



## **Final report of the pan-London Safeguarding Children Culture and Faith Project**

**‘Keeping the child in focus means seeing past his or her faith and/or culture’**

**‘What parents do is more important than who they are... the right kind of parenting is a bigger influence on a child’s future than faith, culture (wealth, class, education) or any other common social factor’**

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<sup>1</sup> Second quote adapted from Graham Allen Review

## **Acknowledgement**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Pan-London Safeguarding Children Culture and Faith Project

1.1.1 This report summarises key findings from the Pan-London Safeguarding Children Culture and Faith Project (the London C&F Project), which sought to promote a step-change in safeguarding London's children living in minority ethnic, culture or faith communities or groups. The project comprised three parts:

- Project work with minority ethnic, culture or faith communities / groups by 10 London local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs);
- Focus groups in all 32 London LSCBs to gather views on how to improve safeguarding for London's children living in minority ethnic groups and communities;
- Interviews with all 32 London LSCBs, mapping activity and aspiration for stronger partnership work to safeguard children living in minority ethnic, culture or faith communities or groups

1.1.2 The London C&F Project was completed under the supervision of the London Safeguarding Children Board's (London Board) culture and faith subgroup, chaired by Andrew Fraser (Director of Children's Services, LB Enfield) and comprising membership from a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations in London, including a broad cross section of community and faith groups operating in the capital.

1.1.3 Regular progress reports were made to the full London Board throughout the life of the project, and three of the project outputs (see 1.2, below) were launched at the Board's annual conference in December 2011.

### 1.2 Project outputs

1.2.1 Project outputs include this report, a guidance document, a training toolkit and an LSCB engagement strategy to assist minority ethnic communities and faith groups in protecting their children and working with statutory services to do so.

1.2.2 All outputs from the project are available at: [www.londonscb.gov.uk/culture\\_and\\_faith/](http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/culture_and_faith/)

## 2. Individual borough projects

### 2.1 Background

2.1.1 Ten London LSCBs carried out local project work under the auspices of the London C&F Project, with grant funding (obtained through a successful bid to the Migration Impact Fund) allocated to each area to support the projects through their initial 18 month pilot phase.

2.1.2 Final reports from eight of these projects (excluding Bexley and Haringey, see 2.10 and 2.11 for details) are included as appendices to this report, and should be an excellent source of inspiration for any local safeguarding partnerships considering carrying out similar work in the future. Summaries of these projects are included below:

### 2.2 [The Barnet experience](#)

2.2.1 The Barnet project was made up of several strands, including work to:



- Pilot materials, toolkits and information with a variety of community and faith groups (including holding focus groups and developing learning sets);
- Develop a voluntary and community sector safeguarding advice service to include the needs of more marginal faith and unattached 'migrant' communities, and support progress in safeguarding by faith groups;
- Work with Barnet's Youth Shield (Voice of Young People in Safeguarding) to include the voice of the child input to the Pan-London Project;
- Undertake engagement with local supplementary schools to improve the safeguarding of children within the schools;
- Undertake an audit of best practice through completion of a questionnaire designed for the purpose;
- Deliver focus groups with pre-determined questions to community groups that made sense in terms of the local demographic profile.

2.2.2 The main focus of the Barnet project was to equip supplementary schools to address safeguarding issues, as a way of reaching a diverse range of communities through organisations trusted by families. Barnet are also building on relationships formed with faith leaders through the faithbook project ([www.thefaithbook.co.uk](http://www.thefaithbook.co.uk)) to improve understanding of safeguarding and highlight / increase uptake of resources available.

### 2.3 The Brent experience

2.3.1 The Brent project was carried out in partnership with the Victoria Climbié Foundation as a comprehensive community engagement exercise, which was followed by establishment of a community-led reference-group within the LSCB framework.

2.3.2 The reference group was established to develop an ongoing engagement / communications strategy between the LSCB and the local minority ethnic community and faith groups, providing a framework for capacity building activity in the local community to safeguard children, including identifying risk of harm and what to do if there are concerns about a child. The group also provides a conduit for information sharing, both from the group to the Board and vice-versa.

