



# The BHR SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP

Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements  
2019-20

## **1. Introduction**

This Plan has been produced by the three statutory Safeguarding Partners (SPs) as identified within 'Working Together 2018' and very clearly sets out how the safeguarding arrangements will be provided across the Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge areas. The SPs are:

- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- London Borough of Havering
- London Borough of Redbridge
- NHS Barking and Dagenham Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Havering Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group
- Metropolitan Police Service

As the Safeguarding Partners for the Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge areas we are pleased to publish our new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Our Plan places the well-being and safety of our children and young people at the very heart of our arrangements and all our future work will be dictated by what will best meet their needs. The Plan finds a balance between making good use of developing an integrated approach to some of our common shared safeguarding needs, bringing together much of the infrastructure work needed to support the partnership and ensuring a sharp local focus on the issues and needs that relate to children and young people in the communities in which they live. Above all else, our Plan and subsequent activities will be driven by listening and responding to the needs of children, young people and their families in our areas.



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Adrian Loades  
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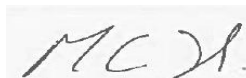
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(City and Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets,  
Waltham Forest, Barking and Dagenham,  
Havering and Redbridge CCGs)

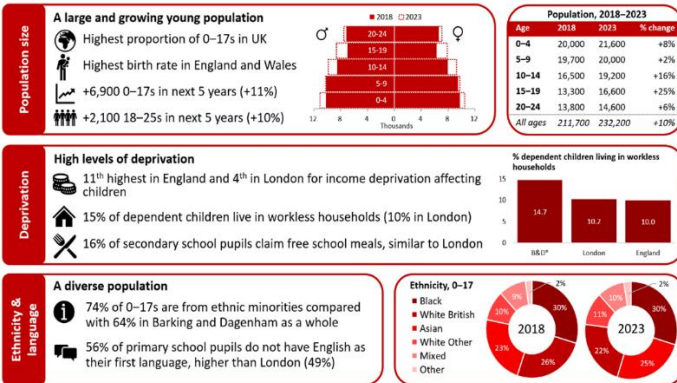


Ceri Jacobs  
**Managing Director**  
BHR CCGs

## 2. About the Boroughs

### Barking and Dagenham

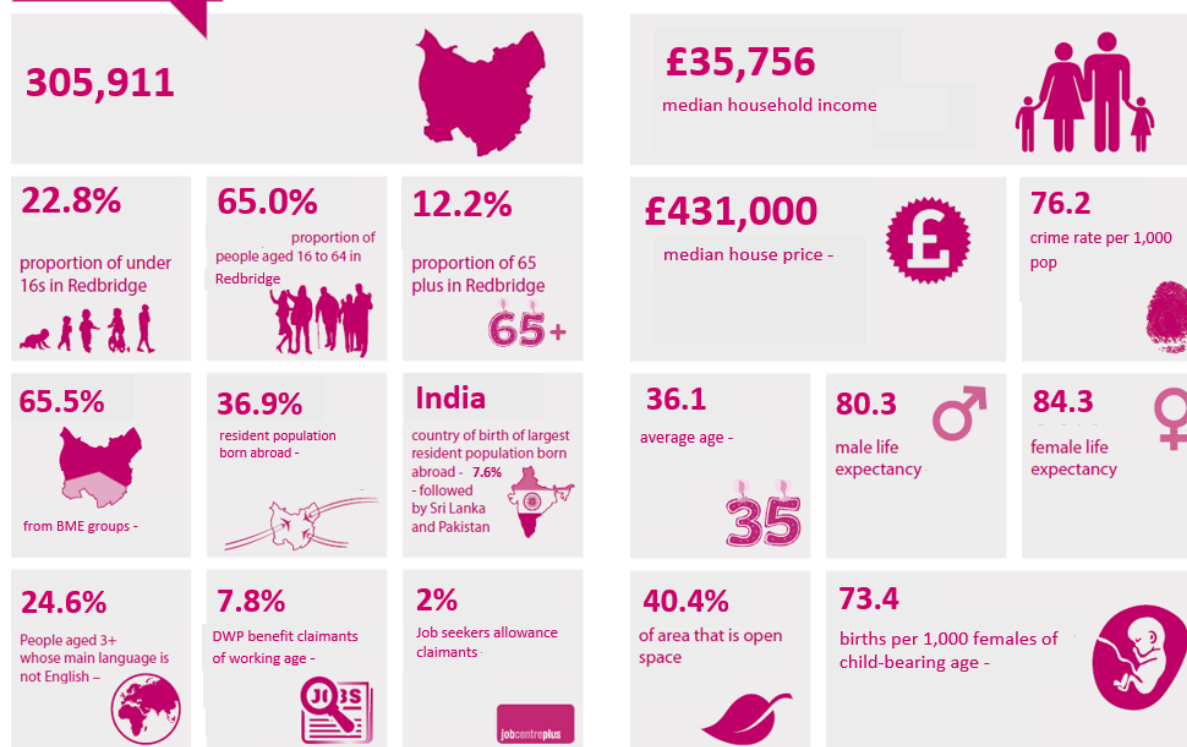
A rapidly growing, fast changing borough that is increasingly young and facing many significant challenges...



