are in the early stages of the adoption planning process. We have therefore increased the number of workshops/preparation groups from 2 to 3 per year. We continue to recruit families who live outside of the borough to reduce the possibility of parents establishing the whereabouts of their birth children. Demand for placements for white babies aged between 0-2 years continues to be low and as a consequence they are not a priority area for recruitment. By focusing on these specific areas of recruitment, the Adoption Team ensures that any purchase of inter-agency placements is targeted on the 'harder to place' child.

### **6. PROFILE OF ADOPTERS**

- 6.1 The number of prospective adopters approved during the year was 18 units which is above the team's performance target of 15.
- 6.2 The ethnicity of the 18 units of adopters was predominantly White/British (28); and 5 were from BME backgrounds.
- 6.3 There were 7 new initial step-parent adoption enquires in 2010/11.

### **7. NATIONAL ADOPTION STANDARDS TIMESCALES**

- 7.1 The Adoption Agency is required to monitor its performance against a range of timescales. The timescales relate to the decision to place a child for adoption, assessing and approving prospective adopters and the proposal to place a child with particular adopters.
- 7.2 Of the 7 children placed with prospective adopters, as outlined in paragraph 4.1, 6 were placed within the required statutory timescale of 12 months from the approval of the plan for adoption. The reason for one child being placed outside of the 12 month timescale (within 13 months) was because of health concerns regarding the birth parents.
- 7.3 All completed Child Permanence, Prospective Adopter and Adoption Placement reports were presented to Panel within the required timescale; all agency decisions and notifications were also made as required.

- 7.4 The agency met the timescale in relation to sending out an information pack to inquirers within 5 working days in 90% of cases and in 98.5% of cases inviting prospective adopters to an information session.

## **8. THE ADOPTION CONSORTIUM**

- 8.1 The South East Adoption Consortium comprises Bexley, Medway, Bromley, Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and Kent. The consortium aims to maximise placement choice for children and to minimise delay in family finding across the consortium authorities by sharing prospective adopters.
- 8.2 The quarterly management meetings attended by the Adoption Group Manager are used to clarify and develop policy and practice issues across the consortium. The sharing of local practice guidance and procedures facilitates good working relationships and avoids duplication of work across the consortium. A key theme of the discussions during 2010/11 has been the need to increase the recruitment of adopters for older children and Black and Minority Ethnic [BME] adopters across the whole of the consortium.
- 8.3 Approved adopters are added to the consortium database every 20 days after their approval thus ensuring that family finding workers have access to a wider pool of adopters for the children they are finding families for.
- 8.4 There have been 5 practitioner meetings during 2010/11 where social workers meet to discuss issues related to adoption practice. One of the meetings held in Bromley was a very useful discussion around confidentiality and the impact of social networking sites on adoption.
- 8.5 The Adoption Support Services Advisors across the consortium also meet regularly to ensure that adopters within the consortium receive a good and consistent standard of service from each of the 6 authorities.

## **9. RECRUITMENT AND PREPARATION OF ADOPTERS**

- 9.1 The Adoption Service received 170 enquiries to the duty service throughout the year. Six information sessions were held throughout the year. These events receive considerable support from Bromley's experienced adopters who attend to ensure that all prospective adopters have the opportunity for individual discussion not only with a member of staff but also with experienced adopters.
- 9.2 The Adoption Team held two sets of preparation groups during 2010/11. The groups comprise an initial workshop entitled '*Adoption : Is this the Right Journey for Me?*' followed four weeks later by three preparation group sessions looking at all aspects of the adoption process. The preparation groups provide advice, information and individual counselling where necessary to ensure that people can make an informed decision on whether to make a formal application to adopt a child.
- 9.3 The recruitment strategy for the service is based on the profile of the children in care in Bromley and in the Consortium that need to be placed for adoption and also takes account of the number of approved adopters waiting for a placement. Most enquiries are from adopters that are interested in adopting a child under 6 years, often younger and from childless individuals or couples. Priority in relation to recruitment would be given to BME applicants, or applicants that are interested in child aged over six years, in sibling groups of three or more children or children with complex needs.

## **10. INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION**

- 10.1 The Adoption Team is responsible for providing a service to people living within the borough that wish to consider intercountry adoption. Through membership of the Intercountry Adoption Centre (IAC) additional information on intercountry adoption; preparation groups for first and second time adopters and training is provided.
- 10.2 During 2010/11 there were 10 initial inquiries about intercountry adoption which resulted in three initial interviews. There was one intercountry assessment completed during this period.

## **11. ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES**

- 11.1 Since the implementation of the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 there has been a legal duty on the local authority to provide adoption support services to both adoptive families, adopted children and birth families.
- 11.2 There has been an ongoing increase in the demand for such services, as well as an increase in the complexity of such cases. The past 12 months have seen a number of well established adoptive families in crisis, leading to 2 children from 2 adoptive families becoming looked after.
- 11.3 There have been additional stresses placed on the adoption and post adoption support services due to a lack of capacity within the local CAMHS services to meet therapeutic needs.
- 11.4 A consequence of the increased demand for worker's time in relation to adoption support, means there has been an increase in waiting times for allocation and completion of adoption support assessments, access to information, intermediary services and assessment times for new adopter assessments.
- 11.5 All the staff within the Adoption Team is involved in some way with adoption support. At the end of March 2011 there were 41 active open adoption support cases that were allocated within the team [this excludes contact work, work with adopted adults and adoption support undertaken by assessing social workers].
- 11.6 The service also provides a duty service to respond to enquiries from adoptive families. These may be from Bromley adopters, adopters from other agencies living in the borough or adopters that have relocated into the borough. Some enquiries involve signposting to other services whilst others involve a more intensive assessment of adoption support services.

## **12. SUPPORT GROUPS**

- 12.1 The service is currently running drop-in support groups in the day time for approved adopters with or without children. The service links with other support groups including the support for BME adopters run by BAAF in London. The service ran two very successful social events for adoptive families during the year.

## **13. EDUCATION SUPPORT**

- 13.1 Support to adopters around education comes from the Safeguarding and Social Division extending the service from the LAC Education team and from Bromley's Parent Partnership worker.



## **14. POST ADOPTION CONTACT**

- 14.1 Almost all children being placed for adoption retain some form of contact with their birth families and the Adoption & Children Act 2002 emphasises the importance of supporting such arrangements. This area of work continues to be a significant pressure for the service and one which merits a high level of input as contact managed well can be a critical factor in the successful placement and emotional well-being of the adopted child. It is clear that arrangements for contact have to be kept under review and may need to change and adapt as the child gets older or if there are significant changes within the birth family network.
- 14.2 At the end of March 2011, 176 letterbox contact arrangements were in place. The letterbox coordinator provides the initial point of contact for information, advice and support to all those involved in this indirect contact between adopted child and their birth families. If counselling or intensive support is required they will refer onto the ASSA.
- 14.3 The service is working with 31 children in adoptive families where direct contact arrangements with birth families are in place. The contact is mostly with siblings, but there is an increase in the number of direct contact arrangements involving both birth parents and grandparents.

## **15. WORK WITH BIRTH FAMILIES**

- 15.1 Under the National Adoption Standards it is the responsibility of local authority adoption agencies to ensure that birth families affected by adoption have access to independent advice, information and support when the plan for the child becomes adoption. This is provided in Bromley through the Independent Adoption Development Worker for Birth Families. During 2010/11, 28 new referrals were received and ongoing services were being received by a total of 51 individuals or families. A very successful birth parent's support group continued to meet on a monthly basis.
- 15.2 The take up of this service is increasing slowly and this reflects the fact that birth families are often still in dispute with the local authority about the plans for adoption at the time they are referred. The number of referrals increased in 2010/11. The Adoption Development worker is continuing to promote her role with social workers in the children social work teams so that she can support more birth families. Birth families are also provided with details of agencies who can offer support other than the local authority but experience suggests that some birth family members only feel able to take up this type of support sometimes years after the adoption has concluded.
- 15.3 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced the provision of an access to information and intermediary service for birth relatives of adopted adults (to complement that existing for adult adoptees) which would trace the adoptee and seek their views on contact. The Adoption Team have limited resources to meet the needs of this service.
- 15.4 Any birth relative who requests an intermediary service is provided with support and advice and their details are added to the waiting list. They are also given the details of intermediary services offered by NORCAP. Bromley Adoption Service pays an annual subscription to NORCAP, a voluntary organisation which helps adults affected by adoption.

## **16. BIRTH RECORDS COUNSELLING**

- 16.1 The local authority has a legal responsibility to provide a birth records counselling service. There were 20 new referrals from adopted adults during 2010/11. There is a waiting time of up to 12 months for this service although people adopted before 1975 are given priority because of the possible age of their birth parents if they wish to locate them. In total at the end of March 2011 there were 18 active birth records cases. The adoption support senior practitioners take the lead role in providing this service.

## **17. ADOPTION ALLOWANCES**

- 17.1 The total Adoption Team Budget is £745,230 for 2010/11. Expenditure on Adoption Allowances during 2010/11 was approximately £285,600. This was primarily to pay regular adoption allowance payments in relation to 42 children. There were in addition a number of one off payments made towards the costs of introductions and settling in expenses.

## **18. TRAINING**

- 18.1 Most staff within the service are involved in delivering preparation groups for prospective adopters or input into support groups or post adoption training. Follow up training for newly approved adopters on attachment, contact, and explaining adoption to children was also delivered by team members. Specific training has been provided to area team staff on the preparation of child's permanence reports.
- 18.2 All Adoption Team members have access to relevant training in order to maintain and update knowledge and skills.

## **19. ADOPTION PANEL**

- 19.1 It is the responsibility of the service to ensure the effective running of the Panels and the Agency Advisor is responsible for effective operation of the Adoption Panel, agenda setting, the quality assurance of panel papers and takes a lead in the recruitment of panel members. Panel contributes significantly to the positive work of the Safeguarding and Social Care Division in planning for children and providing a key quality assurance role. The Adoption Panel has met 15 times throughout 2010/11. The Panels have met as planned and have been quorate. Panel training took place on Foetal Alcohol Syndrome and children on the autistic spectrum. This was joint training with the Adoption Team. Panel is kept up to date with practice and legal developments by the advisors to Panel.
- 19.2 During 2010/11 the service has ensured that Panel members' records are maintained to National Minimum Standards, and that all members of the panel have been subject to an annual review and that their CRB check is current.

## **20. DISRUPTIONS**

- 20.1 During 2010/11 there were no disruptions of Bromley children placed for adoption. There were 2 adoption breakdowns of established adoptions where orders were obtained years previously. One of which related to a child placed by another local authority with adopters living in Bromley and where the Bromley Adoption Team were providing adoption support services.

## **21. COMPLAINTS/COMPLIMENTS/ALLEGATIONS**

- 21.1 There were three new complaints received by the Adoption Team in 2010/11. There were seven compliments about the Adoption service and individual members of staff received during the year.

## **22. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- 22.1 Adoption and post adoption support continues to be an area of work to develop and expand as most adopters continue to maintain a link with the service post adoption.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES**

**BROMLEY ADOPTION AGENCY**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**September 2011**



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# 1. Aims and objectives of the Local Authority in relation to the adoption and adoption support service

## 1.1 Mission Statement

We believe that every child should be able to experience a secure and happy family life, being parented by a loving adult or adults. We strive to achieve this through providing a responsive and effective service to individuals and families from all backgrounds, involved in and affected by adoption. We also believe that our responsibility does not end at the point of adoption.

## 1.2 Aims

### 1.2.1 The Department will aim to:

- § provide a high quality adoption and adoption service where all people making contact with the service are responded to promptly and treated courteously and fairly and be given equal consideration in line with the policy and principles set out in the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy Statement. The Department aims to provide a comprehensive adoption and adoption support service in co-operation with other Council Departments; The South East Adoption Consortium (SEAC) Partner Agencies; Voluntary Adoption Agencies; local Adoption Support Agencies; the local Health Authorities; other key stakeholders and service users and to ensure there is a coherent local service to meet identified needs;
- § achieve positive outcomes connected to the '*Every Child Matters*' agenda primarily for children, and also for other service users in its adoption and adoption support services;
- § provide a comprehensive adoption and adoption support service to meet the needs of children, birth families, adoptive parents and adopted adults which will be planned and delivered in conjunction with key partners and stakeholders and service users, as identified at 1.2.1;
- § ensure that the needs, wishes and safety of the looked after/adopted child/adopted adult are at the centre of the adoption process;
- § as far as is reasonably possible, to provide practical support and services which will enable the child to return to, or remain with his/her family of origin where this is being requested, except in those circumstances where it is considered that it would be detrimental to the child's welfare due to issues of significant harm.

1.2.2 In making plans for the permanent placement of looked after children the Department's first aims will be:-

- (a) to ensure the child's welfare is safeguarded and promoted throughout their childhood and
- (b) to ensure that children are securely attached to carers capable of providing safe and effective care for the duration of childhood.

1.2.3 The Department will aim to:

- § ensure that people interested in becoming adoptive parents will be welcomed without prejudice, responded to promptly and given clear information about the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval process. They will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process;
- § match children with approved adopters who can meet their identified individual needs and offer them a stable and permanent home. Information, advice, support, and where appropriate financial assistance, will be provided to achieve positive outcomes for the service user and most particularly for children in terms of a successful and lasting placement;
- § provide birth parents and birth family members affected by adoption with a service that recognises the lifelong implications of adoption and to ensure that they are treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process;
- § recruit suitably qualified and experienced people to deliver the adoption and adoption support service, act as members of the Adoption Panel and provide service as consultants and advisers and will ensure compliance with all required safety checks;
- § ensure that the adoption and adoption support service is resourced to meet the above aims and that the premises from which the adoption and adoption support service operates are fit for their purpose.

### 1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 The Department will ensure that the above aims are met through compliance with the specific objectives stated in:

- (a) National Minimum Standards in Adoption 2011
- (b) Addendum to the National Minimum Standards 2005;
- (c) National Minimum Standards for Adoption Support Agencies 2005;

#### 1.4 Facilities of the Adoption Service

- 1.4.1 The adoption and adoption support service is provided through staff from within the Department's Safeguarding and Social Care Division Social Work Teams, and in particular staff within the Adoption Team. The District Social Work teams are based in the Old Town Hall; the Looked After Team, Children's with Disabilities Team and Adoption Team are based in the Civic Centre in Bromley.
- 1.4.2 The offices of the Adoption Team are located at the Civic Centre where there is access to interview, meeting and training rooms.
- 1.4.3 Plans are in place for the Adoption Service to transfer onto CARE FIRST, the main customer data base and information system, in Autumn 2011.
- 1.4.4 The Adoption Agency has formally appointed Agency Medical and Legal Advisors whose responsibilities include advising the Adoption Panel and offering advice and consultation to social work staff, other professionals and adopters.
- 1.4.5 The adoption and adoption support service makes use of other Council Departments, as required, to support planning and delivery of services.
- 1.4.6 The Department is a member of The South East Adoption Consortium (SEAC) where the six local authority members actively work together to improve adoption practice and through sharing resources reduce delays for children requiring adoption.
- 1.4.7 The Department holds membership of the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), the Intercountry Adoption Centre and Adoption UK. The Department through the Adoption and Fostering teams is an active member of the London Council's group on Adoption and Fostering and London Region Adoption & Fostering Officers Group.

#### 1.5 Purpose of the Adoption Team

The Adoption Team is responsible for all the adoption and adoption support work undertaken with adopted children and adults, adopters and birth family members affected by adoption within the Department. This involves domestic, inter-country and step-parent adoption; the provision of intermediary services including birth record counselling work; adoption support including the provision of an independent service to birth parents and birth family members affected by adoption.

## **2. Adoption of Statement of Purpose**

- 2.1 The Statement of Purpose was placed before the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder on 7 September 2010 for formal approval.

2.2 The Children and Young People Portfolio Holder will, at least annually, consider and review the Statement of Purpose to ensure that it continues to meet all requirements of the adoption service making any necessary updates and modifications as required.

2.3 The Statement of Purpose will normally accompany the Annual Adoption Agency Report presented to the Portfolio Holder.

### **3. Services provided by the Agency**

3.1 A summary of the services provided by the Department's adoption service is listed below:

- § Advice and information on domestic, inter-country, step-parent adoption and non-agency adoption, including duty appointments for residents of LB Bromley.
- § Bi-monthly information meetings for people interested in domestic adoption.
- § Initial home visits by an adoption social worker experienced in inter-country adoption work for those people wanting to adopt from abroad.
- § Comprehensive preparation and assessment for prospective domestic and inter-country adopters (assessments completed by Adoption Team staff or Family Placement Staff Bank Social Workers).
- § Undertaking the Court Reports and social work visits in step-parent, inter-country adoption and non-agency adoption applications.
- § Individual adoption support Social Workers who work in partnership with the allocated Social Worker for the child(ren) from the point of adopter approval to after the making of the adoption order and the ending of statutory adoption support where this is the responsibility of the Agency.
- § Allocated Social Worker from the adoption team to family find for individual or sibling groups of children.
- § Planned general and specific recruitment programmes for adopters, individual and specific groups of children.
- § Advice, information and the provision of intermediary services (including birth record counselling, tracing and facilitating reunion) to adopted adults seeking information about their adoption and birth families and to birth family members affected by adoption seeking to make contact with a family member who has been adopted.
- § The provision of intermediary services will be limited to adopted adults who live in the borough.
- § The provision of intermediary services will be limited to birth family members affected by adoption through residence in the borough.