### 2.4 The Enfield experience

2.4.1 Enfield worked in partnership with AFRUCA on a programme of training for professionals, church and community leaders, aiming to:

- develop a stronger working knowledge of African communities to improve assessments and interventions by professionals;
- build the capacity of African community groups and faith organisations to deliver child protection training for their staff, volunteers and members; and
- run a pilot training programme for African parents on child protection and positive parenting.

### 2.5 The Greenwich experience

2.5.1 The aim of the Greenwich project was to improve the collaboration between the Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) and local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with the goal of improving engagement and safeguarding practice, particularly within BME communities. The GSCB undertook focused work with CSOs, through Greenwich Action for Voluntary Service, in the following five areas.

- Participation and representation
- Information gathering

- Information sharing
- Training
- Consultation, advice and guidance

## **2.6 The Hackney experience**

2.6.1 The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board project focussed on obtaining the views of BME children and young people about domestic and gender based violence.

2.6.2 The project particularly wanted to hear the views of Turkish and Kurdish young people, although the views of other BME young people were also included.

## **2.7 The Merton experience**

2.7.1 Merton Safeguarding Children Board worked in partnership with Merton Council and BME and faith groups in the borough to improve child protection outcomes and address and reduce any disproportionality in child protection plans.

2.7.2 The project used a variety of routes to improve understanding, engage and improve communication with BME and faith communities, including through supplementary schools and intergenerational dialogue.

## **2.8 The Newham experience**

2.8.1 The Newham programme aimed to raise understanding and awareness of child abuse linked to the labelling of children as “possessed”. It also aimed to ensure appropriate services were available, and that communities were supported to actively engage in these services.

2.8.2 The overarching aim of the project was to improve the capacity of identified communities to safeguard children, and to sustain improvements within their communities. Further, the project aimed to hone practitioners’ skills around assessment and intervention where there is concern around abuse linked to belief in spirit possession.

## **2.9 The Sutton experience**

2.9.1 The Sutton project aimed to map all local supplementary schools and faith, cultural and community groups, and assist these groups to establish, improve and share good practice in child protection.

2.9.2 The project also worked with these groups to ensure they were kept up to date with policy, research and training and link with the Sutton LSCB, and considered implementation of an accreditation scheme based on the Safe Network Standards.

## **2.10 The Bexley experience**

2.10.1 LB Bexley were funded to co-ordinate elements of the London C&F Project, and commissioned a project worker for equivalent 2 days per week with responsibility for:

- Attending pan-London and borough-specific meeting to introduce and further the work of the Pan-London Project;
- Developing materials to assist introduction to the Pan-London Project and gathering feedback e.g. guidance for focus groups and questionnaires;

- Co-ordinating and assisting LSCBs to run local focus groups to gather feedback for the Pan-London Project from a range of frontline professionals and BME & faith communities;
- Co-ordinating pan-London focus groups to gather feedback from the Pan-London project from community and faith leaders, and other high profile individuals and agencies;
- Arranging and conducting meetings with LSCB / borough representatives to gather information about current or recent projects, training courses etc;
- Gathering feedback from local & pan-London focus groups and the meetings with LSCBs into a helpful written format to inform drafting of the Project Report, Guidance, Strategy Toolkit & Training Toolkit
- Assisting with project workshops, seminars and conferences

## 2.11 The Haringey experience

- 2.11.1 Haringey were commissioned to lead on the development of a training toolkit for professionals engaging with minority ethnic culture and faith (often socially excluded) communities, groups and families to help safeguard their children.
- 2.11.2 The aim of the *London C&F Training Toolkit* was to ensure that professionals and voluntary groups working with minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families have access to a wide range of resources, materials and background information to help them develop and design appropriate and sensitive training packages in relation to child protection in its broadest sense.
- 2.11.3 The training toolkit contains a wide and varied selection of material including scenarios, summaries of Serious Case Reviews, background reading about faith and culture, a resource list and some guidance about group dynamics and basic group work.

