

CABINET

22 March 2022

Title: Amendment of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) for Children	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care Integration	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: No
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Accountable Director: Chris Bush, Commissioning Director, Children's Care and Support	
Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Elaine Allegretti, Strategic Director, Children and Adults	
Summary <p>This report presents the outcome of a review of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children which were established in 2019. These arrangements were presented to Cabinet on 18 June 2019 (Minute 15 refers) for approval.</p> <p>Following a recent review this report seeks agreement to an amendment to the arrangements which transfers the statutory responsibility under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 from the Barking, Havering, and Redbridge (BHR) Safeguarding Partnership to the local Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BDSCP). Similar reports are being presented to the Cabinets of LB Havering and LB Redbridge seeking the same.</p>	
Recommendation <p>The Cabinet is recommended to agree that the governance of the statutory responsibility for multi-agency safeguarding children revert to being at the local level, led by the statutory safeguarding partners through the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BDSCP), with effect from April 2022.</p>	
Reason(s) <p>Following a review by the statutory safeguarding partners, and in consultation with the Independent Scrutineers/Chairs of the three local Safeguarding Children Partnerships in Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge, it has been agreed that the statutory safeguarding children function would revert to be being at borough level from April 2022, subject to necessary Cabinet agreement(s).</p>	

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Government commissioned a review of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children, and the subsequent publication of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 placed a new responsibility on Local Authorities, the NHS and Police to make arrangements for working together in the local area.
- 1.2 It was agreed by Cabinet in June 2019 that Barking and Dagenham would work with Redbridge and Havering to form a BHR Safeguarding Partnership, including the North East London CCG and the East Area Basic Command Unit (BCU) Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). These arrangements were published in June 2019 and were subsequently implemented (see Appendix 1).
- 1.3 It was agreed as part of the published arrangements that a review would take place to consider the effectiveness of the new approach. This was delayed due to the pandemic but took place in summer 2021.
- 1.4 The review, which included all statutory safeguarding partners and the Independent Chairs/Scrutineers of the local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (SCPs) concluded that working together at a strategic level across a broader geographical area had many benefits. Much had been achieved in the areas of quality assurance, exploration of mutual areas of concern, sharing good practice and general working together in a cross-borough approach. The statutory safeguarding partners wanted to build on this platform, via for example themed safeguarding summits and 'deep dives' into safeguarding issues. However, the volume of business that needed to be directed through this route at meetings had impacted on capacity.
- 1.5 It was agreed that the statutory requirements, including reporting, and the associated administrative processes, would be better served on a local basis via the existing SCPs which had broader membership and more detailed knowledge of the individual boroughs.

2. Proposal and Issues

- 2.1 The statutory safeguarding partners agreed that this proposal would be taken forward with a view to implementing from April 2022. Therefore, it is proposed to move the statutory multi agency safeguarding responsibility to the local partnerships, the BD Safeguarding Children Partnership for Barking and Dagenham, whilst maintain a non-statutory multi agency partnership across the Barking and Dagenham, Havering, and Redbridge (BHR) area. The non-statutory BHR arrangement would continue to focus on collaborative working and the sharing of learning and good practice.
- 2.2 The proposal has been agreed at the BHR multi agency meeting and LB Redbridge and LB Havering will be taking similar reports through their decision-making arrangements. The CCG and Met Police will also be securing approval for the change through their respective governance arrangements. The proposed has been discussed and agreed at the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

3. Financial Implications

Implications completed by Philippa Farrell, Head of Service Finance:

- 3.1 This report seeks Cabinet's agreement to the statutory responsibility for multi-agency safeguarding children to revert to being led at the local level, through the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BDSCP) with effect from April 2022.
- 3.2 Some partners in the existing arrangement are also in the process of seeking approval for the change through their respective governance arrangements. Once approval for this stage is received further development of the terms and mechanism for the non-Feel statutory multi agency partnership across the Barking and Dagenham, Havering, and Redbridge (BHR) area will commence. This will have financial risks as the Safeguarding Children Partnership received financial contributions of £30k from the CCG, £5k from the Police/MOPAC, £41k from Maintained Schools, £14k from Academies and £7.5k from the BHRUT, while the Council also contribute. We will not know the extent of the risks until the new arrangements are in place.
- 3.3 The Council provided the sum of £21k towards the running of the partnership in 2020/21. Total expenditure, which was within budget, was £109k in the same year. These include the costs of practice learning reviews, training and development needs, administration, independent chairs, and corporate overheads. The requirement for the £21k will not reduce but could increase. As noted in 3.2 above, there might be further financial implications in the future which will become clearer when detailed plans on how the new arrangements will operate and be funded are produced.

4. Legal Implications

Implications completed by Lindsey Marks, Deputy Head of Law.

- 4.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017, significantly amended the Children Act 2004 and one of the changes was that Local Safeguarding Children Boards would be replaced with Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships. The 3 safeguarding partners are the Local Authority, the Police and the CCG who have equal and joint responsibility for Local Safeguarding arrangements.
- 4.2 In July 2018 an updated version of Working Together to Safeguard Children was published and required local authorities to begin their transition from LSCBs to local safeguarding partners. The statutory guidance provides that local safeguarding partners should agree the level of funding secured from each partner to support the new safeguarding arrangements. The level of funding secured from each partner should be "equitable and proportionate", with contributions from each relevant agency. Funding is required to be transparent to children and families in the local authority area and to include the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews.
- 4.3 At least every 12 months the local safeguarding partners and relevant agencies must publish a report on what they have done as a result of the arrangements, and how effective the At least every 12 months the local safeguarding partners and

relevant agencies must publish a report on what they have done as a result of the arrangements, and how effective the arrangements have been in practice.

- 4.4 The proposal in this report ensures that the Local Authority with the other 2 partner agencies (the Police and the CCG) complies with the requirements of Children and Social Work Act 2017 for a Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership, and rather than being a multi-agency safeguarding children partnership across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge, it will revert to being at the local level, led by the statutory safeguarding partners through the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- Cabinet Report, June 2019, Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements
<https://modgov.lbbd.gov.uk/Internet/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=180&MId=10038&Ver=4>

List of Appendices:

- **Appendix 1:** Published Arrangements 2019-2020