- § The provision of an independent adoption service to birth parents and birth families affected by adoption including information, advice, support, assistance with maintaining indirect contact, counselling where it is planned that a child is placed for adoption and the provision of a regular support group to birth parents whose child has been placed for adoption or adopted.
- § Post placement and post adoption support through:
- management of the confidential letter box service;
  - individual social work support to adoptive families;
  - therapeutic support to children and their adopters through use of 'Theraplay'; referral local CAMHS service; or where assessed as appropriate purchase of individual packages of therapeutic support;
  - providing advice and information signposting service for adoption support services via the Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA);
  - adoption support and training – adopters support group meets bi-monthly; series of workshops on attachment held annually, social events including an annual adoptive families picnic; and a series of training workshops;
  - individual work with children placed for adoption or adopted and the development of groups for adopted children and young people;
  - financial support in the form of single payments and on-going, regular payments (adoption allowances)
  - newsletters.
- § Bromley Adoption Panel which fulfils statutory functions as required and offers advice and consultation to social work staff on adoption matters.
- § Services of Medical and Legal Advisers for advice, information and consultation in addition to their specific roles and functions.
- § Membership of The South East Adoption Consortium (SEAC), British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), Adoption UK; Intercountry Adoption Centre; ALG adoption and fostering group; London Region Adoption & Fostering Officers Group and South East Post Adoption Network (SEPAN).

**4. Details of the Manager of the Adoption Service**

- 4.1 Name: Marcia Brown
- 4.2 Address: Adoption Team, Joseph Lancaster Hall, Civic Centre,  
Rafford Way, Bromley, BR1 3UH
- 4.3 Telephone: 020 8313 4185
- 4.4 Fax: 020 8313 4086
- 4.5 Email: marcia.brown@bromley.gov.uk
- 4.6 Relevant Qualifications: BA (Hons), CQSW Trent University 1991, DMS  
Croydon College 2006
- 4.7 Relevant Experience: Extensive experience of recruiting and supporting  
foster carers and adopters. Most recently managed a team of social workers  
in an adoption agency.

**5. Any conditions in force in relation to registration under Part 2 of  
the Care Standards Act 2000 of the registered provider and, if  
applicable, the registered manager**

There are no conditions in force.

6. Details of the Permanent Staff employed in the Adoption Service

**PERMANENT STAFF**

Please list all staff employed permanently in the adoption service

Position or Role in the Agency	Hours Per Week	Name	Year of Appointment	Qualifications
Group Manager, Adoption	36	Ms Marcia Brown	2010	BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies, CQSW, DMS
Deputy Manager	36	Ms Dawn Gardner	2005	CQSW; Accredited fieldwork practice teacher
Senior Practitioner, Adoption	27	Ms Jenny Parkinson	2000	MSc; CQSW; PQ1, PQ Child Care Award
Senior Practitioner, Adoption	36	Ms Joy Bullen	2001	CSS (child care component), PQ1
Senior Practitioner, Adoption	18	Ms Caroline Smith	2001	MSc in Social Studies; CQSW; Practice Teacher Award: PQ1
Senior Practitioner, Adoption	36	Mr Barry Miller	2005	CQSW; Certificate in Counselling; D32/D33 NVQ Assessor Award. PQ1
Senior Practitioner, Adoption	30	Ms Enitan Kuti	2008	Dip SW and BA (Hons) in Social Work; PQ1 and Post Qualifying Award in Child Care.
Senior Practitioner, Adoption	36	Ms Anne Johnson	2005	BA: CQSW; PQ1; Currently completed first year of two post-qualifying course on adoption and attachment at Family Futures
Senior Practitioner, Adoption Support and Adoption Support Services Adviser	18	Ms Amuda Oko-Osi	2008	BA (Hons) and CQSW; PQ1

<b>Position or Role in the Agency</b>	<b>Hours Per Week</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of Appointment</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
Senior Practitioner, Adoption	21	Ms Alison Lewis	2000	CQSW and Diploma in Social Studies, 1990; PQ1
Senior Practitioner, Adoption Support	36	Ms Elaine Barrett	2003	Dip SW; BA; PQ1 and PQ Child Care Award; Theraplay Award (Introduction & Intermediate); Post graduate Child Focused Systemic Child Psychotherapy
Independent Adoption Development Worker (birth Families)	36	Ms Anna Stokes	2005	NNEB; Ante-Natal Teaching certificate (groupwork); Basic Counselling Skills Certificate; BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Developing Counselling Skills
Clerical Officer, Adoption	36	Ms Elizabeth Joseph	2008	NVQ II Computing
Letterbox Administrator	36	Ms Nicole Molloy (maternity cover)	2011	BA (Hons) Politics and Sociology

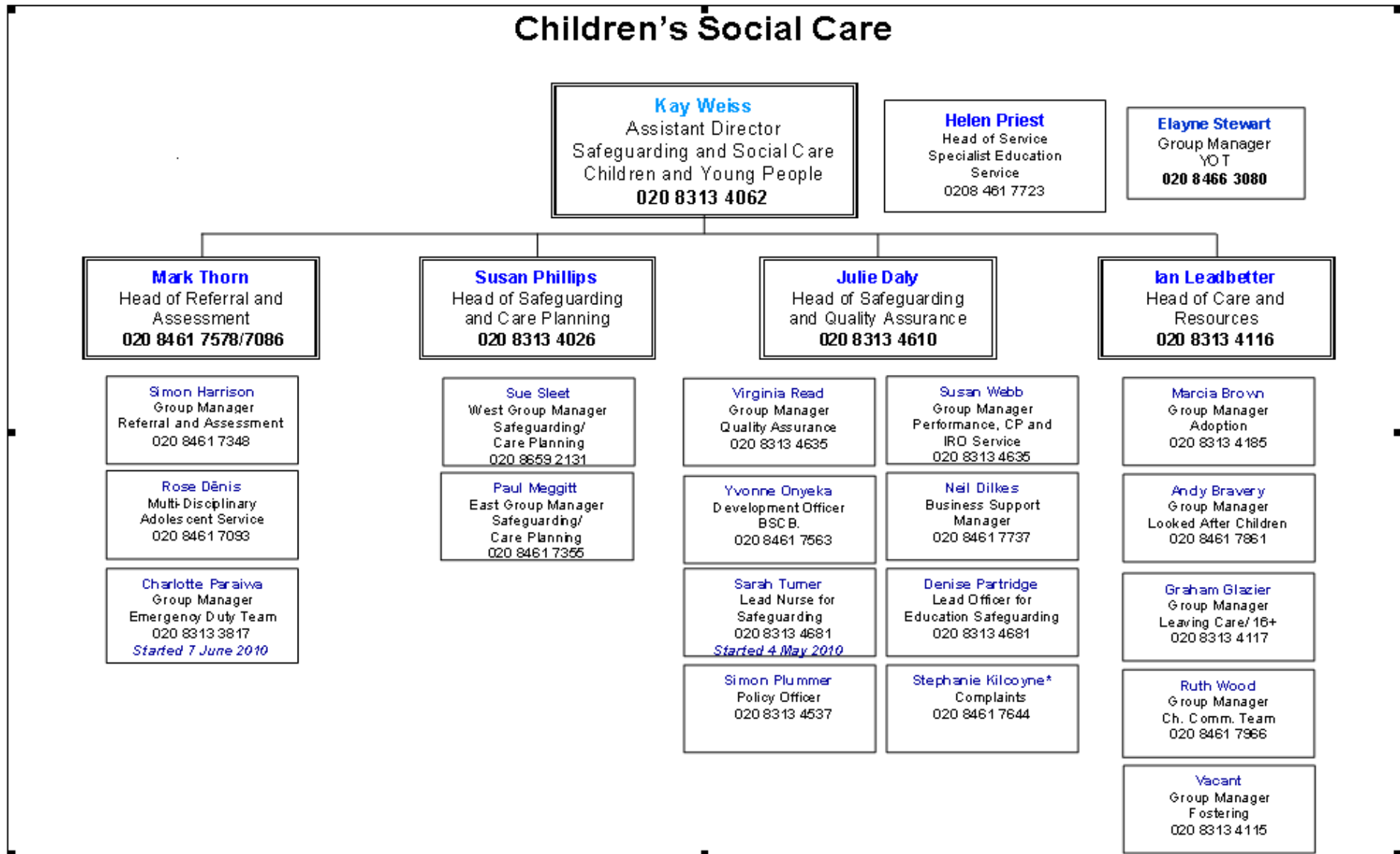
Name and position of person completing this return Ian Leadbetter, Head of Social Care, Care and Resources

Date updated: 13.09.20

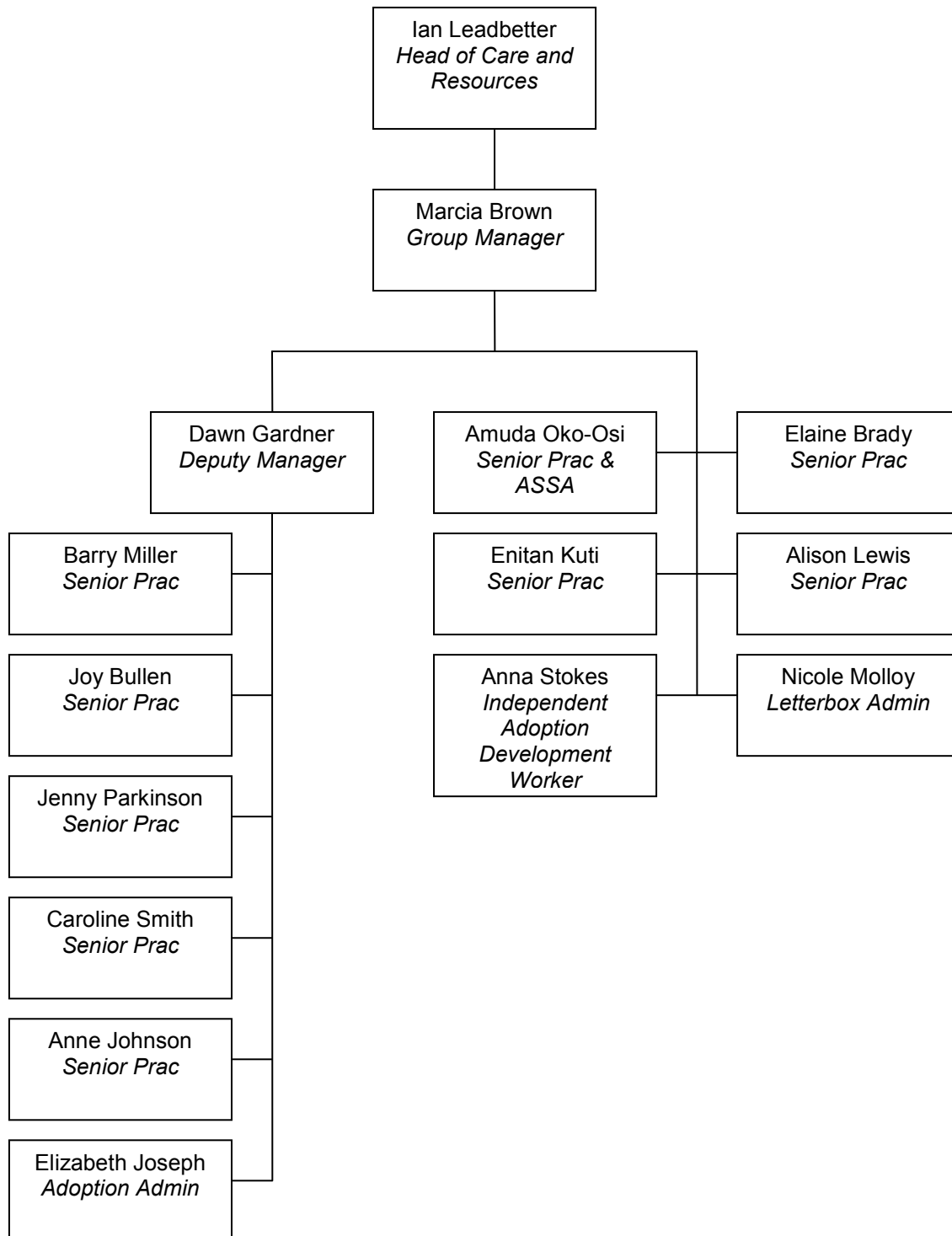
## **7. Organisational Structure of the Adoption and Adoption Support Service**

- 7.1 Bromley Children and Young People Services is one of the main Departments of Bromley Council and is divided into four Divisions – Safeguarding and Social Care; Commissioning & Children’s Education; Standards & Effectiveness in Schools and Strategic Planning, Performance & Communication.
- 7.2 The Care and Resources Section of the Safeguarding and Social Care Division is responsible for the delivery of the Bromley Adoption Service. A structure chart for the Safeguarding and Social Care Division is found at 7.6. Within Safeguarding and Social Care there are four sub-divisions – Referral and Assessment; Safeguarding - East and West; Care and Resources; and Quality Assurance and Safeguarding.
- 7.3 Social Workers for children requiring adoption or placed with adopters would mainly come from the two Safeguarding and Care Planning Teams, the Looked-After Children’s Team or the Children’s Disability Team. The Adoption Team is part of the Care and Resources Sub-Division thereby maintaining close links with the Fostering Team, the Looked after Children’s Team and 16+ Leaving Care Team. A structure chart for the Adoption Team is found at 7.6.
- 7.4 Bromley Adoption Team combines adoption and adoption support work in one team. The management structure and staff in post in adoption and adoption support is set out at 7.7.
- 7.5 The Bromley Adoption Agency is responsible for the establishing, maintaining and servicing of the Bromley Adoption Panel. The Panel in carrying out its statutory functions makes recommendations to the Agency delegated decision maker (Kay Weiss, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Social Care). The work and performance of the Adoption Panel is included in the Annual Adoption Agency Report submitted to Children and Young People Portfolio Holder normally in September of each year.

7.6 Organisational Structure chart of the Children's Social Care Division



7.6 Organisational Structure of the Adoption Team



## **8. Quality Assurance of the Adoption Service**

- 8.1 The Group Manager is currently responsible for the overall management of the Adoption Team and direct management of the adoption support service, the Deputy Manager, and administrative staff. The Deputy Manager is directly responsible for the social work staff conducting adopter assessments and family finding. Social Workers are seen in supervision on a three weekly basis and all other staff are seen four weekly. Supervision and line management practice follows the Departmental Supervision Policy and Management Standards.
- 8.2 Family Placement Staff Bank Social Workers are provided with supervision by either the Group Manager, Deputy Manager or experienced Senior Practitioners in the Adoption Team under the terms of their agreement for service and follow the same supervision practice as referred to in 8.1.
- 8.3 Copies of the signed supervision notes are placed on the relevant adopters'; child's family finding or adoption support file with any agreed action noted.
- 8.4 Files are seen, read and agreed for closure by the Group Manager, Adoption or the Deputy Group Manager.
- 8.5 The Group Manager for Adoption holds additional responsibility for advice to the Adoption Panel and in this capacity reads all reports on children and adopters and provides an important quality assurance role prior to presentation of reports at Panel including confirmation that all statutory checks of references and medical records are undertaken.
- 8.6 The Adoption Panel provides a quality assurance function which is exercised through individual recommendations on cases presented and recorded in the Panel minutes and Panel decision sheet; advice from the Medical, Legal and Panel Advisors to Panel. The production and circulation of practice points arising from the work of the Adoption Panel to Safeguarding and Social Care Staff improves practice and contributes to positive outcomes for children and their families.
- 8.7 The Group Manager, Adoption is supervised on a regular, three weekly basis by the Head of Service, Care & Resources.
- 8.8 An Annual Adoption Agency Report is produced and submitted to the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder in addition to the performance monitoring reports also received on looked after children.
- 8.9 A Permanency Monitoring Group with representation across Safeguarding and Social Care meets on a regular basis to monitor the progress of permanency planning for individual children and take ameliorative action as appropriate.
- 8.10 The Adoption Service had its last three year adoption inspection in August 2009.

## **9. Procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective adopters**

- 9.1 The information provided in this section is a summary of the procedures on the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval of prospective adopters and the support provided to adopters post approval.



## 9.2 Recruitment

The overall recruitment strategy for adopters is broadly divided into two strands. Firstly there is on-going general recruitment for adopters who will be able to meet the needs of children in Bromley and in The South East Adoption Consortium (SEAC) requiring adoption now and in the medium term (next 6-18 months). By increasing the number of approved adopters in the 'general pool' it is likely to reduce the delay in placing children for adoption. Secondly, when there are no suitable approved 'in-house' or Consortium adopters available for a child(ren), specific recruitment for that child(ren) is undertaken.