## 3. Common themes from individual projects

### 3.1 Challenges and opportunities

- 3.1.1 Between them, the individual project reports paint a fascinating picture of the challenges and opportunities presented by this type of intensive community engagement work. A number of common themes emerge from the reports, some of which will be considered in more detail in points 3.2 – 3.7, below:
- The importance of working in partnership
  - The key role of local leaders
  - The importance of building up mutual understanding
  - An acceptance that engagement is a long term process

### 3.2 The importance of working in partnership

- 3.2.1 This was a key thread running through the project reports, and many LSCBs noted that the success of local projects was dependent on building a strong sense of the work as a joint initiative between statutory services and the local community. As Merton concluded:

*'The most useful learning is that maintaining the dialogue itself and moving issues*

*forward in the spirit of partnership rather than intervention is critical to success*'. The Merton Experience, point 7.4

- 3.2.2 A number of boroughs built this partnership through a culture and faith subgroup of the LSCB, either establishing a new group or using the project as an impetus to reinvigorate existing structures. The Brent project was strongly focussed on developing a community led reference group to lead this type of work in future (Brent, point 3.2), and Newham noted that *'the Faith and Culture Sub-Group has been energised by this project, and there is strong partnership involvement around the issue'* and felt that:

*'One of the main successes of this project relates to how the project structure has helped to embed a cohesive, responsive and diverse partnership of local leads for this critical issue'*. The Newham Experience, point 2.1

- 3.2.3 The project reports are clear that strong involvement from local communities is vital if this type of work is to succeed, and the Barnet report suggested further work to ensure that local groups are enabled to undertake this role once the project has formally concluded. The report was clear, however, that this is no small task:

*'[Possibilities for an exit strategy include] developing the capacity of community and faith groups to work in partnership with statutory professionals in preventative work and on casework. This would involve investing and training individuals in some depth to work alongside the local authority on a case by case basis – with the hours allocated to work funded accordingly'*. The Barnet Experience, point 3.17

### **3.3 The key role of local leaders**

- 3.3.1 A number of the project reports suggest that involvement from faith and community leaders is a key factor in building a successful local partnership, and early engagement is often noted as crucial step in establishing an effective working relationship.

- 3.3.2 The Sutton report states that *'building up trust and confidence in faith leaders has been a constant theme'* (The Sutton Experience, point 7.3), Barnet highlight local leaders as *'influential individuals who can impact on the activities of members of their community'* (Barnet, point 6.4), and Newham conclude that:

*'Faith and community leaders should be identified as "change agents" as they hold powerful positions in the community and can be influential in the community'*  
Newham, point 6.4

- 3.3.3 The importance of a flexible approach to engagement is also highlighted strongly in many of the reports, with Sutton highlighting the importance of *'understanding and respecting that many leaders have "day jobs" and the project needs to be flexible to accommodate them'* (Sutton, point 7.4). Greenwich identified this as a key theme in their own work:

*'Many Civic Society Organisations identified that the regularly scheduled Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board training did not meet their needs as it is only held during business hours, which is when most of their volunteers are unable to attend due to other commitments'*. The Greenwich Experience, point 7.3

- 3.3.4 It is therefore clear that, to engage effectively with local community or faith groups and particularly with local leaders, a flexible approach is extremely important. Brent's

report sums these points up, and offers further advice for services seeking to engage with local groups:

*'The "community" is very diverse and moves at its own pace. It will not be rushed. Leadership can be flexible within groups, often with the seeming leader being a mouthpiece, rather than having influence'.* The Brent Experience, point 7.2

### **3.4 The importance of building up mutual understanding**

- 3.4.1 Many of the projects set out to improve engagement with local community groups, which was patchy at best in some areas:

*'Historically, there had been minimal representation and engagement between the Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board and local Civic Society Organisations and no forums or mechanisms in place for this to develop'.* Greenwich, point 4.1

- 3.4.2 However, all reports were clear that this engagement is a two way process, with suspicion from some sections of the local community (*'a key challenge for the project involves the level of entrenched mistrust some faith sector organisations have in relation to statutory services'*, Newham, point 6.3) echoed in a lack of understanding of local groups from statutory services (*'there was a lack of professional understanding about Black and minority ethnic communities, particularly in relation to understanding culture norms and dynamics'*, Newham, point 6.4).