### Havering

An elderly borough with the highest projected growth for children in London





Sources: GLA 2016; ONS 2011 Census; DWP Nov 2016; DWP Apr 2019

Sources: GLA 2014; ONS 2018; Met 2019; ONS 2017 mid-year estimates; Greenspace info for Greater London 2015; ONS 2017

### 3. Vision

As Safeguarding Partners, we have set out our vision for this Plan in three areas:

Firstly, above all else the work encapsulated in this Plan has to **reduce the harm and risk** faced by children and young people in our communities. In order to do this, we will ensure that their needs and their voices are centre stage in all we do.

Secondly, as SPs we know we are reliant on the skills and expertise of our collective workforce so we are making a commitment to **invest in that workforce** and specifically to build a culture that values reflection, analysis and learning.

Thirdly, we will not be driven by organisational needs or limited by agency boundaries – where it is **better for children we will work locally and where it is better to work across the wider footprint then we will do so**. The defining factor will be what will be the most effective in keeping children safe.

### 4. Joint Safeguarding Principles

This vision for the Plan leads us to define a number of core principles that will guide our work:

- As Safeguarding Partners, we positively and proactively accept our lead responsibility for these arrangements. We will ensure that our relevant agencies are asked to contribute proportionately and in a focussed way – we will consciously

move away from the need to have every agency around every table and instead ensure their contribution is made where it is most relevant

- The core focus of this Plan is on our quality assurance and scrutiny functions – we will develop an approach that is characterised by reflective learning and appreciative inquiry
- We will use this Plan and future iterations of it to reduce duplication and repeated demands on those agencies that work across more than one local authority area
- The learning from our work set out in this Plan will where relevant be captured into our commissioning strategies, most especially through the ‘Children’s Transformation’ work described below
- The structure designed to support our arrangements will flex and respond to meet need and circumstances – form will very clearly be driven by function
- Decision-making will be clear and specific with each component part of the arrangements having clarity about role and purpose

Staff in all agencies across BHR will continue to follow the Pan-London Child protection Procedures and those procedures will continue to govern the operational delivery of safeguarding services to children and young people across our area.

## **5. Tiers of Activity**

This Plan is designed to operate on three interrelated tiers or levels which, when taken together, will enable us to deliver our safeguarding duties in the round. Statutory Partners recognise that they are a part of a much wider system that keeps children and young people safe. Therefore, it is recognised that our arrangements will need to engage all partners who have a contribution to make to safeguarding.

### **First Tier of Activity**

Children, young people and their families live in local neighbourhoods and communities. Their prime reference points are firstly those local areas and secondly the boroughs made up by those communities. The core part of our Plan therefore is designed to reflect those realities and ensure we build arrangements that best meet local needs.

As Safeguarding Partners, we will therefore construct a set of arrangements designed to meet the needs of the children and families in each of the three areas within the overall BHR footprint.