The Adoption Team, via dedicated duty time, aims to respond to all people inquiring about adoption and send them the relevant Information Pack within five working days. This information pack contains the eligibility criteria. The Duty Social Worker puts details of the initial inquiry onto CHARMS (adoption information system) and passes a copy of the initial referral to the Clerical Officer, Adoption to input onto CARE FIRST (Division's client record system).

All people inquiring about adoption are invited to the next bi-monthly Information Meeting. However depending on the priority given to recruiting particular types of adopters (for Black and Minority Ethnic children; older children; large sibling groups of children) people putting themselves forward for such children would receive a initial home visit from an adoption Social Worker – designed to encourage the inquirers to maintain their interest in adopting with Bromley.

Information meetings are held bi-monthly on a weekday evening in the Civic Centre in Bromley. Members of the Adoption Team and Bromley Adopters provide comprehensive information on adopting a child and on the adoption process. A detailed Information Pack is available.

If people want to proceed with their inquiry they are asked to complete and return a short questionnaire by a specified date. Everyone taking forward their inquiry has an initial home visit by an Adoption Social Worker. The adoption process is explained in detail along with information about children needing adoption and how people are selected and given priority for the workshop and preparation groups and adoption home study assessment. All inquirers must be able to demonstrate that they meet or have the potential to meet the eligibility criteria.

If there are concerns/issues about a person's health at this stage medical advice would be sought. Following regulatory requirements if any information (health or otherwise) is revealed which is likely to prejudice the outcome of an application advice will be sought from the Adoption Panel prior to commencement of an adoption home study assessment.

## 9.3 Preparation

- 9.3.1 The Adoption Workshop and Preparation Groups are run 2-3 times a year and have spaces for up to eight units (individuals or couples). Preparation Groups are held during the day, on the same day over three consecutive weeks. People are selected onto the workshop after initial interview, following discussion in a formal meeting of the Adoption Team on the basis of how they match with children waiting now or in the medium term; numbers of approved adopters waiting in similar categories, length of waiting time. The Workshop is held first four weeks before the Preparation Groups and will be followed up by a home visit to ensure adoption is right for the individual/couple if considered necessary. All individuals/couples who the Adoption Team consider should be invited to make a formal application will be sent a set of application and statutory check forms. Where the Adoption Team does not consider an individual/couple

suitable or ready to commence Preparation Groups they will be seen by two of the social workers who facilitated the Workshop and will be provided with with the reasons for not proceeding further with them in writing.

- 9.3.2 The date of receiving the completed and signed application forms is taken as the date of their formal application to adopt.
- 9.3.3 At least two Adoption Social Workers take responsibility for facilitating each set of workshop/preparation groups and follow an agreed programme, which is evaluated annually. Outside speakers (adopters, adopted people, other team members (post adoption workers) are fitted into the programme which has some formal teaching and is also experiential. Comprehensive written information is provided to prospective adopters on all aspects of adoption.
- 9.3.4 At the end of the groups prospective adopters are asked to complete feedback forms and confirm that they wish to proceed with their adoption application and return within one week together with their completed Criminal Record Bureau and statutory check forms.
- 9.3.5 If there are issues/concerns raised through the groups that the workers need first to discuss with the prospective adopters prior to them being allocated for a home study assessment, a joint home visit will be arranged without delay. These workers will make a recommendation to the Deputy Manager, Adoption, on whether to proceed to allocate for a home study assessment or whether a 'brief adopter report' should be written and presented to the Adoption Panel recommending that they are not suitable to be an adoptive parent(s).

#### 9.4 Assessment

- 9.4.1 The Deputy Manager allocates applicants for the adoption home study assessment to both Adoption Team Social Workers and Family Placement Staff Bank Social Worker according to their availability and on occasion the need for a particular allocated worker. Any delays in allocation are monitored by the Group Manager, Adoption and applicants are kept informed. The adopter file is made up and statutory checks started and written personal references sought.
- 9.4.2 The performance standard for completion of the assessment is eight months from the date of the formal application to presentation at Panel.
- 9.4.3 The allocated Social Worker undertaking the assessment checks the applicant's identity, and gets the CRB checks and the applicant's medicals (costs met by applicants) under way on the first visit, in addition to mapping out the assessment visits.
- 9.4.4 Comprehensive adopter assessments are undertaken using BAAF Prospective Adopter's Report form. All members of the household are seen together and individually. Two personal referees and at least one family member are visited together with anyone else considered relevant by the Social Worker (e.g. if child in household – their school teacher). In addition significant previous partners or previous partners with children are seen. A second opinion Social Worker visit is conducted with the assessing Social Worker following the draft report being seen and commented upon by the Assistant Team Manager and/or Group Manager.
- 9.4.5 The applicants are sent a copy of the final report 10 days before the deadline for receipt of Panel papers and may make observations on the report prior to it being submitted to Panel. If the assessing Social Worker is from Staff Bank, the Deputy Manager will allocate a Social

Worker from the Adoption Team to become their Adoption Support Social Worker following Panel.

- 9.4.6 The assessing Social Worker will receive regular supervision throughout the assessment.
- 9.4.7 If the assessing Social Worker has concerns about the competence of the applicants these will be addressed and may necessitate a joint visit with their supervisor or on rare occasions early presentation through a brief report to the Adoption Panel. Where the majority of the assessment has been completed and the assessing Social Worker and their supervisor are not recommending approval, the applicant(s) will always be offered the opportunity of the assessment being completed and presented to the Adoption Panel rather than a brief report being presented to Panel.

## 9.5 Approval

- 9.5.1 The assessing Social Worker will prepare the applicant(s) for attending the Bromley Adoption Panel using the Panel Information Leaflet. The assessment will be booked into Panel in advance by the assessing Social Worker, as agreed with their supervisor and the applicant/adopter(s).
- 9.5.2 The assessment report, together with any written observations or representations will be submitted by the assessing Social Worker by the due closing date and will be passed to the Group Manager, Adoption who acts as Panel Adviser to the Adoption Panel.
- 9.5.3 The Panel Agenda is drawn up by the Panel Adviser and the agenda time provided to the assessing Social Worker who informs the adopter(s).
- 9.5.4 Reports are circulated to Adoption Panel Members six days prior to Panel along with a copy of the Panel papers to the Agency decision maker. Panel meet with the assessing Social Worker and the applicant/adopter(s) and would always ask them to leave while the Panel comes to a recommendation. Social Worker and applicant/adopter(s) are then invited back into Panel for the recommendation.
- 9.5.5 Following Panel the Panel Secretary writes up the Panel recommendations and advice on the Panel 'Decision Sheet' and the Panel minutes, which are passed to the Legal and Panel Advisors and Panel Chair for checking. The Panel Adviser passes the 'Decision Sheet' and the Panel minutes, to the 'Agency Decision-Maker' to make the Agency decision. The performance standard is to make the decision within seven working days of Panel.
- 9.5.6 The signed 'Decision Sheet' is passed back to the Group Manager, Adoption in order that the decision can be communicated in writing to the adopter(s) within seven working days of the decision being made. A copy of the 'decision' and the individual Panel minutes will be placed on the adopter(s) file.
- 9.5.7 If the Agency decision maker is not minded to provide Agency approval the applicant(s)/adopter(s) are notified in writing that they have 40 working days in which to make representations to the Agency or to apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for an independent review panel. If representations are made they will be offered an interview with the Panel Chair and Panel Advisor prior to refer back to Panel. If after further consideration by the Adoption Panel and Agency the applicant(s) are still not in agreement with the Agency decision they will be advised to make a formal complaint under the Council's Representation and Complaint's Procedure.

## 9.6 Support

- 9.6.1 Following approval all adopters will have an allocated adoption support Social Worker from the Adoption Team. Social Workers will visit at least two monthly and be in contact at least on a monthly basis until adopters are linked with a child. From this point, contact will be determined through the Adoption Support Plan although there are minimum levels of contact maintained.
- 9.6.2 Where an adopter(s) is matched with an older child(ren) or a child(ren) with complex needs a 'Life Appreciation Day' will always be held following the Matching Panel and before the meeting to plan the introductions. This enables the adopter(s) to listen to and meet all the key people involved in the child's life. When a child is placed for adoption that child will have an allocated Social Worker who will offer support to the child and to the adopter(s) in caring for the child. A range of adoption support services is made available to adopters (see 3.1 above).
- 9.6.3 Should an adoption placement disrupt between the placement of the child and the making of the adoption order a 'Disruption Meeting' will always be held in order to gain a full understanding of the issues involved and assist in future planning for the child and the adopters.

## 10. **Procedures for assessing the needs of those requesting adoption support services from the Agency**

- 10.1 All adopters and social workers involved in placing a child for adoption will receive a copy of the Adoption Support Services Information leaflet. Information for children about adoption support services is contained in the Children's Guide to Adoption.
- 10.2 Adoption Support needs will have been evaluated by Social Workers in connection with preparing plans for adoption for a child; approving adopters; and matching and placing children for adoption. These plans, including contact arrangements, for the child, adopters and their and birth parents and birth family members will be recorded in the Adoption Support Plan and the adoption Placement Plan and are the responsibility of the named worker to action.
- 10.3 All adopted adults and birth family members affected by adoption will receive the Information Leaflet for People Affected by Adoption. Birth families affected by adoption will also receive 'About Adoption : Information for Birth Families'.
- 10.4 Where a formal request is made for an assessment of adoption support need, an adoption support referral will be completed and the referral acknowledged. The referral will be passed to the Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA) for consideration of priority for allocation and whether a full adoption support assessment, is required.
- 10.5 Where the request for assessment relates to a particular adoption support service or if it appears that the service user's needs can be adequately assessed by reference to one particular adoption support service a full adoption support assessment will not be undertaken. In these cases eligibility for the particular service will be assessed in relation to the service user's needs and circumstances.
- 10.6 Requests for financial assessment for an on-going allowance or significant lump sum payments will be subject to a financial assessment of means. All requests for an on-going allowance are made to the Adoption Panel for recommendation and then to the Agency decision-maker for the agency decision. Requests for lump sum payments will be decided within respective manager's financial authorisation levels.

- 10.7 It is expected that all adoption support assessments for adoption support services are undertaken and completed within 40 working days of allocation and that during this period assistance, support and direct work is provided where required.
- 10.8 A draft of the assessment report will be sent to the service user and other agencies involved with 28 days for comment. At the end of this period the Agency will write to the service user and other agencies involved setting out how it is proposed to meet the identified and assessed needs. Where appropriate this will be set out in the form of an Adoption Support Plan.
- 10.9 Where adoption support services are being provided they will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **11. Summary of the Complaints Procedure**

- 11.1 The information set out below at 11.2 on 'Compliments, Concerns and Complaints' is provided to people attending an Information Meeting in the comprehensive Information Pack.
- 11.2 The service that you receive from the Bromley Adoption Team is based upon:-
- § providing accurate and clear information about the service(s) provided
  - § doing what we say
  - § setting out timescales for the service(s)
  - § acting fairly and without prejudice in all dealings with service users
- 11.2 If you consider that we have surpassed these intentions in our dealings with you then please let us know. **Compliments** support staff in their work and assist in the planning and delivery of effective services.
- 11.3 Where you have a **concern(s)** about an aspect of the service you have or are receiving it is important that you first raise this with the person who has been dealing with you. If it is not clear who this is then please contact the Adoption Team Duty Social Worker (( 020 8313 4193) in the first instance. Such open and direct communication often leads to a speedy and positive resolution of the concern(s).
- 11.4 Finally you may consider that the service you have received from the Bromley Adoption Team has been poor or your **concern(s)** has not been addressed or resolved. In such circumstances please direct your **complaint** (by letter, email, phone or through direct in-person contact) to the Group Manager, Adoption. They will respond within five working days and will endeavour to 'problem-solve' your complaint with you to achieve a mutually agreed outcome. If this is not possible they will explain the Council's Complaints Procedure, '*Getting it Right*', and provide you with the written details of how to take forward your complaint to the next stage.
- 11.5 The Children's Guide to Adoption produced so that there is information in the booklet for children and young people in terms of raising concerns or complaints or making representations about their care or the service they are receiving.
- 11.6 The Information Leaflet for People attending the Adoption Panel provides details on how people can make a complaint about this aspect of the service as well as a response form for people to complete and return on the service they have received.

12. **Address and telephone number of OFSTED**

**Main Office**

**OFSTED**

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

Tel: 08456 404045

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

**Office of Lead Inspector (Margaret Lynes)**

**OFSTED**

London Region  
Area 7, Team 4  
Alexandra House  
33, Kingsway  
London WC2 6SE

Tel: 08456 404045

**OFSTED Telephone line for raising concerns and complaints:  
08456 014772**

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Children and Young People Portfolio Holder  
18 October 2011

**BROMLEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD 2010-2011  
ANNUAL REPORT**

Contact Officer: Julie Daly, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance  
Tel: 020 8313 4610 E-mail: julie.daly@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Gillian Pearson, Director of Children and Young People Services

1. Summary

1.1 Lord Laming's report (*The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report March 2009*) recommended that Local Safeguarding Children Boards should produce an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area, which should be a public document, and this was translated into statutory guidance in 2009.

1.2 Bromley Safeguarding Children Board's 2010-2011 Annual Report was published in June 2011 and is presented to Members for consideration and discussion.

2. **THE BRIEFING**

2.1 Bromley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has been set up under the requirements of the Children Act 2004. BSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Bromley will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Bromley and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The aim of the BSCB is to ensure that all children within Bromley, in whatever setting, are kept safe from harm

2.2 The core functions of the BSCB are to:

- develop local policies, procedures and thresholds for inter-agency safeguarding working;
- monitor and evaluate how well services work together to safeguard children in order to inform planning and service development;
- encourage effective working partnerships between professional groups, including sharing knowledge gained through national and local research;
- undertake serious case reviews where a child has died or is seriously harmed and co-ordinate a response to unexpected child deaths;
- ensure the functioning of the child death overview arrangements;

- communicate the shared responsibility for safeguarding children and young people;
- improve inter-agency work through agreeing training and development priorities;
- listen to and take children and young people's views into account when planning and delivering programmes to safeguard them and improve their welfare.

2.3 The 2010 – 2011 BSCB annual report sets out :

- The governance and accountability arrangements for the Board
- Key achievement and progress for the year 2010-2011
- Quality assurance and performance monitoring arrangements
- Future priorities and developments for the year 2011-2012
- Detailed accounts
- Main board membership.

2.4 The main board of the BSCB comprises 45 members across a broad range of statutory and voluntary sectors agencies. During 2010 -2011 Cllr Ernest Noad, the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People became a member of the Board. Two lay members of the community were also appointed as members of the Board during the year. The main Board met twice in 2010. Issues covered included learning lessons from serious case reviews; understanding the issues of safeguarding within the gypsy and traveller community, considering strategies and operational means to improve the monitoring and early intervention for children who run away; trafficked children; safeguarding in early years education provision, child sex disclosure arrangements and the role being played by the Volunteers in Child Protection scheme in Bromley.

2.5 The Executive Committee is a smaller panel representing statutory agencies at Director and Assistant Director level with designated professionals providing professional advice. The Executive meets quarterly and provides the strategic direction for the BSCB and is the key decision making committee. It met five times last year. The Executive also sits as the Serious Case Review Sub-Committee when required.

2.6 In 2010-2011 the Executive's work included:

- approval of the final report for one serious case review in respect of a baby; commissioned a further a serious case review concerning two children;
- development and agreement of a strategy for safeguarding disabled children;
- monitoring of and setting the BSCB budget for 2011-12;
- review of safeguarding procedures and protocols;
- review of the Public Health report 'Happy and Healthy', which explores issues of mental health and obesity of children in Bromley following the highlighting of the these issues for the nation by UNICEF;
- involvement in the Strategic Health Authority's peer review by a Service Improvement Team of safeguarding by health agencies in Bromley.



- 2.7 Major achievements of the BSCB in 2010-2011 included a conference to promote the safeguarding of disabled children at which a draft strategy for safeguarding disabled children was launched for consultation. The strategy has now been agreed and is being taken forward by the Partnership Board. Other achievements include a safer workforce training strategy, continuing to promote strategies around working to protect children living with domestic violence.
- 2.8 A major plank of the BSCB's work is the provision of multi agency safeguarding training. In 2010-2011 38 courses and 5 briefings were attended by 845 delegates, a 12% increase on the previous year.
- 2.9 Priorities for 2011-2012 are:
- a focus on monitoring the impact of early intervention in protecting children and young people;
  - launch and promote changes to the referral system into children's social care and ensure that the multi-agency assessments are working well;
  - develop and promote guidance to help with protecting young people from gangs;
  - ensure that any government changes to the multi-agency framework for child protection are communicated by the BSCB to the wider partnership;
  - in partnership with London Borough of Bromley offer on-line child protection training for some groups;
  - working in partnership with Health to support their drive for all front line staff to be trained in safeguarding to Level 3;
  - develop more multi agency approaches to supporting children living in families where there is domestic abuse.
- 2.10 This report is written at a time of significant national reform to the children's services agenda including safeguarding and child protection. The challenge for BSCB and local agencies will be to ensure that the work of safeguarding children remains focused and effective.