- 3.4.3 Building up a sense of mutual understanding between local communities and the statutory sector was therefore seen as a key aim for many of the projects, as succinctly summarised in Merton's report:

*'Safeguarding and child protection is improved by greater knowledge on both sides – communities on what is expected in terms of parenting, attitudes and other behaviours under UK law – and agencies in what the pressures and issues within the communities are'.* Merton, point 7.5

- 3.4.4 A number of boroughs felt a strong sense of mistrust from local community groups, often because previous engagement had been largely focussed on statutory intervention when issues arise. Newham noted that *'community and faith groups have concerns about trust and confidentiality in respect of the statutory sector'* (Newham, 6.4) and Sutton agreed that *'where a child protection issue arises within a faith, community or cultural group there is often misunderstanding and a lack of trust when statutory agencies decide to investigate'* (Sutton, point 2.2)

- 3.4.5 However, several reports noted that, once the LSCB began a more sustained process of engagement outside of formal child protection proceedings, many local groups were keen to improve their understanding of safeguarding and were happy to engage. Greenwich noted that safeguarding information in their e-bulletin was always among the most viewed and downloaded, and engagement in a series of workshops was high and feedback very positive – with particular interest from participants in attending more sessions in the future (Greenwich, point 6.8). Merton echoed these views, but with an important caveat:

*'There is a willingness to engage and better understand child protection in most faith and culture communities in Merton, but this dialogue cannot be imposed'.* Merton, point 7.3



3.4.6 In turn, most reports acknowledged that raising professional understanding of the local community was an equally important outcome for the project. Newham noted that *'professionals will need to develop the confidence and cultural competence to challenge and "unpack" safeguarding issues that may have cultural origins'* (Newham, point 6.4), and Greenwich were clear that *'it was important for the GSCB to develop an understanding about how Civic Society Organisations operate, and take this into consideration when planning and undertaking work with the sector'* (Greenwich, point 10.2).

3.4.7 Hackney's work with children and young people puts a further dynamic on the importance of mutual understanding, with many terms commonly used by professionals meaning little to the young people interviewed:

*'The project mainly highlighted that for those who took part, there is a need to increase their awareness of domestic violence, honour based violence, forced marriage and gender based violence. Although broad generalisations are unable to be made, it is suspected that this is a reality of other young people. A major learning point related to the young people's lack of understanding of the labels of domestic violence, HBV and gender based violence'. The Hackney Experience, point 9.3*

3.4.8 Hackney also found that young peoples' descriptions of their own ethnicity can be far more complex than the generic terms commonly applied by professionals, and warned that *'the rigid labelling of young people by professionals can perhaps be restrictive and suppress their sense of self'*. The Hackney report further clarifies this point:

*'The majority of peer researchers described themselves ethnically in terms of their parents' nationality, which sometimes involved a mixture of different nationalities. Their hybrid descriptions of themselves sometimes seemed to provide them with an esteemed sense of identity ... a small group of the young people identified themselves as being Black British during the focus groups. The choice of this description was centred on the view that they were born in the UK, they had never been to their parents' homeland or that they could not identify with the culture of their parents due to enculturation. Therefore, they sought to identify themselves in a way that reflected this demarcation'. Hackney, point 6.2*

3.4.9 With all this in mind, it is vital that statutory services and local communities develop a shared understanding – and a shared language is a key element of this.

### **3.5 An acceptance that engagement is a long term process**

3.5.1 A common conclusion in all the reports is that community engagement is an extremely complex process, and will not easily fit into the strictures of an 18 month project. As Newham conclude:

*'The work undertaken by this project has made clear to the partnership the level of complexity involved in building relationships with faith sector organisations, and the amount of time it takes to bring about change. Outcomes from the delivery of the education programme and the process of self-assessment will not be seen during the life of this project'. Newham, point 5.1*

3.5.2 Sutton's Project Worker shares her experience in an appendix to their final report, and sums up some of the issues facing LSCBs which attempt this type of activity:

*'It takes a long time to build trust and confidence with groups / leaders, they need to get to know you very well first over a period of time to build a trusting relationship*

*before sharing information. This means attending their community events and group meetings. Time is needed to build on and keep communications open, 6 months is only just starting the process of engagement. Groups need to be consistently reminded you are there as a support, with letters, emails and phone calls’.*

Sutton, Appendix 1

- 3.5.3 For engagement to be truly effective, it must be seen as a long term process with partnerships built up gradually over time. Barnet’s experience is instructive on this point:

*‘Step by step approaches are needed to form positive and effective relationships with specific communities. For example, trust was formed in a gradual way over time with the local Muslim community. This enabled us to progress from an open safeguarding surgery to a more focussed safeguarding awareness event. The next steps could be to explore a specific issue in some depth eg FGM’.* Barnet, point 8.1.