**Barking and Dagenham** – B&D are progressing their local safeguarding work through five main strands. Firstly, through their Improvement Plan developed in response to the Ofsted ILACS inspection (March 2019); secondly, through their work as a development site for contextual safeguarding (see below); thirdly, as one of the five selected sites by the Early Intervention Foundation to deliver an early years transformation academy (which will be used to target issues related to neglect); fourthly through some work led by the Chief Executive on domestic abuse and fifthly, through the formation of a multi-agency Safeguarding Quality Assurance Group. This latter group will build on the previous work of the LSCB and act to offer some oversight and challenge to the local safeguarding system.

B&D will also be recruiting a 'Safeguarding Champion' to deliver their **independent scrutiny** function. Built as a local equivalent to the children's commissioner role, the post holder will have free rein to roam across the local safeguarding system but with a specific focus on hearing and representing the voices of children, young people and their families.

**Redbridge** – the out-going LSCB has set four priorities for the area which will remain in place for the coming period and are all addressed by this Plan. They are safeguarding vulnerable adolescents; supporting schools and other educational settings; learning from practice and learning from children, young people and families. They will develop a local safeguarding partnership that focusses on both strategic issues and local risks to the safeguarding of children and young people. Its responsibilities will include: identifying annual local safeguarding priorities; progressing the delivery of those safeguarding priorities that are not adopted for cross borough working; overseeing performance and the quality of safeguarding arrangements in Redbridge; coordinating the response to key local safeguarding risks and emerging risks in Redbridge working with other partnerships as needed and ensuring the dissemination of learning both locally and contributing on a cross borough basis.

It will retain an **Independent Chair** who will continue to provide a scrutiny function as required. An **Independent Scrutineer** would also be commissioned to provide annual assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people in Redbridge. The independent scrutineer would be expected to give a particular focus to the views of children, young people and families when undertaking their role.

**Havering** - will develop a Safeguarding Partnership Group to work in conjunction with the BHR Partnership and provide overall strategic direction and governance for the safeguarding partnership within Havering. The Havering Safeguarding Partnership Group (HSPG) will be chaired by the Director of Children's Services. It will develop and oversee the implementation of an annual work programme, identifying key priorities for the partnership, and agreeing objectives for the partnership and individual agencies. Providing leadership and oversight, the HSPG will ensure that the local partnership is effective and provides opportunity for the alignment of safeguarding priorities across agencies and in the wider community of Havering. It will be aligned with national and regional safeguarding work to ensure that local work both learns from and contributes to national best practice. It will retain its focus on the outgoing LSCB's priority areas – children in need and subject to child protection plans where neglect is the concern; working with the Corporate Parenting Group to improve services to care leavers and implementation of the recent Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy with focus on criminal exploitation, county lines and modern slavery. To facilitate effective scrutiny of interdependent work areas, four local thematic groups overseen by the HSPG are envisaged, each to be chaired by a member of the HSPG. The themes will be: Adolescent Safeguarding; Quality and Effectiveness; Schools and Learners; and Case Review Group. The HSPG will also develop Task and Finish Groups as required to examine areas of particular concern with agreed terms of reference.

Havering will commission an **independent person** with the relevant profile, to scrutinise the work of the HSPG through various mechanisms such as observation of processes/review of

minutes/ evolving dialogue with stakeholders, particularly children, young people and their families.

### **Second Tier of Activity**

The need for local focus notwithstanding, there are some safeguarding issues which are common to all and where an integrated and combined response makes best use of our collective resources (including those of our relevant agencies) and which will be more effective in countering risk and increasing safety.

The most obvious area where this approach currently applies is in the area of adolescent risk, dangerous drug networks, gang membership and knife crime. This is a clear example of a current pressing issue, felt in all areas, where borough boundaries are irrelevant for both perpetrators and victims of harm and where all agencies have a contribution to make at some level.

Barking and Dagenham is one of the development sites for Contextual Safeguarding as identified by the University of Bedfordshire and the DfE. The work being developed there will be of relevance to all three areas and will help shape our collective response to this pressing issue. The Safeguarding Partners will commission a task and finish group who will be asked to review current practice, both strategically and operationally, identify areas of good and best practice that can be more widely adopted, examine the roles and contributions of the existing multi agency arrangements to address the needs of young people at risk of or suffering CSE/CE; to consult with young people and relevant voluntary and community bodies and help shape a way forward that both works across our boundaries but allows for local variation as needed. They will make links with the respective Adult Safeguarding Boards (to address issues relating to the involvement of vulnerable adults through processes like 'cuckooing') and that addresses the wider issues of transitional safeguarding and that there is work is carried out across traditional age boundaries. Community Safety Partnerships to ensure a broad integration of approaches and activities – this issue is of such concern that it is crucial that all efforts designed to counter it are well directed and coherent.