# 2010-2011 Annual Report

June 2011

## **Bromley Safeguarding Children Board**

**Room B40A, St Blaise Building, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3UH**

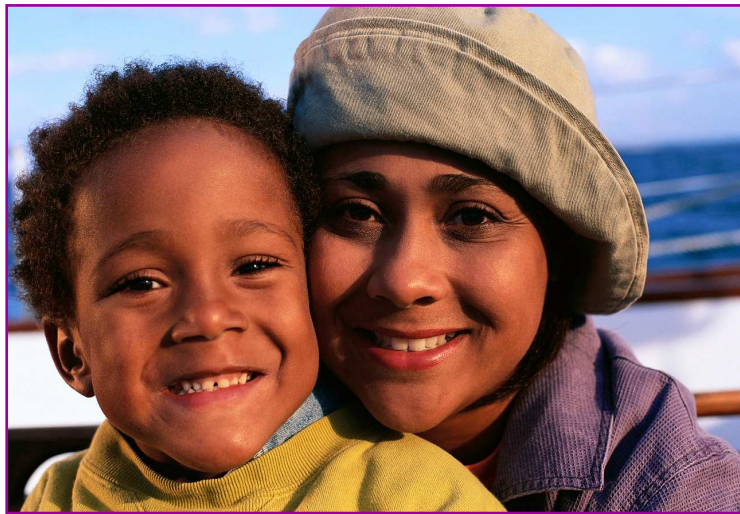
**[bscb@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:bscb@bromley.gov.uk)**

**[www.bromleysafeguarding.org](http://www.bromleysafeguarding.org)**

**020 8461 7816**

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**Jenny Dibsall, Chairman,  
Bromley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB)**

## Foreword

The Bromley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) is pleased to publish its fourth annual report which describes the work carried out to ensure that children and young people are safe and their general well-being secured. Much has been achieved and this report documents in detail the changes and specific work that has been carried out by dedicated staff across all agencies concerned with children, young people and families in Bromley.

For BSCB as with other LSCBs across the country, 2010-2011 has been a year that has marked the beginning of radical nationally driven changes to services and the organisation, structure and funding of agencies. Whilst some changes will occur incrementally over the next two years, the moves to GP commissioning of health services for example, the response to other legislation locally, including the Academies Act and the reduction in funding to the Council and other statutory agencies in particular has led to more rapid developments.

Extensive change inevitably presents complexities and challenge when ensuring that multi-agency work to safeguard children remains secure and robust. To this end the Board has carefully monitored the changes to agencies and any impact upon vulnerable children. To date agencies have reported openly any changes and have given a high priority to reducing risks and protecting safeguarding services and processes. Since more extensive changes will be forthcoming next year and beyond, the Board is aware of the need to be constantly vigilant.

At the outset of the year, there was an inspection by OfSTED of safeguarding and looked after children, with health elements inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Whilst safeguarding services were considered to be adequate, a detailed, comprehensive and extensive action plan was devised largely directed at the Council and Health agencies. In addition NHS London carried out a Safeguarding Improvement Team peer review of safeguarding within Health agencies in Bromley in September. Whilst largely satisfied that safeguarding arrangements were good, the review led to additional actions to continue to develop arrangements across health agencies. A serious case review concerning serious injuries to a baby was completed at the end of 2009-2010 and a further review concerning two brothers aged 4 and 6 subject to neglect was undertaken during the year. Both reviews have led to detailed and specific action plans. The Board has expected that these action plans are afforded priority and the response from agencies has been good. As I write this, we await the Government's response to the Munro Review into child protection. This will lead to further significant changes for many agencies and professionals in order to impact upon the child's journey through the child protection process.

The annual conference this year focussed upon safeguarding children with a disability. A focal point of the day was a presentation by pupils from the Glebe and Marjorie McClure Schools when they articulated eloquently and very poignantly how it felt to be disabled and fearful of bullying and hostility. Work has begun to ensure that the voice of children and young people is heard and informs our policies and work plan.

To continue to improve and to be ready to assist agencies in this time of unprecedented change, the Board has reviewed and tightened its governance arrangements and accountability. Board meetings are now open to the public. Membership of the Board has been extended and two lay members have been appointed and now attend regularly. There are links to Bromley's shadow Health and Well-Being Board.

I believe that this annual report demonstrates that the agencies that comprise BSCB are willing to learn and improve and will consider how best to implement any required changes to strengthen the safeguarding of Bromley's children. Please do read this report and if you have not done so visit the BSCB website for further information about the work in Bromley to ensure children are safe and their well-being promoted.

*Jenny Dibsall*

Jenny Dibsall, Chairman, Bromley Safeguarding Children Board



## 1 Summary

- 1.1 Since May 2010, there has been an unprecedented rate of change nationally which has posed considerable challenges to Bromley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) during 2010-2011. The new version of Working Together was produced in March 2010 but additionally by 10 June we were informed that all serious case reviews commenced after that date would be published in full. On the same date a significant review of child protection was commissioned, the Munro Review, to make recommendations that would provide better frontline services to protect children. This was driven by the findings of the Social Work Review Board, which was established to enhance the profession's status in the wake of the Haringey Serious Case Review into the death of Baby Peter Connolly.
- 1.2 The Munro Review final report was published on 10 May 2011 and series of recommendations concern the strengthening of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and changes to the inspection regime. Professor Munro has sought to explore the whole child protection system from the context of the "child's journey".
- 1.3 On 27 July 2010, the Academies Bill received Royal Assent. The Act enables more schools to become academies and gives them the freedoms and flexibilities to continue to drive up standards. In October, the Government determined that local authorities were no longer required to have a Children's Trust or produce a Children's Plan. Local authorities were allowed greater flexibility to decide what partnership arrangements continued thereafter.
- 1.4 Further changes nationally have indicated radical changes in Bromley driven by reductions in funding or required changes to the structures of various statutory agencies. This is no different to other local authorities, though the extent and impact of changes upon frontline services can vary.
- 1.5 In July 2010 the Government White Paper Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS, set out a long term vision for the future of the NHS. As part of the planned developments the government's strategy Health Lives: Healthy People paves the way for public health functions to move into the local authorities to focus on local health improvements. Local health commissioning structures have moved to a South East London cluster approach with shared functions across local boroughs. Within Bromley a Business Support Unit has been established to support local arrangements for developing GP consortia for Bromley.
- 1.6 Reductions in funding to other agencies or the reduction in grants that had been previously ring fenced are resulting in considerable appraisal of existing functions and services. This is most apparent in the Local Authority where reductions of 27% over four years is required but the Police and health services are also managing financial changes which will impact upon service provision. Whilst some of these changes are a few years away from coming to fruition, it is already apparent that close monitoring is required during the implementation of the changes to ensure that children's interests and safeguarding remain high on the agenda.
- 1.7 Since our last report the BSCB contributed to an unannounced Ofsted inspection on local child protection and safeguarding arrangements.



### **Safeguarding in Bromley**

- 1.8 The changes nationally have had variable impact upon services and safeguarding in Bromley. Bromley has not needed to conduct a serious case review since June 2010 but we continue to be open about previous failings and summaries of serious case reviews are available on BSCB's website. There have been changes to the Children's Trust. (See paragraph 3.7)
- 1.9 The Academies Act has led to considerable changes in Bromley where it is anticipated that eventually all secondary schools will become academies either alone or federated and many primary schools will be included on a cluster basis. This will have implications for the way in which schools in the authority are supported and monitored but it is hoped that all will continue to work with the BSCB through the Education Committee as at present.
- 1.10 Reductions in local authority funding will reduce the number of planned children's centres and this may impact upon vulnerable families and early intervention to prevent problems escalating. This is of concern when there continue to be increased funding pressures upon children's social care as a result of placement costs for looked after children and difficulties in recruiting suitable qualified social workers. The closure of the maternity and A&E services at Queen Mary's Hospital have had an impact on other units, but to date there is no evidence that children are affected adversely and safeguarding standards are a priority for South London Healthcare Trust (SLHT). Changes to health commissioning in Bromley have yet to take effect though as Bexley is a pathfinder for the changes, the BSCB is watching with interest to see what issues arise.
- 1.11 The closure of the maternity and A&E services at Queen Mary's Hospital have had an impact on other units, but to date there is no evidence that children are affected adversely and safeguarding standards are a priority for South London Healthcare Trust (SLHT). Changes to health commissioning in Bromley have yet to take effect though as Bexley is a pathfinder for the changes, the BSCB is watching with interest to see what issues arise.

### **Safeguarding in Bromley**

- 1.12 Bromley's safeguarding and looked after children services were inspected in April 2010 but the final evaluation was not published until June. The judgement was that the overall effectiveness of safeguarding was adequate with some good areas. There were two requirements for immediate action in relation to safeguarding; one concerning the member approval and implementation of the social care improvement plan and the other regarding improving the quality and timeliness of social care assessments. There were other requirements for action within a three month period. A detailed action plan was drawn up and was monitored closely.
- 1.13 The inspection noted the pressure and high caseloads in the children's social care referral and assessment teams. The BSCB continues to monitor how children's social care responds to high level of contacts. The number of children who are subject to a child protection plan continues to be high and there are increased numbers of looked after children. However, a recent unannounced Ofsted inspection shows that the service is now being securely managed. The assessment teams are amalgamated into one creating a single point of entry to the service. The council's recruitment and



retention package has successfully brought in and retained suitably qualified and experienced social workers.

- 1.14 Safeguarding arrangements of statutory partners are reviewed every three years, typically through a questionnaire to agency directors or chief executives, the outcomes of which are presented to the BSCB Executive Committee. This year's review highlighted that agencies continue to take their safeguarding duties and responsibilities seriously. In the climate of change and restructuring the BSCB is pleased to have been kept up to date promptly with changes and developments within individual agencies. All partners recognise the importance of remaining focused on the needs of children, particularly at a time of significant organisation and service change.

### Strategic Vision

- 1.15 All local safeguarding children boards have a statutory responsibility, as set out in the Children Act 2004, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children through effective co-ordination between partners in their area. At the very least this requires shared goals and priorities. The BSCB agreed a three-year workplan this year, which shows agreed priority areas for safeguarding activity until 2014. The workplan, which is available on the BSCB website, includes the following priority work areas:

- Learning from serious case reviews
- Safeguarding disabled children
- Safeguarding children living with domestic violence
- Enhanced performance monitoring for safeguarding
- Safer Workforce through a revised training strategy







## 2 Governance and Accountability

- 2.1 Currently BSCB reports at least annually to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which has representatives of the chief executives of Bromley's key agencies. At this stage it is not clear how the LSP will continue but, at present, if there is no change. BSCB's annual report and any other reports as necessary will be provided. Bromley has a shadow Health and Well-Being Board. During the forthcoming year the links between BSCB and that Board will be established and any reporting requirements clarified. This may be influenced by recommendations from the Munro Review and any subsequent government guidance.
- 2.2 In Bromley, as with many authorities, partner agencies concerned about children considered that a partnership provides the benefits of strategic planning whilst ensuring that children's best interests are met. The Children's Trust became the Bromley Partnership Board in line with government changes and will meet three times a year. The BSCB via the chair will continue to report on safeguarding arrangements to the Partnership Board at each meeting and will present the annual report.

### Committees

- 2.3 Last year, the BSCB overhauled its committee structure to address the shifting demands and expectations of local safeguarding children boards in general and Bromley specifically. The revised structure is now in place and will remain under review, particularly as the BSCB awaits the response to the Munro Review.

### Main Board

- 2.4 Membership of the BSCB Main Board has been strengthened this year and accountability improved. The meetings are open to the public who can table questions. The link below indicates the necessary process.  
<http://www.bromleysafeguarding.org/pdfs/Procedure%20for%20questions%20from%20the%20public2010.pdf>
- 2.5 The Children and Young People's Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ernest Noad attends the Board which also strengthens the link between the BSCB and the Partnership Board, which he chairs. Two lay members with experience of working with children, one a foster carer, the other a teaching assistant have been selected and are regular attendees of the Board. Independent and private providers are also now better represented on the Main Board. In particular the Director of a local independent adolescent in-patient psychiatric unit now attends.
- 2.6 The Main Board comprises 45 members representing many interests and agencies locally. Section 7 lists the representatives on the Main Board.
- 2.7 The BSCB Main Committee met twice in 2010 last year. Issues covered included learning lessons from serious case reviews; understanding the issues of safeguarding within the gypsy and traveller community, considering strategies and operational means to improve the monitoring and early intervention for children who run away; trafficked children; safeguarding in early years education provision, child sex disclosure arrangements and the role being played by the flagship Volunteers in Child Protection scheme in Bromley.



## Executive Committee

- 2.8 The Executive Committee is a smaller panel representing statutory agencies at Director and Assistant Director level with designated professionals e.g. health and legal providing professional advice. The Executive meets quarterly and provides the strategic direction for the BSCB and is the key decision making committee. It met five times last year. The Executive also sits as the Serious Case Review Sub-Committee when required.
- 2.9 In 2010-2011 the Executive's work included:
- § approval of the final report for one serious case review in respect of a baby; commissioned a further a serious case review concerning two children;
  - § development and agreement of a strategy for safeguarding disabled children;
  - § monitoring of and setting the BSCB budget for 2011-12;
  - § review of safeguarding procedures and protocols;
  - § review of the Public Health report 'Happy and Healthy', which explores issues of mental health and obesity of children in Bromley following the highlighting of the these issues for the nation by UNICEF;
  - § involvement in the Strategic Health Authority's peer review by a Service Improvement Team of safeguarding by health agencies in Bromley.

## Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring Sub- Committee (QAPM)

- 2.10 The Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring Sub-Committee meets four times a year and takes responsibility for monitoring standards in safeguarding arrangements and other operational aspects of local safeguarding. Quality assurance and performance monitoring is increasingly central to the effective functioning of the BSCB. It helps to check how well single-agency safeguarding arrangements are working. This year QAPM sub-committee:
- § revised the BSCB safeguarding dataset to specifically focus on areas of concern;
  - § reviewed the multi-agency audit framework and updated it to ensure that agreed and emerging safeguarding priorities are kept under review;
  - § undertook three multi-agency audits;
  - § reviewed the learning from referred cases.



### Training Sub-Committee

2.11 The BSCB Training Sub-Committee met twice in 2010 and carried out its usual functions to evaluate the BSCB training provided and to set the training programme for the following year. This year it achieved the following:

- § conducted a quality assurance exercise of the training
- § conducted a user survey of delegates
- § continued to address increased demand through working to identify a larger pool of internal trainers
- § organised training beyond the set programme in order to meet the requirements of serious case reviews.



### Child Death Overview Panel

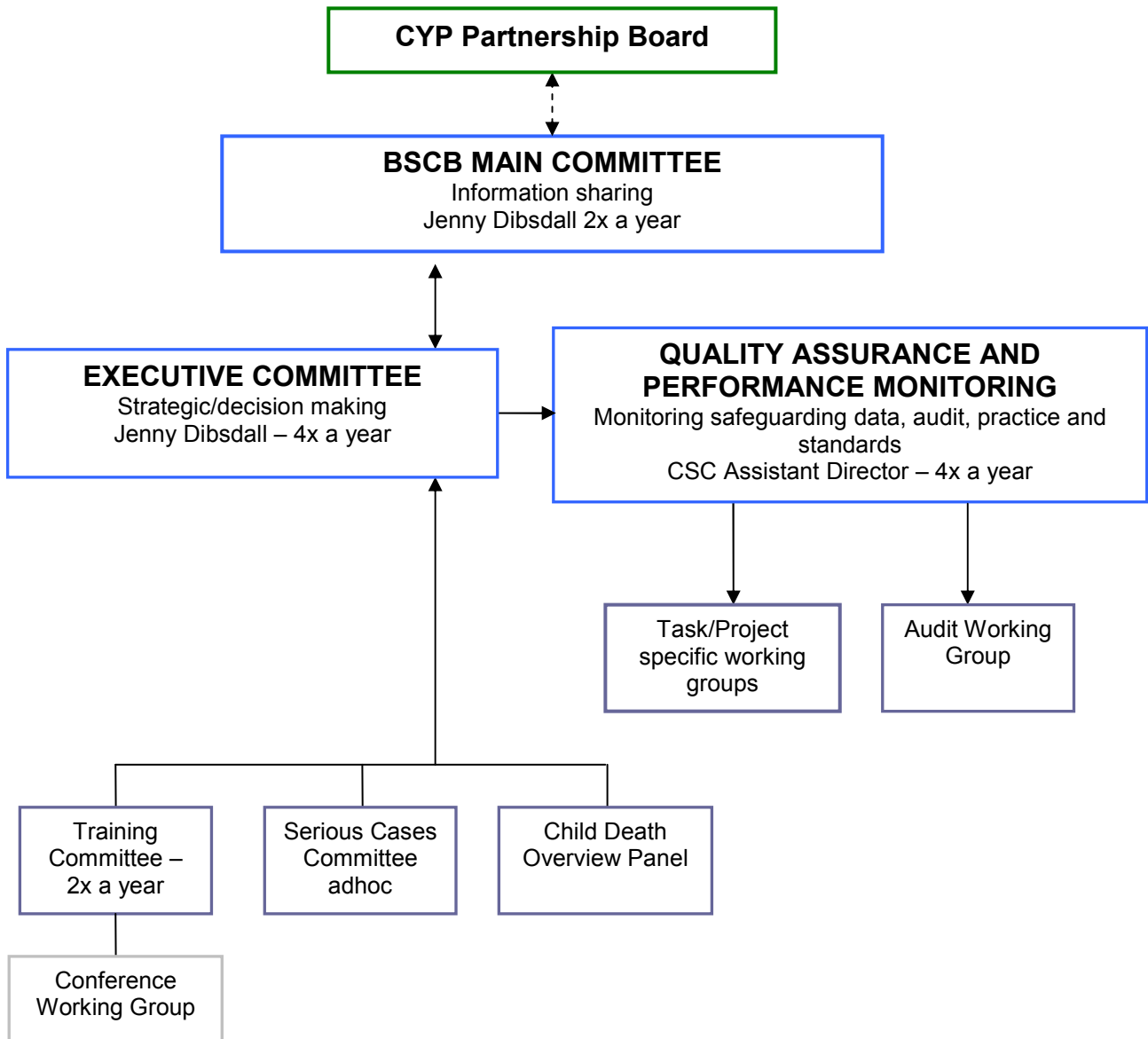
2.12 This multi-agency panel has a core membership of police, social care, health professionals. It is a statutory requirement. The Panel met four times in 2010 and 2011 to discuss the circumstances of all child deaths in Bromley and to identify any issues or trends. They provided an annual report to the BSCB Executive Committee, of summary of which is given in paragraphs 4.17- 4.22.