- 3.5.4 With the individual projects funded for a limited amount of time, most final reports highlight the importance of a robust exit strategy. Many share Merton’s aim to *‘mainstream the learning and methodology of engagement to continue understanding and dialogue with diverse communities’* (Merton, point 8.1), often through the culture and faith subgroup of the LSCB:

*‘As it is managed by the Faith and Culture Sub-Group, the project is fully integrated with other work undertaken by the partnership. This integration will enable a seamless exit strategy as project work can be mainstreamed into the core business of the Sub-Group’.* Newham, point 2.3.

- 3.5.5 Whichever approach is chosen, it is clearly vital that engagement does not end with the formal conclusion of the pilot projects. As the final reports illustrate, a tremendous amount of excellent and innovative practice has taken place across the pilot LSCBs – the challenge now is to sustain this practice, and spread the learning as widely as possible.

## **4. Online survey of statutory and voluntary groups**

- 4.1 Alongside the individual borough projects, an online survey was developed by Barnet LSCB and made available for all London LSCBs to use with their local statutory and voluntary groups. The objective of this survey was to identify the training and support needs of safeguarding practitioners across a wide range of organisations, and the findings from this survey activity are available as appendix 2 of this report.
- 4.2 A total of 711 responses were received from practitioners in statutory agencies, and 169 from third sector practitioners. Many of the comments received echo those identified through the individual borough projects outlined above, with a need for better understanding between statutory agencies and community / faith groups highlighted particularly strongly. A desire for more awareness raising activities and training opportunities were a common theme in the responses, with returns from statutory agencies consistently identifying a lack of detailed knowledge of different community and faith groups as a barrier to more effective working. See appendix 3 for an outline of the most common responses.

## 5. Conclusion and next steps

- 5.1 The *Pan-London Safeguarding Children Culture and Faith Project* was an opportunity for London to explore the safeguarding needs of children living in minority culture and faith communities, groups and families in unprecedented depth, and the work carried out through the pilots and wider strategic group has highlighted some important learning for all agencies working in the capital.
- 5.2 As with the individual LSCB projects, it is vital that this work continues beyond the life of this project and really does contribute towards a step-change for these children and families. The outputs developed as part of this project should make a real difference in assisting LSCBs to implement local plans and strategies, and the London C&F Practice Guidance, Training Toolkit and LSCB Strategy have been distributed widely across London for this purpose. They are also available to download from [www.londonscb.gov.uk](http://www.londonscb.gov.uk), alongside this Project Report.
- 5.3 In keeping with the next steps identified in many of the individual project reports, the London Board now intends to mainstream this work through its own Culture and Faith Subgroup, revamped to include representation from the LSCBs carrying out work as part of this project. The terms of reference for the group will also be revamped, to put a stronger emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of the outputs produced as part of this project and assessing London's response to the safeguarding needs of children and young people living in minority culture and faith communities, groups and families.
- 5.4 The work undertaken through the *Pan-London Safeguarding Children Culture and Faith Project* provides an excellent basis for London to implement a step-change in safeguarding arrangements for these children, but it is vital that this is seen as the beginning of an ongoing effort rather than an end in itself. The work outlined in this report leaves London well placed to push on and make real progress in this area, but it is up to all organisations working with children and young people in the capital to intensify their efforts and help make this aim a reality.