The work will coincide with the first review being commissioned by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Panel which is focussed on adolescents and criminal exploitation and due to report in October 2019.

### **Third Tier of Activity**

We have already identified a number of functions and activities which in our judgement will be more efficiently provided either once across the whole area or at least to common templates and processes. We will build on the best of the work already underway under the governance of the three respective LSCBs and bring to a conclusion some good work that has already been initiated by those Boards. We have already constructed a response to the CDOP duties across our three areas and we want to extend and expand that approach as far as possible. In particular, we are wanting this group to develop responses to the following,

set out against the aspirations and commitments we have agreed for each of these areas of work.

**Our guiding principles in all these areas is to simplify, to align and to improve.**

(i) Rapid Reviews

*What Will We Achieve: Compliance with the national requirement to complete rapid reviews within 15 working days; reviews that offer the necessary narrative and analysis that enables local partners and the National Safeguarding panel to make informed choices about the way(s) forward and the quick and effective dissemination of learning back into the system.*

Given these are by definition, case specific, they will be carried out within the area of residence for the child/family involved. We will use our existing local arrangements for the conduct of Serious Case Reviews to conduct these reviews. However, we will develop a common template for all agencies who might be asked to contribute to such a review. The SPs will sign off any completed review and in particular ensure that any recommendations contained therein – whether to conduct a Local Safeguarding Review, whether to conduct any other form of local response; to recommend a national review or to not do any review of any description – are properly owned by the local system.

All rapid reviews, regardless of their proposed outcomes, will be tabled both within the local arrangements and with the tri-borough SP meeting – it is important that all are sighted on specific incidents of concern and abuse that trigger the rapid review threshold. SPs will want to identify any emerging themes which might lend themselves to a thematic local child safeguarding practice review.

(ii) Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

*What Will We Achieve: the completion of LCSP reviews that are short, focussed and reflective, enabling effective dissemination of learning across the system and that meet the standards set out in Working Together 2018 and are responsive to any future guidance from the National Panel*

Again, these are child specific and will need to be commissioned and delivered within the relevant authority boundary. Completed reviews will be tabled both locally and across the wider area. In particular, the SPs will want to maintain an oversight on emerging themes and risks and the production of a review in one area may result in a stocktake and diagnostic in the others. Working Together requires reviewers to be independent of the case under review but not necessarily completely independent of the local safeguarding system. We will therefore develop a pool of reviewers across the wider area able to conduct these reviews as required.

(iii) Quality Assurance

*What Will We Achieve: quality assuring safeguarding systems requires regular and challenging reviews of existing practice and service delivery. Our core focus is to enable reflective learning with a strong focus on 'what works'*



In addition to the LCSP Reviews as required by Working Together, as SPs we are committed to developing a culture of learning and improvement across the whole area. Relevant staff across the three areas will come together to develop a shared programme of reviews across the local system, the outcomes of which will be shared across the whole area; they will identify an agreed methodology(ies) for these reviews with a particular focus on not just involving front-line practitioners but enabling them to conduct and lead on practice evaluations; and to identify examples of good effective safeguarding practice that can be reviewed and analysed and findings disseminated. We will use the development of this shared programme to both reduce demand on those agencies which work across the whole footprint and to ensure the full engagement of our relevant agencies and local partners.

(iv) Agency Challenge

*What Will We Achieve: an assurance that all agencies are making their appropriate contribution to the safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people and are contributing as required to the local safeguarding system*

Working Together 2018 is clear in setting out the crucial contribution of ‘relevant agencies’ especially but not solely schools, colleges, other education providers and early years settings. The duties placed on those agencies under the 2004 Children Act still stand of course and it is important that there is an assurance about the effectiveness of their contributions. We will develop a model of assurance with all our relevant agencies that is proportionate, challenging, informative and ultimately which adds value to our collective safeguarding work.