### Serious Case Review Committee

2.13 This committee, which is formed of the Executive Committee, meets ad hoc to consider cases where a serious child protection incident has occurred. The committee may determine that either an Individual Management Review (IMR) is obtained from an agency or, in a case involving several agencies and that meet the criteria in Working Together 2010, that a Serious Case Review (SCR) is commissioned. The Serious Case Review Committee has oversight of the process and outcomes. It met five times in 2010 to approve the final report of one review and to consider another of two children, which it proceeded to monitor through to the final report being submitted to Ofsted. The Committee also considered one serious incident of the suicide of a young person. The Mental Health Trust conducted an investigation into the incident comparable to an IMR, which was presented to the SCR Committee. Ofsted's evaluations of serious case reviews were also presented to the Committee and any response to Ofsted's analysis and comments agreed.



## BROMLEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD





### 3. Achievement and Progress

- 3.1 The strategic priorities identified by the Board for 10-11 are contained at 1.1. However this last year began with the findings of the OFSTED inspection into Safeguarding in Bromley, which was published in June. This is a broad inspection carried out over two weeks by OfSTED and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which explores the multi-agency arrangements and processes that protect and safeguard children and promote the well-being of looked after children. The full inspection report can be found at [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare\\_providers/la\\_download/\(id\)/5244/\(as\)/lac\\_2010\\_305.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/(id)/5244/(as)/lac_2010_305.pdf)
- 3.2 Whilst the report described the Board as providing “active leadership” in safeguarding, BSCB has not been complacent. As an immediate priority, BSCB was concerned to support agencies in delivering the comprehensive and detailed action plan that was drawn up in response to the inspectors’ findings. This primarily focussed upon children’s social care services and in particular their increased number of referrals. Figures in this report shows that numbers have begun to decline and the management of the system has been improved. All agencies have been concerned to ensure that the protection of children through the multi-agency process is accurate and effective.
- 3.3 Indications of improvements to services were supported by the peer review of Health services in September and the annual letter from OfSTED concerning the state of Children’s Services in December 2010 which considered that services are performing well. The OfSTED letter noted that improvements to children’s social care are still required and BSCB continues to monitor management action to address these issues.
- 3.4 As indicated earlier in this report the key challenge this year has been monitoring the process of change and restructure across all agencies. This has been unprecedented with changes to schools, local authority structures, health service re-organisation and the effects of changes to funding and financial support. BSCB is also concerned regarding proposed changes to youth provision and children’s centres that can impact upon vulnerable families requiring support to prevent children needing statutory intervention. Close monitoring of the quarterly dataset reports, audits and the provision of updates to the Executive and Main Board has been an important element of this year’s work that will continue into the next three years as the changes are implemented fully and reductions in services impact upon children and families.

#### Annual Conference

- 3.5 BSCB Annual Conference took place in October 2010 and played a central role in raising awareness about safeguarding among one of our most vulnerable groups of children – those with a disability. The success of the conference is always dependent on good multi-agency working. The BSCB worked with health, schools, children’s social care and disability and specialist service teams within the authority to organise and run the conference. As always the conference provides an opportunity to share practice and gather feedback – this time on the key safeguarding issues impacting on disabled children. This helped to shape further the strategy.



- 3.6 Over 110 delegates attended the Annual Conference, where consultant and trainer, Ann Patmore provided a national context for this aspect of safeguarding. Delegates also heard potent messages from young people themselves from Glebe and Marjorie McClure schools about their experience of being disabled and feeling safe in Bromley. Their shared experience led directly to the local safer transport police team improving their services to help vulnerable children feel safer as they travel to and from their schools. Workshops covered knowing when safe is good enough and child protection, looking at the emotional needs and mental health signs in parents, protecting sexually active disabled young people and safeguarding disabled children in school.

### **Safeguarding & the Children's Strategy**

- 3.7 In Bromley, local strategic partners agreed that the work of the Children's Trust was too important in service planning to abandon and therefore agreed to set up a Partnership Board to continue with agreed areas of work. One of these work strands was to draw up Bromley's Children's Strategy 2011-14. Members of BSCB contributed to the strategy which is due to be released for wider consultation. Within the strategy safeguarding children is a key priority and issues raised by BSCB are included in that section.

### **Regional Involvement**

- 3.8 The BSCB Business Manager and the Executive Representative from the Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum together attended regional workshops on developing safer communities. The London Safeguarding Children Board (LLSCB)'s events brought together voluntary and community providers across London with their LSCB managers to share and develop practice. The learning and resulting tools and guidance have been shared with LSCBs and in Bromley with the Executive.
- 3.9 Bromley has also contributed to a workgroup to update the pan-London audit tools and guidance, for Child Protection, Early Intervention - Child in Need and Child in Care which had been originally developed by the now decommissioned Government Office for London. These are now available for all London safeguarding children boards to use.

### **Safeguarding Disabled Children**

- 3.10 Stronger links have been forged between the BSCB and the Disability Strategy Group this year. Collaboration between a time limited task group and members of the disability strategy group were instrumental in developing a Strategy for Safeguarding Disabled Children and for the successful annual conference.
- 3.11 Raising awareness about safeguarding for disabled children, particularly vulnerable children, has been key to the BSCB since 2009 following the publication of the government's practice guidance on safeguarding disabled children. The Executive wished to go further by setting out expectations in relation to multi-agency work and to challenge the then Children's Trust to put in place measures to improve safeguarding. A multi-agency time-limited task group, led by Consultant in Public Health Medicine Dr Jenny Selway, was established to drive forward a Strategy for Safeguarding Disabled Children. The group comprised representatives from health, two special schools, the council's social care team and children with disability team



as well as specialist support. The consultation paper was launched at the BSCB's Annual Conference on 21 October 2010 and was subject to consultation by multi-agency partners. The strategy has now been handed over to the Disability Strategy Group asking them to identify ways to implement the expectations set out in the strategy.

### **A Safer Workforce Training Strategy**

- 3.12 Training to protect children and young people from further abuse or harm is a central feature of the work of safeguarding boards and local children's partnerships.
- 3.13 Consistently the demand for safeguarding children training has outstripped supply locally. In order to plan better training, the BSCB conducted a training needs analysis this year. Each agency has forecast its training requirements over a three year period. Projections have been made on training take up by agency in previous years. Child protection training for those who work with children, their parents and/or carers has been designed on the basis of the on the degree of contact with children and the role & responsibility of an individual in the child protection process. The revised guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 2010 refined this target audience into 8 groups with more detail on what training is required for each group and who and how it might be provided.
- 3.14 The overall analysis enabled the BSCB to improve its plans. The training programme is set within the Board's funding limits, the need to manage a multi-agency mix on core training courses, and the need to address the lessons from serious case reviews. The strategy sets out the BSCB expectations of multi-agency and single agency safeguarding children training.
- 3.15 With increasing demand for our courses, The BSCB has identified a pool of local agency trainers to deliver aspects of the programme. Many of the specialist courses delivered in 2010-2011 were delivered by professionals from partner agencies. All BSCB training evaluates well and further information about the evaluation and quality assurance of training can be found in section 4.

### **Serious Case Reviews**

- 3.16 Sadly, over the past year three children have been subject to two serious case reviews (SCR) commissioned by the BSCB. The first case involved a baby girl of 3 months who received a significant head injury which has left her needing substantial support. The review was subsequently evaluated by Ofsted as good.
- 3.17 In a further SCR commissioned by the BSCB, two young boys aged 5 and 6, were found to have suffered long term neglect despite the involvement of several agencies in their lives. Both are now in foster care and are responding to the intensive support provided. This review was evaluated as good by Ofsted.
- 3.18 The lessons for both cases are captured in action plans and both are near completion. Each is kept under review by the BSCB's Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring Committee.



- 3.19 Both cases highlighted issues regarding conducting serious case reviews, in particular support for small, independent / non-statutory agencies. In future, maintained school Individual Management Reviews (IMRs) which contribute to the overall review will be prepared by the Lead Officer for Education Safeguarding to ensure independence and sufficient critical analysis.
- 3.20 There were a number of specific issues emanating from the reviews, which are being addressed through on going multi-agency training and internal agency auditing. These are:
- § enhancing the quality of risk assessment through greater analysis (BSCB);
  - § working with neglect cases to ensure sufficient challenge to families and other professionals and to recognise when improvements is not sustained (BSCB);
  - § effective safeguarding supervision which supports reflective practice (individual agencies).

### **Safeguarding Children Living with Domestic Violence**

- 3.21 Domestic violence continues to be a priority for the BSCB. The main focus of its work has been to audit and monitor actions to improvement safeguarding arrangements across agencies including the management and supervision of cases.
- 3.22 BSCB run a multi-agency awareness raising training to ensure that staff working with children young people or their carers are aware of the safeguarding issues and can identify a child at risk of harm.
- 3.23 The BSCB continues to promote the Risk Identification and Assessment Matrix and the findings of the evaluation and audits have been shared with senior managers across agencies.

### **Challenging Neglect**

- 3.24 In the government's recent review of serious case reviews, research found that of the 268 cases reviewed, long standing neglect was a factor in a quarter of them, exceeded only by physical abuse which featured in over half of the cases. However physical abuse and neglect often co-exist. It quickly became clear during the serious case review into the harm caused to Children D and B that working with families in which neglect is prevalent is a significant challenge locally. The BSCB immediately implemented training to support multi-agency professionals and their supervisors to challenge and progress families where there is neglect. Two courses, targeted at team leaders, named and designated professionals ran in 2010-2011, with further courses planned as part of the BSCB's core training programme.

### **Community Safety**

- 3.25 Bromley Borough Police works closely with local partners on a range of issues to help to prevent young people coming to harm including: close monitoring of families where there are repeated incidents of domestic violence through the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC); monitoring violent and sex offenders through an integrated offender management process, which helps to minimise their risk to families and Bromley children; Referring cases of children who are missing for more than 24 hours to children's social care and sharing and analysing this information with partners on a regular basis.





3.26 Since January 2011, the police have fitted 4 panic alarms within high risk premises. Furthermore, following on from the work that Bromley Police have been carrying out with South London and Maudsley hospital Trust, in relation to tagging certain patients at the Bethlem Hospital, a similar scheme is now being considered to benefit high risk domestic violence victims. The system would work on a purely voluntary basis, where the victim is given a unit about the size of a pager. When the activation button is pressed an alarm message is sent to the police via the tag and an open microphone is established. This allows the conversation from the victim to be heard and recorded. Bromley will be piloting the system and the protocols that are linked to operating this system.

### Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

3.27 On a rolling year basis, as of early March 2011, 113 cases had been referred to MARAC, of which 9 were repeats. There were 166 children within the families referred.

3.28 A breakdown of the source and volume of referrals is given in the table below. Whilst the majority of referrals are generated by the police, a significant number are made by domestic violence advocates and children’s social care.

Agency	Number of referrals
Police	60
Domestic Violence Advocates	20
Children’s Social Care	14
Primary Care Trusts	7
Education	3
Mental Health	1
Probation	5
Voluntary Sector	1

### Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

3.29 The role of MAPPA is to manage Registered Sex Offenders (RSO) and Potentially Dangerous Persons. The Police, Prison Service and Probation are responsible for managing MAPPA with other agencies required to co-operate. Bromley borough police continue to report quarterly to the BSCB Executive. Whilst at the time of writing the figures for 2010-2011 were not yet ratified, it is anticipated that they will be similar to 2009-2011 when there were 141 RSOs [Government Mappa Report 2010](#). There are now five full-time offender manager staff in Bromley, which is at an appropriate ratio to the number of offenders and falls within national guidelines.

3.30 Monthly MAPPA meetings are well attended by partner agencies. Changes to the management of the meeting helped to improve agency attendance.

3.31 Numbers of offenders mapped at level 2 (a higher level of risk) is reducing through closer work with Probation and the use of screening meetings with relevant agencies to improve the risk assessment process. The police team are a well established unit with consistency of experience and well managed links with other agencies.



- 3.32 Bromley Police prepared for the introduction of “Sarah’s Law” in the months preceding the launch on 4 April 2011 of the Child Sex Offender Disclosure (CSOD) programme. The scheme allows members of the public to register their child protection interest in a named individual. Where the individual has convictions for child sexual offences and is considered to be a risk, this information will be disclosed to the relevant member of the public. In the lead up to its implementation, Bromley Police gave a presentation on the scheme to the BSCB Main Committee. The MPS system has been upgraded to manage effective sharing of information with Children’s Social Care and a similar arrangement is in place with the probation service.

### Licensing Reviews

- 3.33 The Board is one of a number of responsible authorities notified for license variations, applications and can call for reviews of existing licenses in matters relating to the protection of children from harm. One of the ways we do this is to raise concerns about existing licensed premises and make representations at the council’s Licensing Sub-Committee. Last year, the BSCB raised concerns about two applications involving the sale of alcohol to minors and about of children present in licensed premises. In all cases the BSCB asks licence holders to be aware of the [safeguarding protocol](#) and to raise staff awareness of their duty to protect children from harm.

### Safer Transport

- 3.34 Safer Transport Teams patrol on buses and at transport interchange points e.g. bus stations within Bromley Borough focusing on local problems. They also patrol local roads to tackle issues such as cycle theft, responding to local traffic incidents and the safe movement of traffic. The young people’s presentation at the BSCB Annual Conference in 2010 identified how disabled young people’s experiences on the bus network meant they felt unsafe. As a result patrols within the vicinity of special schools were made aware of the particular issue and visibility was increased at key times of day. The team continues to work with schools to offer advice and tips on personal safety for children and young people when travelling in Bromley.

### Safeguarding in Schools

- 3.35 Key achievements in safeguarding in schools include learning from Serious Case Reviews; Children Who Abuse Other Children and Children Who Self Harm. Lessons learnt from the Serious Case Review resulted in a Circular being sent to schools which included recommendations for schools to be more alert to signs of neglect and to tighten up on pulling together and the reporting of concerns. Reflections on the process for schools led to changes in the BSCB’s SCR procedure.
- 3.36 A working group looked at a protocol that included an assessment for children who abuse other children. The assessment assists schools in gauging whether the child, or other children, would be put at risk and how the situation is best managed. A pilot scheme is currently being trialled.
- 3.37 Another working group looked at research and findings of children who self harm and how schools can recognise the signs, and access support. The work of that group will be included in a wider remit of issues affecting adolescents.



- 3.38 The academic year 2009/10 saw an increase in requests and delivery of basic child protection/safeguarding training. It also saw the introduction of safeguarding checks/audits in schools.