# Appendix 1 - Individual borough reports

## Part One

### The Barnet Experience

**Karen Walkden**  
**July 2011**



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Barnet project was undertaken as part of the Pan-London Safeguarding Children Culture & Faith Project, an action-research Project which aimed to promote a step-change in safeguarding London's children living in minority ethnic, culture or faith communities or groups. The Barnet contribution to this work was to:
- Pilot materials, toolkits and information with a variety of community and faith groups (including holding focus groups and developing learning sets)
  - Develop a voluntary and community sector safeguarding advice service to include the needs of more marginal faith and unattached 'migrant' communities. Support progress in safeguarding by faith groups
  - Work with Barnet's Youth Shield (Voice of Young People in Safeguarding) to include the voice of the child input to the Pan-London Project
  - Undertake engagement with local supplementary schools to improve the safeguarding of children within the schools.
- 1.2 Barnet delivered focus groups with pre-determined questions – to community groups that made sense in terms of the local demographic profile. Barnet has conducted focus groups with the following (see appendix for the briefing, questions and findings):
- Professionals working for Jewish voluntary sector organisations
  - Professionals working for voluntary sector organisations providing services for children, young people and families
  - Statutory professionals working with children
  - Statutory professionals working with adults
  - Supplementary schools volunteers
  - Muslim focus group of staff working at Ayesha Community Education
- 1.3 Details from these focus groups have been provided to Emma Aiyere from Bexley to perform an analysis of needs and issues arising across the London Boroughs. The findings will contribute to the shape of the outputs.
- 1.4 In addition Barnet designed an on-line version of the survey questions that is being used across all London Boroughs. This was promoted locally through the members of the BSCB and through the CommUNITY Barnet children's service. It was also promoted through the briefings and communication vehicles referred to in section 3 (Project setup). Raw data from participants across all London Boroughs has been provided to Christine Christie (London Councils) for analysis. Barnet responses are provided in the appendix to this report. Raw data by borough has been provided to a number of borough project team members on request – and continues to be available. Contact Karen Walkden at [karen@flourishing.me.uk](mailto:karen@flourishing.me.uk) for details.
- 1.5 An audit of best practice was also undertaken through completion of a questionnaire designed for the purpose. Helen Elliott and Karen Walkden met with Emma Aiyere on 2nd August 2010 to complete this audit. A copy of this document is available from [Helen.Elliot@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.Elliot@barnet.gov.uk)
- 1.6 Resources allocated to Barnet by London Councils enabled us to deliver these activities, attend the Pan London culture and faith project steering group, and the faith and culture sub-group of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board.

**2. Project background – a description of the population in Barnet**

2.1 A number of source documents are highlighted in bold text. Copies are available through the [www.barnet.gov.uk](http://www.barnet.gov.uk) website, or can be provided by Karen Walkden at [karen@flourishing.me.uk](mailto:karen@flourishing.me.uk).

2.2 The **Sustainable Community Strategy** for Barnet 2010 to 2020 states:

“In common with much of London, Barnet is one of the most diverse areas in the country in terms of ethnicity and faith. As an example over 170 first languages and dialects are spoken in schools across the borough, yet at the same time we are proud that our communities are cohesive and people get on well with each other.

Over a third of our population were born outside the United Kingdom. The borough's largest ethnic minority group, as defined by census categories, is people describing themselves as Indian, which is 10% of the population. Barnet has the largest Chinese community in England.

Barnet is also the second most religiously diverse borough in the country and home to the largest Jewish community in the country. In the last census 15% of people described their faith as Jewish”

“Barnet’s population is growing increasingly diverse, especially in the under 19 age group; the attitudes, ethnicity and culture of Barnet are now more reflective of London than previously.

By 2020 37.1% of the local population will be non-White (compared to 33.2% in 2010)

Barnet’s fastest growing ethnicity is ‘Other’ – a group that includes Middle Eastern and Central Asian states. Barnet is already home to a growing community from Iran and Afghanistan”

2.3 Analysis of ethnicity information in the **school data** profile report compiled in November 2010 shows the following:

<b>Primary Pupils</b>	<b>Secondary Pupils</b>
35% are White British 17% are from Any Other White Background 11% are Black-African 9% are from Any Other Ethnic group 5% are Indian 4% are from Any Other mixed background 4% are from Any Other mixed Asian background  There has been a steady increase year on year in the % of pupils with English as an additional language 2007 (39%), 2008 and 2009 (41%) and 2010 (43%)	32% are White British 15% are from Any Other White Background 10% are Black-African 9% are from Any Other Ethnic group 8% are Indian 5% are from Any Other mixed Asian background 4% are from Any Other mixed background  There has been a steady increase year on year in the % of pupils with English as an additional language 2007 (36%), 2008 (38%) 2009 and 2010 (39%)

2.4 The **profile of Children and Young People in Barnet (2010)** states:

“Children and young people make up around a quarter of Barnet's total population and, in numerical terms, Barnet has the second largest population of children and

young people in London, with, in 2010, 88,560 children age 0 - 19.