(v) Data Analysis and Challenge

*What Will We Achieve: we will establish a short-focussed dataset designed to focus on the outcomes for children and young people across the system and that add value to our overall scrutiny work*

As with our commitments around independent scrutiny, so our approach to the construction and purpose of a multi-agency dataset will be driven by the need to add value to work already underway across all partner agencies. We will develop data that focusses on outcomes rather than processes, which highlights potential areas of difference across the three areas (so measuring incident rates becomes important) and that will look beyond the scope of ‘normal’ performance indicator reporting.

(vi) Workforce Development

*What We Will Achieve: we will build on the best of our current workforce development programmes to ensure a consistency of approach across BHR and a focus on the skills and expertise needed to keep children safe.*

We will identify a training programme across the wider BHR area that is designed to focus on those issues that most benefit from multi agency training and that make the biggest impact on children and young people’s safeguarding. Learning from our collective quality assurance work, being responsive to local need and ensuring a relentless focus on practice essentials will be our key drivers.

## **6. Partnership Structure**

As stated in our principles, the formation of our structure is clearly secondary to what it is we are seeking to achieve. The Plan is clear in setting out the required outcomes from these structural arrangements and partners stand ready to amend the structure if those outcomes are not being realised. That said, it is important that relevant agencies and those we need to engage with are able to see how our work is captured and the governance under which it takes place.

The First tier of Activity clearly sets out what will be in place locally.

We will construct a **Safeguarding Partners Group** – the 3 DCSs; the BCU superintendent - Head of Safeguarding from Police and the CCGs Chief Nurse. This group will meet six-weekly in the first instance until these new arrangements are established and proving to be effective. This small, senior group will take the lead for the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across BHR and in particular will:

- Define and share the key safeguarding priorities within each area and develop cross borough responses where it makes sense so to do
- Support local arrangements to be focussed on local issues and that local learning is made available across the BHR area
- Identify themes and activities that require independent scrutiny and commission scrutiny providers to provide challenge and guidance (see section on Independent Scrutiny)
- Resolve any inter-agency conflict as might arise
- Maintain an overview of the new arrangements as they develop

## **7. Relevant Agencies**

It is a matter of fact that the safeguarding of children and young people can only be delivered by all those agencies with a part to play working together in a coherent and integrated manner. As Safeguarding Partners, we recognise and embrace our leadership role but we know we can only deliver what is required of us through highly effective whole system work. One of our core principles is that of ensuring that our partners are asked to contribute to our safeguarding work in ways that are proportionate and appropriate to their core responsibilities. Agencies will be expected to contribute significantly where it is clearly their role so to do but not where their contribution would be marginal.

The local arrangements set out above will clearly engage many of our relevant agencies – but again with a specific focus on ensuring there are enabled to make the ‘right’ contribution in the ‘right’ setting. The proposed BHR work on adolescents will specifically need to engage with agencies such as the respective YOTs, the NOMs and CRC; representatives of the secondary school sector, CAMHS and relevant VCS bodies.

Our schools and early years settings are of course crucial partners in all our work with children and young people and in maximising their safeguarding. As with all other agencies,

we are wanting to ensure that their contribution is purposeful and proportionate. We see their presence being especially important in three key areas.

Firstly, through the various local arrangements this Plan describes and ensuring that those local arrangements have the right people round the right table making the right contributions. Secondly, in the cross-borough developments also set out here – our work to better protect adolescents and address gangs and knife crime will be absolutely dependent on the contribution of all our schools (including the primary sector) and education provider. Thirdly, through the exploration of individual cases whether formally through the rapid review and local child safeguarding practice review processes or through locally defined case audit activity.

## **8. Independent Scrutiny.**

We are committed to the value independent scrutiny can bring to all of our safeguarding work. Holding a mirror up to that work is crucial if there is to be confidence our practices are as safe and effective as possible. We are committed to seeking challenge that is informed, expert (including expert by experience) and focussed on our overall commitment towards continual improvement. As Safeguarding Partners, we are all particularly committed to ensuring that our independent scrutiny processes enable us to better hear the views and experiences of children, young people and their families and enable them to have a more active and powerful voice in how our services are designed and delivered.