### **Safeguarding in Health**

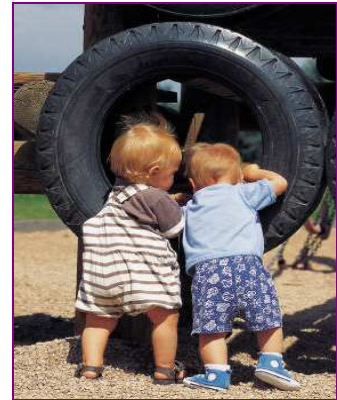
- 3.39 Safeguarding children is a high priority for all NHS organisations in Bromley. At present there are a number of structural changes underway within the NHS locally including: the development of a cluster approach to commissioning across South East London, the development of Business Support Unit in Bromley to support local commissioning and the development of the GP Commissioning Consortia, the transition of Public health into the Local Authority and the launch of Bromley Healthcare from 1 April 2011. Bromley Healthcare is a social enterprise delivering community health services across Bromley including health visiting, school nursing, community paediatrics and the local walk-in health services.
- 3.40 Robust safeguarding arrangements are in place in all local NHS agencies and they have posted declaration on their websites setting out compliance with standards monitored by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). These include arrangements for safe recruitment, policy, procedure and training. Safeguarding children arrangements across health services are being maintained and closely monitored through transition to new NHS structures.
- 3.41 This year the programme of GP practice visits for updating on child protection was accompanied by a well-attended academic day. A Local Enterprise Service for safeguarding children has been taken up by many of the GP practices across Bromley helping to further embed good safeguarding arrangements within primary care.
- 3.42 Safeguarding arrangements for other primary care providers are also in place. Pharmacists receive training on safeguarding alongside Chlamydia training. A programme for training Dentists is underway and has been extended to meet the high level of demand. An updated briefing for Optometrists was recently developed in March 2011.
- 3.43 Strategic links to the BSCB are well developed with designated and named staff for safeguarding children regularly forming part of development and audit groups as well as sitting on relevant committees. The Director of Public Health sits on the BSCB Executive and also chairs the Safeguarding Children Commissioning Group of NHS Bromley. NHS Bromley received its Ofsted /CQC inspection in April 2010 and in September 2010 the NHS London Safeguarding Improvement Team undertook a peer review of safeguarding across local NHS services. Both were positive about the safeguarding arrangements in place and actions plans arising from these are being implemented according to an appropriate timescale.
- 3.44 Health agencies across Bromley meet quarterly at the Local Safeguarding Children Health Forum. The Forum is jointly chaired by the Designated Doctor and the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children in Bromley. The forum brings together work and developments in safeguarding children across the Borough reporting to NHS Bromley as well as the Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring meeting of the BSCB.



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- 3.45 Health are also leading a multi-agency group aimed at the development of work to ensure young girls at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) are safeguarded within Bromley. So far this led to changes within maternity services and additional training for front line staff within social care.
- 3.46 The closure of Queen Mary's emergency department services led to services transferring to Princes Royal University Hospital (PRUH) and Queen Elizabeth (QE) Hospitals in November 2010, and a new service in the Children and Young People's Assessment Unit. Maternity services underwent further change as their services transferred December 2010. Neonatal care transferred to the new sites with an expanded ability to care for 26 high dependency babies. Transferring services has had implications for safeguarding practice across sites. These include information sharing with different Children's Social Care and Provider Units, ensuring staff are aware of who to contact if there were concerns and standards safeguarding processes. There was a clear plan developed to ensure that all safeguarding issues were addressed.
- 3.47 In 2010 a total of 11,879 babies were delivered within SLHT, 32,578 children and young people accessed emergency departments and 47, 892 attended out patient departments. Finally 13,046 children or young people were admitted to hospital for further treatment. This is a significant amount of children and young people accessing services and requiring safeguarding risk assessment and it highlights the amount of possible safeguarding activity within the Trust.
- 3.48 Within mental health services the restructuring of Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust took place April 2010 moving from three Community Mental Health Teams to one Liaison and Intake Team (LIT) and Short Term Intervention Team (SIT). Cases requiring longer term intervention are held within the three Recovery Teams, the Assertive Community Treatment Team and the Rehabilitation Support Team. In April 2011 Oxleas restructured into functional directorates across the three boroughs of Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley. The three Heads of Social Care remain based in their boroughs and in Bromley continues to work across all teams in the borough and continues to lead on children's safeguarding issues in all parts of the Oxleas service. Restructuring of Oxleas services will not change the high focus and priority given to children's safeguarding.
- 3.49 Over the last year Oxleas continued to build strong working relationships with midwives and health visitors, holding regular meetings to discuss cases leading to enhanced understanding of each other's roles. Safeguarding leads have been identified for each team and they have received additional training.





### Children's Social Care

- 3.50 Following the Ofsted inspection, Children's Social Care continued to work on a detailed Safeguarding and Social Care Improvement Plan which incorporated the issues arising from the inspection. This plan contained detailed proposals to improve the front line child protection service in social care by, amongst other things, improving the recruitment of permanent child protection social workers and improving the Integrated Children's System – the electronic recording system for Children's Social Care. Most of the improvement plan is now completed. Of particular note is the improvement in recruitment. This was partly achieved by the introduction of the recruitment and retention package. The front line child protection teams now have over 80% permanent staff compared to about 50% a year ago.
- 3.51 Despite the workload pressures and recruitment challenges, performance within the service has been maintained.

Performance area	March 2010	February 2011
No. of initial assessments	2486	2316
No. completed in timescales	23%*	51.4%
No. of core assessments	867	903
No. completed in timescales	43.5%	51.9%
No. of Child Protection (CP) plans	250	322
No. reviewed within timescales	92.1%	95%
No. of CP visits in timescale (6 weekly)	92%	99%

\*timescale based on 7 day completion – this changed to 10 days for 2010/11.

- 3.52 Notwithstanding the change in timescales for initial assessments performance for this area has improved. This is a result of both the downturn in referrals to Children's Social Care and improved staffing levels. Other areas of child protection work have remained consistent with some slight improvement in performance.





## 4. Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring

BROMLEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD DATASET 2010-2011					
	Description	10/11 1st Quarter	10/11 2nd Quarter	10/11 3rd Quarter	10/11 End of Year Figure
1	Number of children reported as missing overnight from				
	care	8	4	1	14
	home	31	39	31	140
	other (hospital/school)	-	-	-	0
2	Percentage of children missing from care				
	under 10 years	0%	0%	0%	0%
	10-16 years	100%	100%	100%	100%
	( Black minority ethnic) BME	41%	100%	0%	35%
	Gender: Female	83%	75%	100%	89%
	Male	37%	25%	0%	15%
	Have gone missing on 2 or more occasions	33%	20%		13%
3	Percentage of children missing home				
	under 10 years	0%	7%	0%	1%
	10-16 years	86%	92%	100%	94%
	( Black minority ethnic) BME	37%	29%	45%	38%
	Gender: Female	74%	59%	77%	72%
	Male	26%	41%	33%	28%
	Have gone missing on 2 or more occasions	11%	8%		
8	Number of Children Subject to a CP Plan	269	279	313	315
	under 10 years	70%	71%	69%	71%
	10-18 years	30%	29%	31%	28%
	Gender: Female	52%	52%	53%	53%
	Male	46%	44%	44%	44%
	Unborn	2%	4%	2%	3%
	( Black minority ethnic) BME	30%	34%	28%	31%
	Category of plan				
	Neglect		32%	32%	33%
	Physical Abuse		6%	7%	6%
	Emotional Abuse	Not available	46%	42%	43%
Sexual Abuse		1%	0.6%	0.6%	
Multiple		15%	19%	17%	
9	Number of initial contacts to children's social care (CSC)	2411	2130	2155	8422
10	Percentage initial contacts that go onto referrals	Not available	Not available	30%	30%
11	Number of referrals to CSC	913	557	512	2703



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12	Percentage of Referrals to CSC going on to initial assessments	80%	85%	92%	93%
13	Percentage of Initial Assessments going on to core assessment	53%	56%	50%	51%
14	Number of completed assessment under Common Assessment Frameworks (CAF)	166	70	98	466
15	Number of CAFs escalated to CSC	27	4	4	10
16	Number of allegations against multi-agency staff referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	21		65	
	Referral by employment sector :				
	Social care	3		4	
	Health	1		7	
	Education	3		28	
	Foster carers	4		4	
	Connexions	0-		0	
	Police	1		1	
	Youth Offending Team	0		0	
	Secure Estate	0		0	
Voluntary Organisations	2		2		
Faith Groups	0		2		
Miscellaneous (Armed Forces / Probation /CAFCASS/ Immigration/Asylum support / Transport /NSPCC	0		0		
Other)	0		14		
15	Outcome of allegations				
	Substantiated	3		25	
	Unsubstantiated	4		17	
	No conclusion reached yet	14		27	
16	Number of privately fostered children registered with children's social services	1	2	2	5
17	Number of privately fostered children who have had an initial assessment	0	0	0	0
18	Number of child deaths	4	3	7	19
19	Vacancies in the CSC				
	Safeguarding & Care Planning	28%	18%	na	29.6%
	Referral & Assessment	39%	20%	na	24.3%
20	Vacancies: Health Visitors	2.3%	1%	4%	6.9%
21	Vacancies: Midwives	-	-	8.8 %	7%



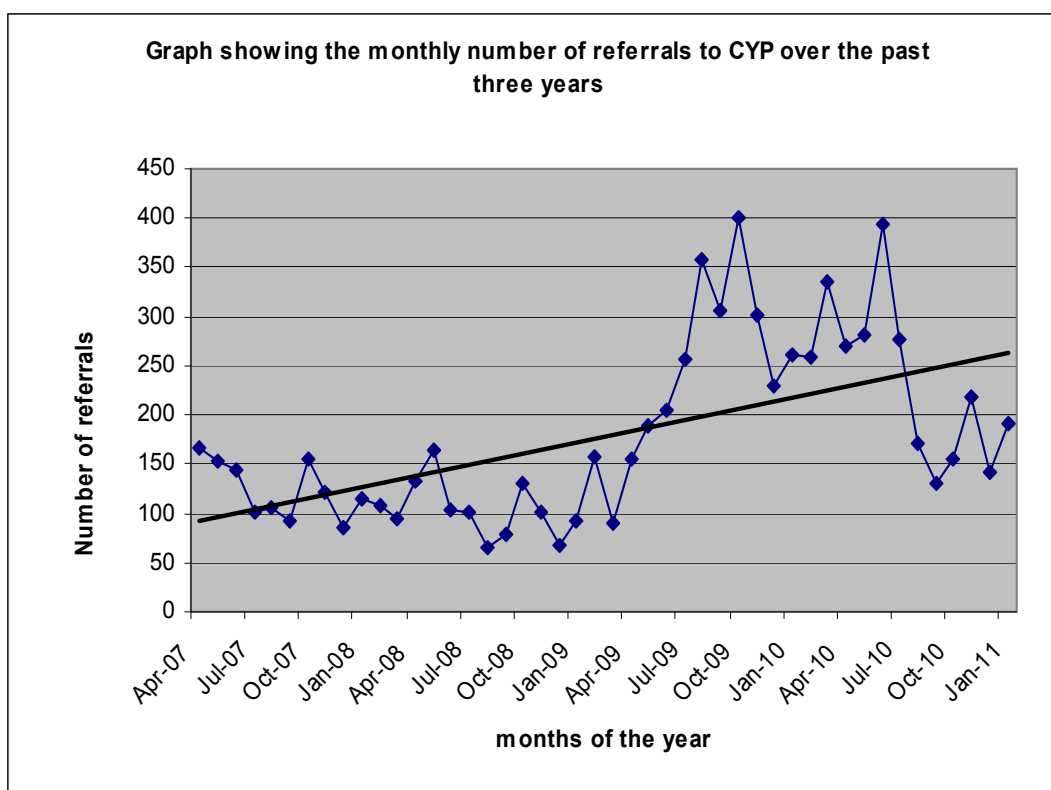
## MONITORING

4.1 Monitoring how well agencies perform their duty to safeguard child and young people from harm and how they work together is a central function of LSCBs. A key aspect of its role is the production of a safeguarding dataset, which focuses on the core areas of child protection and particular issues for other agencies. Partners acknowledge the importance of regularly reviewing multi-agency information on safeguarding as an essential element of holding agencies to account. The information can identify the need for service improvements or for enhanced joint work to minimise safeguarding risks. Explored in greater detail, the dataset enables the BSCB to provide a narrative about safeguarding arrangements locally.

### Performance Patterns in Children Protection

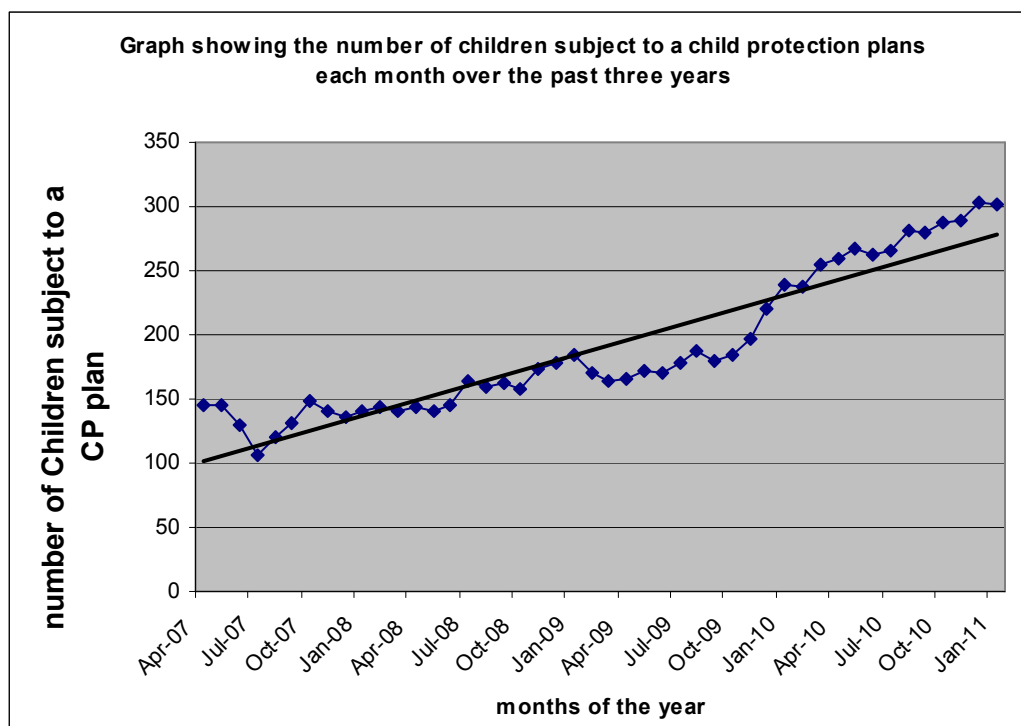
4.2 Bromley has seen a significant increase in the number of referrals to Children’s Social Care and children subject to child protection plans over a three year period. From April 2008 to March 2010 increased activity includes: 143% increase in initial contacts, 143% increase in initial assessments, a 99% increase in core assessments, 100% increase in child protection investigations and a 69 % increase in children subject to a child protection plan.

4.3 Graph 1 below shows the sharp peak in referrals to Children’s Social Care in July 2010. Since that time there has been a falling back in the referral rate. However, Graph 2 below shows that this has not been accompanied by such a decline in the number of children subject to child protection plans. In April 2011 the number fell back for the first time dropping to 303, still a significant increase on previous years.



CSC Graph 1





CSC Graph 2

- 4.4 In response to this increase in demand and activity Bromley Council has agreed for an increase in establishment of front line social work service of 10 posts. The figures shown in the table above just relate to qualified posts and show the underlying vacancy figures excluding any agency staff who may have been in post at the time. This increase in referrals to children's social care has been mirrored in other local authorities, particularly across London, and is felt to be in part the aftermath of the baby Peter case but also an increase in the number of referrals coming from the police, particularly in relation to domestic violence. The table below shows the significant numbers of referrals coming from the police in Bromley.
- 4.5 In response to this concern about the increasing number of referrals from the police, Bromley Children's Social Care has worked in partnership with the Metropolitan Police to set up a 'triage' system for police and social care to work together at the point of referral to jointly review and assess the nature of contracts and referrals and ensure that where appropriate referrals are passed to lower threshold organisations than Children's Social Care. This will ensure that Children's Social Care continue to target the children at greatest risk and also help to identify sources of support for those families not meeting the Children's Social Care threshold. The triage will be operational from May 2011. As part of this work the BSCB 'threshold document' which outlines the threshold for referrals to Children's Social Care has been reviewed and is now incorporated in a 'Partnership' document which sets out more clearly the role of all agencies working with children in Bromley and their responsibilities towards safeguarding.
- 4.6 In addition to the concern about the number and appropriateness of referrals to Children's Social Care there is concern about the significantly high number of children subject to child protection plans and this will be the subject of an audit in May 2011 to try to identify the factors within Bromley leading to this rise.



- 4.7 Another area of concern for Children's Social Care has been the difficulty recruiting front line child protection social workers. This has been particularly acute in London and is attributed to the negative impact of the baby Peter Connelly case on the profession, but also the highly mobile nature of the London workforce. The impact of a highly mobile workforce on the quality of child protection work cannot be underestimated. A serious case review in Bromley in 2009 into serious injuries sustained by a 3 month old baby showed that in a five month period this highly vulnerable family had 5 different social workers and 4 different managers.
- 4.8 The mobility of the workforce has led not only to difficulties in effective workload management but also created budget pressures because of the need to employ locum staff at premium rates to fill vacancies to cover the statutory responsibilities of the service. The difficulties around the recruitment and retention of front line staff were the subject of a report to the Executive of the Council in February 2010. The Executive agreed a range of measures to address the difficulties including a recruitment and retention package for front line staff. This has led to significant improvements in performance.

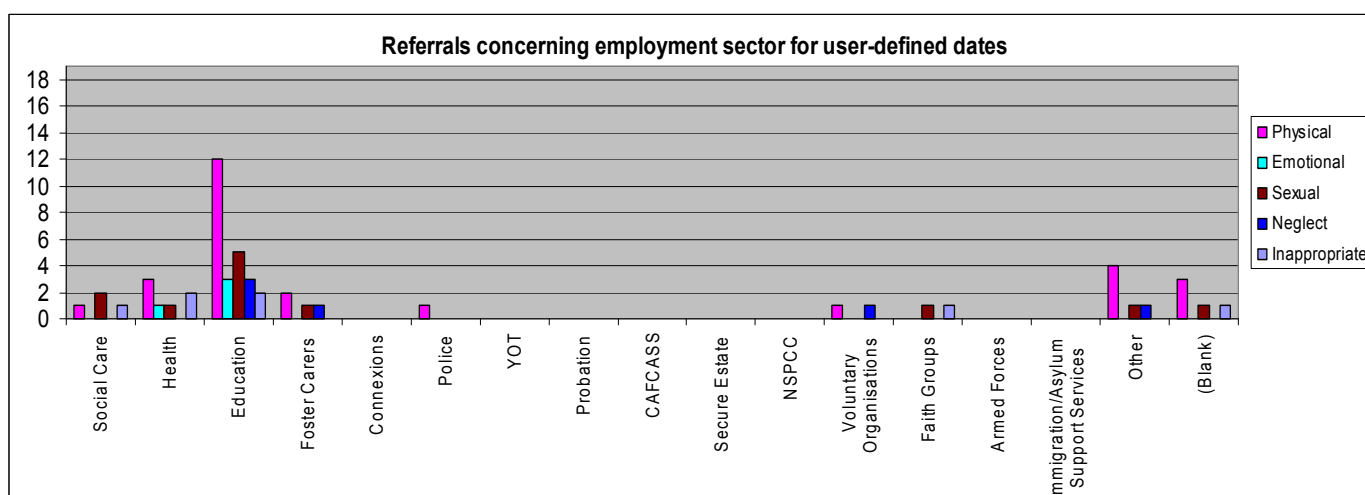
**All initial contacts between 01/09/10 and 1/12/10 by agency**

Agency	Number of Initial contacts	% of agency type Social care contacts	Number that go onto referrals
Police	1440	61.67%	170
Teacher	120	5.14%	70
A & E	115	4.93%	18
Family member/relative/carer	112	4.80%	33
Local Authority Services – External	71	3.04%	12
Local Auth Services - Internal, Social Care	70	3.00%	26
Other Primary Health Services	55	2.36%	26
Midwife	52	2.23%	21
Other	52	2.23%	16
Unknown/anonymous	46	1.97%	16
Probation	36	1.54%	10
Voluntary Organisations	26	1.11%	12
GP	24	1.03%	9
Health Visitor	20	0.86%	10
Legal/courts	19	0.81%	11
Acquaintance (inc. neighbours/child minders)	15	0.64%	10
CAFCASS	14	0.60%	3
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	9	0.39%	7
Housing	9	0.39%	5
Self	6	0.26%	3
Health Other	6	0.26%	2
Education Welfare Officer	5	0.21%	2
Adult Health Services	4	0.17%	0
Drugs and Alcohol Services	4	0.17%	0
Prison	4	0.17%	4
District Nurse	1	0.04%	0



### Allegations Against Professionals

4.9 There are occasions when a child protection allegation is made against a professional. In each case that meets the criteria, the allegation is treated seriously and thoroughly investigated by a multi-agency strategy group convened by the Council. Until recently local authorities were required to submit data on the number and nature of child protection allegations and the outcome of investigations to the government. These are reported twice yearly to the BSCB Executive to identify any trends and whether specific interventions, such as training, is required for a sector. The data presented is for the 6 month period from September 2010 to end March 2011 of ongoing and initiated allegations. A total of 65 allegations against professionals were investigated, of which 43 had concluded within a year. The strategy group typically agrees an outcome in half of the referrals within 3 months of the start of the investigation. Where no final outcome is reached about the allegations within a 6 month period (25 cases), this is usually due to the complexity of the case and whether any other legal proceedings are under way.



4.10 A single case may have multiple outcomes. The majority of allegation referrals result in no further action being taken or that the case against an individual is deemed to be unfounded (4), with no evidence to support the allegations. In a number of cases there is not sufficiently strong evidence for the allegation claim to be upheld (7). Of the allegations where action followed 7 resulted in some form of disciplinary action including dismissal and/or suspension. In the case of more serious allegations, five resulted in criminal procedures and two were referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The majority of referrals (28) concerned staff working in the education sector.

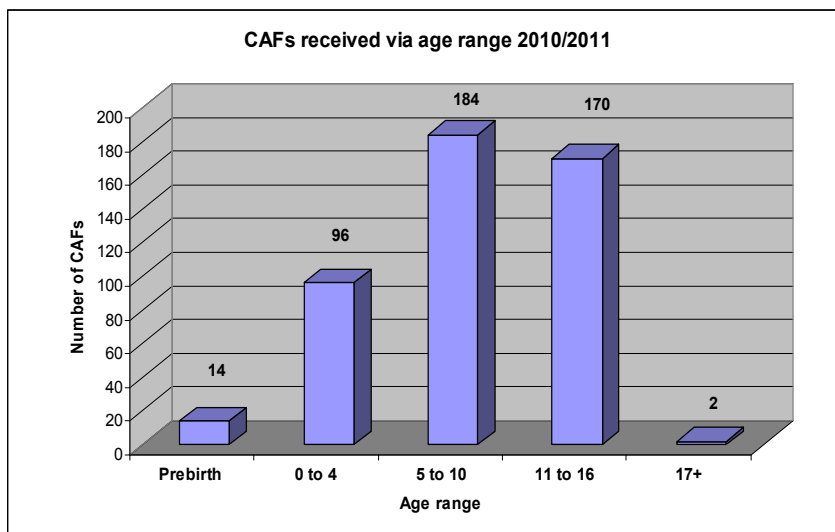
### Early Intervention Common Assessment Framework

4.11 Children with additional needs requiring targeted support need to be assessed in order for appropriate multi / single agency support to be put in place. This year 466 Common Assessment Framework (CAF) forms were completed with parents or carers as part of the process of assessing a child and young person's needs.

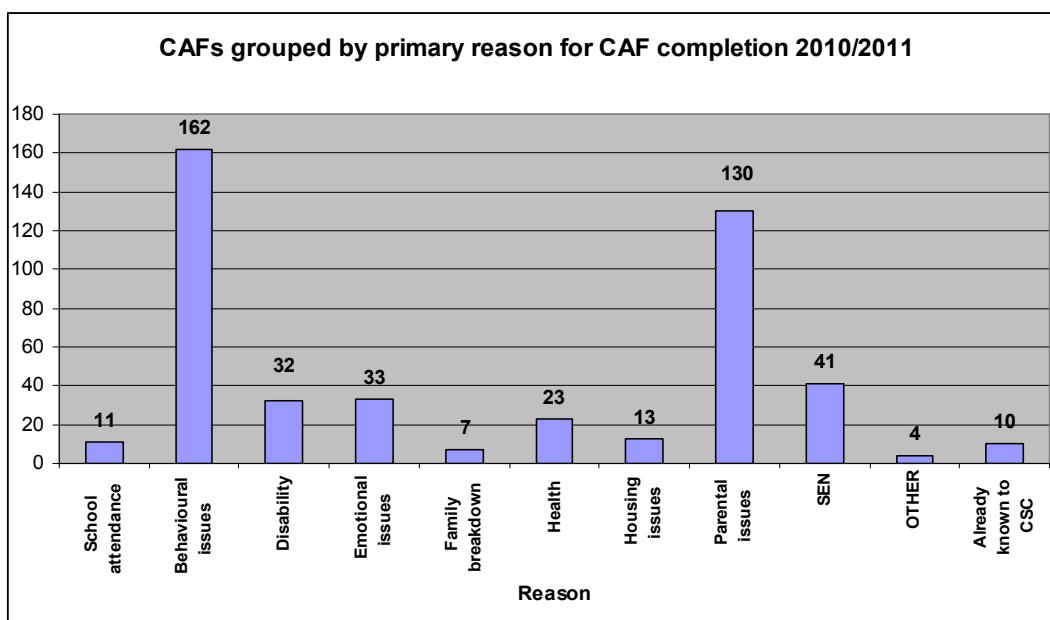


4.12 Primary schools complete the greatest number of CAFs on children (155) followed by secondary schools (119).

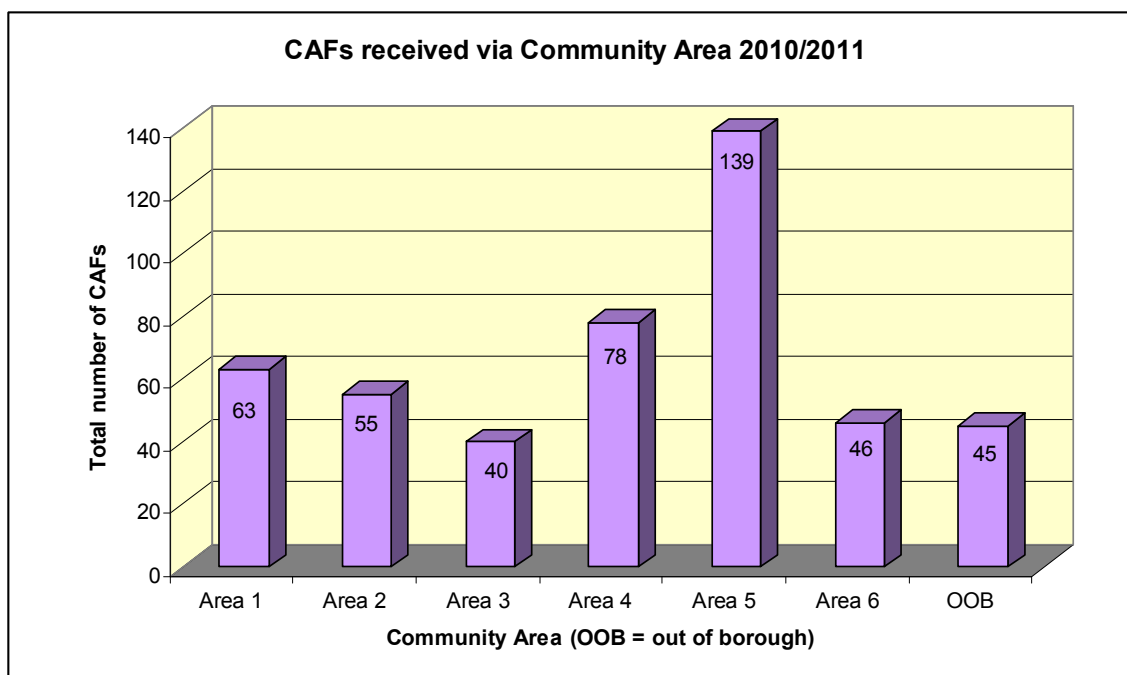
4.13 In 49 cases CAFs were completed following a step-down from the children's social care teams where the cases did not meet the child protection intervention threshold. Health visitors completed the next largest category of CAFs (43).



4.14 The data from the CAF team has been grouped into the primary reasons for initiating a CAF, citing behavioural issues and parental issues as the main ones. The vast majority of CAFs are completed on children aged 5-10 (184) followed by the 11-16 years olds (170). However, the statistics show a 66% annual increase in figures for 2010/2011 in respect of CAFs generated in the 0 to 4 age range. This is an area that the CAF Team have concentrated on in terms of targeting Health Visitors and Early Years settings to try and identify issues at a much earlier stage in a child's life.



4.15 Bromley is divided into six community areas. Areas 1 and 2 (West District), Areas 3, 5 and 6 (East District) and Area 4, which covers parts of both East and West district. The breakdown across the districts is as follows: total in West District (162), total in East District (259), out of borough children and young people (45).



### Children who Died

- 4.16 There were 19 Bromley children who died in the period April 2010 – March 2011. The Child Death Overview Panel continues to analyse the information for each child. This will form the basis of the panel's third Annual Report to the BSCB Executive at the end of the year.
- 4.17 Bromley's experience of child deaths is shared with a number of other authorities, whereby far the most common cause of death is congenital condition affecting the baby's life chances. Of course, this is a tragedy for each family, which we cannot forget. The learning from unexpected deaths is used to provide advice to parents and to identify whether any changes to service provision can improve life chances.
- 4.18 In 2009-2010, there were 23 child deaths in Bromley of which 11 were unexpected. There is a slight decrease 2010-2011 with 19 deaths. The number of child deaths in Bromley each year remains stable - in 2008-09 there were 22 deaths of which 9 were unexpected. Of those reviews completed in 2009-2010, the child death overview panel deemed none to be preventable, but had modifiable factors such as parental smoking in the case of Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy (SUDIs).
- 4.19 Congenital condition was the most common cause of death. Other causes of death include extreme pre-maturity, sudden unexplained death in infancy (SUDI) and road traffic accidents.
- 4.20 The four SUDI deaths in 2009-10 were reviewed together in a special meeting of the CDOP. Although the statistical sample is small, there were some common features in young children whose death was defined as SUDI. All had low birth weight and had a history of carers/parents being smokers. The special meeting of the CDOP was also attended by the risk manager in South London Healthcare Trust and the Coroner's office.



4.21 Another special meeting of the CDOP reviewed the cases of two teenage suicides. Two main learning points emerged from the reviews:

- § Significant impact on wider community – grandparents, friends, school and the need to consider further bereavement support services.
- § Rapid response meetings were useful for sharing information, professional support and identifying a key contact and support for parents.

### About the children who runaway

4.22 Significant progress was made this year in managing cases where children run away. A multi-agency operational group regularly analysed the data, with information on children being shared as relevant with health, youth service, youth offending, education and social care services.

4.23 From the performance data, it is clear that over the past year the number of runaways from care remains small averaging one or two young people each month totalling 14 over the year. Last year there were 260 children in care to the local authority, of which 133 are placed out of borough. Of this number, 11 placed more than 20 miles out of borough. The number of young people resident in Bromley who went missing from home was 140, although the number of missing incidents recorded by the police is much greater. Clearly some very vulnerable young people may runaway several times in a year. Girls appear to be more prone than boys to run away. Furthermore the vast majority of runaways are young people between age of 10 -16 mainly teenagers. Each missing incident is notified to children's safeguarding and social care and other agencies are engaged to work with families and young people where appropriate. Young people from minority ethnic groups are more highly represented among runaways than population statistics might suggest, hovering at between 35% for those in care and 38% for those living at home.

### Profile and take up of Interagency Training

4.24 The BSCB evaluates all its training courses at the end of each session. This enables the Training Sub Committee to enhance and develop the training programme or address any concerns with trainers or trainees. This year the BSCB explored the impact of its training. Specifically, it considered evidence of improvement to working practices and in delegate understanding and performance of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. A multi-agency task group was formed from the Training Sub Committee to conduct the evaluation of past course delegates. There was a response rate of 26% and a notable proportion of delegates who undertook the training had since left their organisation.

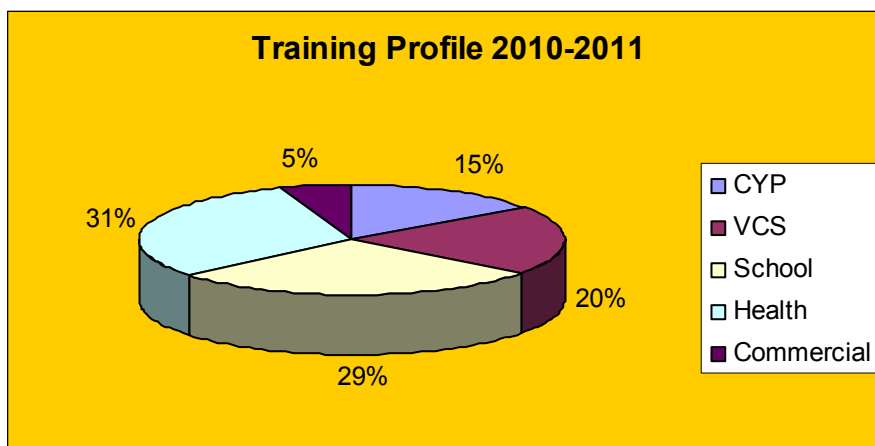
4.25 Delegate feedback included that the training enabled them to:

- § refresh their knowledge of safeguarding practice
- § gain confidence in their working practice as a result of their enhanced awareness.
- § be aware of complexities of child protection and thresholds,
- § evaluate more carefully signs of abuse
- § understand how to move a case on
- § be aware of recent changes to safeguarding practice coming from SCRs



- § gave greater confidence in how to deal with issues
- § have better insight into Social workers role.