Within each of the three local authorities, there are well established performance management arrangements, both within children's services and from the corporate centres. Operational Managers, up to and including the Chief Officers are both managing and challenging their own services all of the time. They are aware of any deficits in standards and practices and they are continually seeking to improve. In addition, members in each of the authorities provide regular robust scrutiny and challenge to our safeguarding services.

In health, there is a well-developed and robust system of contract management and supervision of safeguarding professionals that drives the work of the providers, all of whom have to meet a considerable set of safeguarding objectives within their contracts. The CCGs have internal governance arrangements that Safeguarding Partners can utilise for assurance on the safeguarding arrangements across health providers. This includes the management of safeguarding risks.

Within the Metropolitan Police, an Assistant Commissioner is designated strategic safeguarding responsibilities and a Commander heads an organisation-wide accountability framework within which BCU Command is held to account. Value is added through regular, themed HMICFRS inspections at both force and a national level as well as the challenge offered by the Mayors Office for Policing and Crime - MOPAC.

All three local authorities are active in the Regional Improvement Alliance – this is a network of nine regional groupings across England, supported by the ADCS and DfE. In London this work is overseen by ALDCS and supported by London Councils. London is divided into four sub-regions, with BHR falling into the East London sub-region. The aim is to create a self-

improving system, with a series of self-evaluations, peer reviews and peer challenges, together with a data benchmarking approach. There is an annual London summit involving lead members and Chief Executives, to share learning and agree priorities. The priorities for 2019/20 are: Adolescent Safeguarding, SEND, Workforce and Resources.

Finally, of course, SPs and relevant agencies are subject to external inspection from their own inspectorates - Ofsted, CQC and HMICFRS - and jointly through the JTAI arrangements.

Our plans for independent scrutiny are therefore carefully crafted to add value to an already crowded and complex landscape of challenge. Safeguarding children is an enormously complex and multi-faceted task that requires complex and multi-faceted delivery arrangements. Scrutiny of those arrangements needs to be well-informed and well-focused if it is to add value to what is already in place.

As a consequence, as SPs in BHR we believe that there needs to be a range of scrutiny processes in play so we can be assured that that added value is being delivered and we will develop a menu of scrutiny processes both locally and across the wider BHR footprint that will include:

- The development of the role of Safeguarding Champion as set out above
- (For some), the retention of the Independent Chair role
- The development of inter-borough and inter-agency challenge, using expertise in one area to help challenge and scrutinise work in another
- Developing the role of children, young people and families to actively engage in system challenge and scrutiny
- Buying-in expert challenge from those across the country who have a proven track record in the area under scrutiny to lead practice workshops, case evaluations, learning sessions

All challenge and scrutiny will feed into the SPG. This is the group with the ultimate responsibility to respond and will ensure that a response is made either directly or via one of the partnership arrangements in the area.

## **9. Thresholds**

Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge and Havering all have published threshold guidance available through the respective Council websites. It is one of the intentions of the BHR Safeguarding Partners to explore these further with a view to examining any tensions and differences between them and to examine the impact of those differences on referring agencies – our principles of simplify, align, improve will guide this review.

## **10. Funding and Support Capacity**

Currently, there are separate LSCB budgets and separate support staff within each local authority. Existing funding levels will continue; SPs do not intend that this Plan will increase costs. At this stage, there are no detailed plans to explore a possible merger of budgets or staffing, although SPs will actively look at the scope for improved economies of scale and

better focussed spending plans. Some of the budgets will need to be freed up to support some of the commitments in this Plan, especially investing in the independent scrutiny commitments and inevitably staff in the three boroughs will increasingly work together in the delivery and development of this Plan.

### **11. Review and Annual Report**

SP will be reviewing the efficacy of this Plan from the outset and be ready to amend and refocus work as required – safeguarding children is a complex task and SP need to ensure their collective systems are best focussed to carry it out as well as possible.

Formally, the BHR Safeguarding Partnership will, in May 2020, commission an independent scrutineer to review their work and the impact or otherwise of the new arrangements. SP expect that review will also identify future work commitments and will therefore form a core part of the forward programme for June 2020 and beyond.