4.26 The BSCB provides the local multi agency training in child protection. This year the BSCB provided 38 courses and 5 briefings, attended by 845 delegates. This is a 12% increase on last year. The BSCB aims to have a multi-agency mix of professionals at every training course and a breakdown of agencies attending training up to March 2011 is given.



4.27 As in previous years, health and education make up a significant proportion of delegates (31% and 29% respectively). The proportion of voluntary and community agencies attending continues to steadily increase and was 20% this year.

4.28 Changes to the training programme were made this year following the publication of Working Together to Safeguard Children, which helpfully included a more detailed breakdown of training groups and suggestions for training content and who was responsible for providing training. The BSCB planned to run two courses for Group A or the new Group 1 training group. However, to improve access to and take up of this training by the range of delegates who need it, the BSCB Training Committee agreed to offer a package of e-learning. The advantage of on line training is that delegates can learn at a time and pace that to suits them. Whilst not multi-agency training, the training package promotes a multi-agency perspective throughout.



## AUDITING SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

### Section 11

- 4.29 Section 11 of the Children Act requires statutory agencies to work together to safeguard children and young people and stipulates what must be in place within agencies for this to occur. Each agency must ensure that:
- § their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and
  - § any services provided also have regard to that need.
- 4.30 Every two to three years the BSCB audits agencies under this section. This audit was undertaken through questionnaires to statutory partners in the summer and autumn 2010.
- 4.31 The audit identified that safeguarding arrangements among key agencies in Bromley are in place. This implies that children and young people can be adequately safeguarded in Bromley. The outcomes were put before the Executive Committee so that members could assure themselves of the measures in place. There was also an opportunity to share good practice. It was interesting to note the variety of agency arrangements for reviewing safeguarding activity, such as through supervision, safeguarding committees, audits, policy and procedure review processes.
- 4.32 Whilst the reporting tool was sufficient to assure the BSCB that safeguarding arrangements are in place, it did not provide the level of challenge to partners, which would enable them to demonstrate the quality and impact of safeguarding and child protection in their services and arrangements.
- 4.33 Information from other audits when cross-referenced with the Section 11 audit helped to check whether front line practice was in line with strategy. The approach and tools to the Section 11 audit will be reviewed and updated before it is next used.

### Child Protection in Bromley

- 4.34 A detailed audit was undertaken of a limited number of cases of children subject to a child protection plan by a multi agency group. The cases were selected to represent a spread of: categories of abuse, ethnicity, age and gender mix and a mix of professional and service involvements.
- 4.35 Features of concern that emerged from the audit remain subject to an action plan which the BSCB Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring Committee continues to monitor. Positive features that emerged from the audit included that case planning and its implementation is a strength in Bromley. Case conference plans are particularly seen as a strong area, with clarity around reducing risk and focusing on the child's welfare. They indicate good working relationships among professionals and parents.





4.36 A number of recommendations were made which focus on areas of concern:

- § Referrals will be progressed effectively, with better informed decision making involving a) greater awareness of the procedures (particularly domestic violence) b) partner agencies to avoid delay in appropriate action.
- § Investigations and Assessments have full information from agency checks, social histories and contact with all relevant family members (particularly fathers and extended family) to support better informed decision making and to avoid delay in appropriate action.
- § Core Groups need to be more effective in progressing the plan. This will be subject of a BSCB multi-agency audit in 2011-12.

### E-Safety

4.37 In 2008 the BSCB issued a strategy and draft policy for safeguarding in relation to electronic devices, the internet and on line abuse. As planned the implementation of the strategy was reviewed in the autumn. A survey based audit of partner agencies was undertaken to find out the level of awareness about e-safety and what agencies put in place deal with such issues.

4.38 Of the agencies that responded it was clear that few had designated a person to lead on this role specifically, but the safeguarding lead had absorbed the responsibilities into his/her duties. Agencies had policies on acceptable use of computers, other electronic devices or the internet, and most incorporated e-safety within their existing child protection policies.

### Domestic Violence

4.39 Domestic Violence is a BSCB priority area and over the past two years it has made a considerable investment in promoting the London supplementary procedure on domestic violence and effective identification and assessment of risk through the Barnardos Risk Assessment and Identification Matrix tool.

4.40 Following an audit in November 2009, and a Barnardos evaluation in February 2010 on the use of the procedures and further follow up single agency audits, a full multi agency audit was undertaken in 2011. A programme of multi agency awareness-raising has been undertaken during this period, as well as the issue being raised in lessons from serious case reviews.





### Children's Social Care

- 4.41 Six detailed audits of front line practise were conducted in Children's Social Care during 2010/11. This was in addition to the regular audit of front line practice undertaken by managers within the service as part of their supervisory responsibilities. The audits looked in detail at practice in the front line Referral and Assessment Teams, the Safeguarding and Care Planning Teams and the Looked After Children Team. In addition, an audit of supervision arrangements took place. Some of the outcomes of the audits which have multi-agency implications included: the need to develop better links between the Referral and Assessment Service and the Common Assessment Framework Team – it is hoped that this will be enhanced by the introduction of the triage system. Another was the need for there to be further training around Bromley Missing Children procedures as there needs to be improved compliance. The procedures are now being reviewed and BSCB will be looking at further training in this area.

### Children's and Young People's Views

- 4.42 Ofsted's national survey of children and young people's views, Tell Us, ceased in August 2010 as part of the government's commitment to reduce the bureaucratic burden on schools.
- 4.43 Previously the BSCB used findings from the survey to inform priorities and action. Instead action is underway to develop a process for consultation with schools councils. It is anticipated that there will be a termly consultation that includes safeguarding issues. This will ensure that the direct voice of children is heard and taken into account when considering improvements to safeguarding. It is proposed that the autumn term considers the issues of bullying top coincide with anti-bullying week.
- 4.44 Young people played an active part in the annual conference and their contribution had a significant impact. BSCB plan to ensure that obtaining the views of children and young people is more consistent. Therefore it has asked agencies to provide feedback to the Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring Committee of any surveys of children and young people's views, which can subsequently be reported to the Executive.





## 6 Future Priorities and Developments

### Challenges in Child Protection

This report is written at a time of significant change, which will have an impact upon most agencies. While the detail is being established at a national level, it remains important the BSCB to remain focused on the local issues that impact on the safety of children. Not only are there significant changes to the organisation and structure of agencies, but almost all agencies are concerned with delivering higher quality services in times of increasing financial constraint. BSCB is concerned for the impact on safeguarding children and intends to monitor these changes anticipating issues and minimising impact where necessary.

The report has already indicated changes to health agencies and schools in the Borough (see paragraphs 3.33 – 3.48). An example of a specific issue is that over the next three years, Bromley Council will need to make 28% savings in its budget and this will include services to children and families. However, mindful of the serious nature of child protection work, the Council has protected the budget of Children's Social Care for 2010/2011. It is not yet clear what impact there will be on the voluntary and independent sector in the Borough and how the likely reduction in proposed children's centres and youth provision together with the current economic situation will impact on family life. It is possible that these factors will result in a decline in family functioning and a loss of support to vulnerable children resulting in an upturn in referrals to Children's Social care. In these circumstances sustaining improvements in the frontline teams could prove difficult.

The BSCB proposes the following priorities for 2011-12 to address these issues.

- A focus on monitoring the impact of early intervention in protecting children and young people. This is particularly relevant as Bromley has now reduced the number of children's centres it will open to 3 from the originally planned 23.
- Launch and promote the changes to the referral system into children's social care and ensure that the multi-agency assessments are working well.
- Develop and promote guidance to help with protecting young people from gangs through a multi-agency task group.
- Ensure that any government changes to the multi-agency framework for child protection are communicated by the BSCB to the wider partnership.
- In partnership with London Borough of Bromley offer on-line child protection training for some groups.
- Working in partnership with Health to support their drive for all front line staff to be trained in safeguarding to Level 3.
- Develop more multi agency approaches to supporting children living in families where there is domestic abuse.

The BSCB workplan 2010-2013 sets out the areas of work identified by the Executive, which will be addressed by partners over the coming year.



## 6 Accounts

A summary of the accounts of the BSCB for 2010-11

<b>INCOME</b>	
Carry forward ( for SCRs)	10,100
Contributions from partner agencies (includes staff costs)	113,790
Other Income	6120
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>130,010</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Administration, staff, consultant, office,	83,006
Training	32,100
Annual Conference	
Serious Case Review	10,614
Publications, guidance & resources	5564
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>131,284</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>(1274)</b>



## 7. BSCB Main Board Membership

Independent Chairman	Independent
Consultant Community Paediatrician	Bromley Primary Care Trust
Director Public Health	Bromley Primary Care Trust
Consultant in Public Health Medicine	Bromley Primary Care Trust
Designated Nurse	Bromley Primary Care Trust
Assistant Director, Clinical Services & Care Environment	Bromley Primary Care Trust (Bromley Healthcare)
Named General Practitioner	Bromley Primary Care Trust
Manager of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	Oxleas NHS Trust
Bromley Service Director	Oxleas NHS Trust
Acting Nurse Director	South London Hospitals NHS Trust
Director, Independent Mental Health Service	Adolescent Psychiatric Unit
Director, Children and Young People's Services	London Borough of Bromley
Assistant Director, Adult & Community Services	London Borough of Bromley
Councillor, CYP Portfolio Holder	London Borough of Bromley
Asst Director Legal & Support Services	London Borough of Bromley
Head of Children's Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	London Borough of Bromley
Head of Housing Needs	London Borough of Bromley
Head of Integrated Youth Support Service	London Borough of Bromley
Head of Service Children's Social Care Referral & Assessment	London Borough of Bromley
Head of Bromley Youth Offending Team	London Borough of Bromley
Drug Action Team Co-ordinator	London Borough of Bromley
Early Years and Childcare Manager	London Borough of Bromley
Lead Officer for Education Safeguarding	London Borough of Bromley
Programme Manager, Black and Minority Ethnic Communities	London Borough of Bromley
Head of Service CSC Safeguarding & Care Planning	London Borough of Bromley
Drug Action Team Manager	London Borough of Bromley
Assistant Director, Children's Social Care	London Borough of Bromley
Group Manager, Quality Assurance	London Borough of Bromley
Assistant Director, Adult & Community Services	London Borough of Bromley
Head of Service, Bromley Children & Family Project	London Borough of Bromley
Buzz Manager	Bromley MyTime
Quality Improvement Service Manager	CAFCASS
Church Worker	CFVSF
School Governor	Governor Services
Lay Members	Independent
Assistant Chief Officer	National Probation Service
Student Services Manager	Orpington College
Director of Student Progression	Bromley College of F&H Education
Safeguarding Lead National and Specialist CAMHS	Slam
Borough Crown Prosecutor	South London Prosecution Service
Head Teacher	Manor Oak Primary School
Detective Inspector	Metropolitan Police Service, Child Abuse Investigation Command
Detective Chief Inspector	Metropolitan Police Service, Borough

## 8. Appendix 1

### London Borough of Bromley

Bromley is the largest, geographically, of the 32 London Boroughs. It covers more than 58 square miles, encompassing both highly urbanised and rural areas. It has widely diverse communities and together with the geographic spread it can make the planning of services more complicated.

The latest detailed analysis of the London Borough of Bromley its demographic and economic profile as well as a description of the composition of children and young people in the Borough is based on census information 2001. The Department of Health issued a statement of Public Health in a 2007 analysis of boroughs, districts and counties. Among its measures for children and young people was physical activity among young people, obesity in children, tooth decay, teenage pregnancy and childhood poverty where Bromley was within the average for England.

Bromley's population is changing, with projections until 2031 indicating increases in new births, children and in the older population. Over the period the white population is expected to reduce matched by an increase in the black minority ethnic and 'other' population. The highest proportion is from white other than English background and Black African background. This is reflected in the school population where 24% of children in Bromley schools are from an ethnic background. However, it is worth noting that approximately 20% of the school population 11-14 lived outside the borough. The data showed that in 2005 there were approximately 37,000 children aged between 5 and 14 in Bromley comprising 12% of the borough's population.

The economic diversity of the Borough is notable, with levels of deprivation varying widely between wards. The borough overall is a relatively affluent, with some of its 22 wards ranked amongst the wealthiest in the country, whilst five are ranked amongst the 10% of most deprived areas. These areas are found in the North West, North and Central areas of the Borough. Risk factors emanating from inequalities in health, poverty and social conditions are also linked to increased likelihood of poor mental health.

**London Borough of Bromley**

**PART 1 - PUBLIC**

**Briefing for Children and Young People Portfolio Holder  
18 October 2011**

**CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REPORT**

Contact Officer: Nina Newell, Early Years and Childcare Access Manager  
Tel: 020 8461 7275 E-mail: nina.newell@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Gillian Pearson, Director of Children and Young People Services

1. Summary

1.1 This report is submitted for information to make Members of the Children and Young People Policy Development and Scrutiny (CYP PDS) Committee aware of the key findings within the Childcare Sufficiency Audit Report which is available on the Council Website together with a summary document.

**2. THE BRIEFING**

2.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare (Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006). The Government's definition of sufficient childcare is 'sufficient to meet the requirements of parents who require childcare in order to enable them to take up, or remain in work or to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work'.

2.2 The Local Authority also has a statutory duty to conduct an audit in order to assess the market to determine if childcare is sufficient and to provide a report every three years. (Section 11 of the Childcare Act 2006.) The Act also states that the Audit must take into account the childcare needs of disabled children and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

2.3 For the purposes of the Audit, the supply of formal childcare was considered to include private and local authority day nurseries, childminders, out of school clubs, holiday clubs and extended day pre-school playgroups. Schools offering out of school provision, which is exempt from Ofsted registration on the General Childcare Register, were also included. Consideration was given to the type of available childcare, when the childcare is available and whether this meets the needs of working parents.

2.4 Supply of childcare was assessed by sending structured questionnaires to all childcare providers. These asked for details of vacancies, opening times, flexibility etc.

- 2.5 In order to assess the demand for childcare, a boroughwide parental survey was undertaken - 1,000 copies of a structured questionnaire was distributed via Children and Family Centres, childcare provision and community venues across the borough. An online version was also widely advertised via the Family Information Service. This asked if the available childcare met the needs of parents, and what they would like to see available.
- 2.6 To ensure the robustness and quality of the findings, Childcare Support Ltd, an external agency, undertook the inputting and analysis of the responses to the surveys
- 2.7 The Childcare Sufficiency Report for 2010/11 has now been completed and is available on the Council Website
- 2.8 The main findings are detailed in **Appendix 1** and this information will be used to plan future childcare strategy.

### **3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for working parents in accordance with guidance issued by the Secretary of State and to assess such provision under the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.



## SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS OF THE CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY AUDIT 2010/11

**0-5 year olds** - There is a wide spread of childcare places per 100 0-5 year olds across the borough with the highest level of provision of 70.1% in Hayes and Coney Hall and the lowest provision in Cray Valley West at 22.9%.

The highest number of 0-5 year old places is in the ward of Bromley Town with 646 places, closely followed by Clock House with 614. The lowest number of places is in Darwin ward with 81 places, followed by Shortlands at 145 and Mottingham and Chislehurst North with 145. Indications are that the high concentration of nursery provision in some areas of the borough serves families living in neighbouring areas (e.g. popular childcare is often near to major public transport hubs).

Most wards in Bromley have adequate Early Years provision, with few parents reporting a problem, and an average of 45 places for every 100 children. There is still an indicated need for places for babies (under 2's) and for greater flexibility in terms of payment terms, opening times and providers able to accommodate the changing working patterns of shift workers

**5-15 year olds** - The spread of childcare provision for 5-15 year olds shows the highest level per 100 children in Cray Valley West at 17.7% and the lowest provision in Darwin of 1.6%. All wards are below the national average 20% of places per 100 children for this age group.

Out of school childcare comprises of before and after school clubs as well as provision offered by childminders. In total there are 2,393 out of school places. This equates to 6 places per 100 children aged 5 to 15 years (including disabled children up to 17 years). If childminder numbers are removed this leaves a total of 1,286 places offered by out of school clubs which leaves 3 out of school places per 100 children aged 5 to 15 years.

The need for more childcare provision in the older age group was highlighted in the parent survey particularly during the school holiday periods.

The report highlights both geographical areas where there is still demand for childcare and also the type of care that is required. The Audit indicates that there is in general sufficient childcare to meet the needs of the majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire and that this is of good quality with Bromley providers( nurseries, pre-schools, out of school provision and childminders) receiving above the national average Ofsted outcomes.

**In Summary** - The Audit indicates that the available childcare meets the needs of most parents in Bromley and is of high quality however:-

- affordability of childcare is still a problem for some parents, particularly those who need full day-care;
- there is a continued demand for places for under 2's;
- there is a demand for increased availability of out of school and holiday childcare;
- there is a demand for more childcare for older children (11 years and over);
- there is a demand for more childcare places, both specialist and universally inclusive, for disabled children.

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