33.2% of Barnet's overall population belongs to an ethnic group other than White. The largest ethnic group is Indian, accounting for approximately 9.5% of the population, followed by Other at 6.7% and Black African at 5.7%.

When ethnic groups are broken down by age, a markedly different age structure emerges between groups. Under 20's account for around 40% of residents with Black African origin and 56% of residents with 'Black Other' origin compared to accounting for 21.8% of the White population and just over 25% of the population overall.

Barnet's younger population is therefore much more diverse than the population overall and while the majority are White there are higher proportions of children in many minority ethnic groups when compared with the White population. For example, Black Africans represent 9% of the under 20 population compared with 5.7% of the overall Barnet population. Census data confirms that Black African school age children more than doubled between 1991 and 2001, from 1,228 in 1991 to 2,827 in 2001.

The **2001 Census** asked residents, on a voluntary basis, for their religion. Over 90% of Barnet residents chose to provide this information. While a simple majority of residents gave their religion as Christian, 14.8% said they were Jewish, the highest proportion for any local authority in England and Wales. The next largest group was those saying they had no religion, followed by Hindus and Muslims. This data provides an interesting insight but the current position is likely to be significantly different as many changes to Barnet's population will have occurred in the past 10 years.

The religious views of different age groups in Barnet tend to mirror the different age structures of the ethnic groups most associated with each religion. Younger people in Barnet, for example, are less likely to be Christian than older people.

The Greater London Authority has issued interim ethnic projections and these are a useful update to the 2001 Census data. For the 0-19 population as a whole, the increases will be proportionately greatest for the Other, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black African and Black Other ethnic categories and that the Black Caribbean and White populations in this age range are projected to decrease.

The majority (90% in 2010) of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families in Barnet have an Irish Traveller heritage. There are also small numbers of families from the Eastern European Roma community. While there are no official sites, there are occasionally some roadside encampments, but the majority of Barnet's Gypsy, Roma and Travellers live in temporary accommodation. There is a settled Irish Traveller community in the Cricklewood area."

- 2.5 The **January 2010 school census** recorded that 141 different languages apart from English were spoken by pupils in Barnet schools.

Amongst Barnet resident pupils whose first language is not English, the most common languages spoken are Gujarati, Persian-Farsi, Somali, Arabic, Polish, Urdu, Portuguese, Albanian-Shqip, Chinese, Tamil and Turkish.

- 2.6 Referrals and assessments carried out in Barnet have seen a steady increase from 477 referrals in the quarter July – September 2006 to 842 assessments in the quarter July- September 2010. Initial assessments for the same quarters are up from 438 in 2006 to 706 in 2010. Core assessments are up from 28 in July-September 2006 to

183 in July-September 2010.

- 2.7 Against this background the Barnet project has focused on equipping supplementary schools to address safeguarding issues – as a way of reaching a diverse range of communities through organisations trusted by families.
- 2.8 We are also building on relationships formed with faith leaders through the faithbook project ([www.thefaithbook.co.uk](http://www.thefaithbook.co.uk)) – capacity building youth activities delivered by faith communities – to improve understanding of safeguarding and highlight/increase uptake of resources available.
- 2.9 Development of the Youth Shield programme provides young people with a voice – and enables them to protect themselves. This group is at an embryonic stage of development and will determine their own workplan and pace of growth.

### **3. Project setup**

- 3.1 The Barnet project has been managed by Karen Walkden (Flourishing Consulting Ltd) with a dual reporting line to key stakeholders - Dadia Conti (CommUNITY Barnet, Childrens Services) and to Helen Elliott (Barnet Council – Safeguarding Children Board -Development Manager).
- 3.2 The reporting line is also to the Pan London Faith and Culture Safeguarding project group, meeting monthly through the term of the overall project and chaired by Christine Christie (London Councils). Verbal updates on progress have been provided at each meeting and documented in the minutes. An interim report was provided to the group on 31st March 2011.
- 3.3 Other members of the Barnet team include – Barry Rawlings (CommUNITY Barnet local voluntary sector safeguarding adviser), Audrey Montet (CommUNITY Barnet participation manager – leading on Youth Shield), Ertanch Hidayettin (Barnet Supplementary Schools Forum Co-ordinator), Alex Silverman and Victoria Markey (Flourishing Consulting Ltd).
- 3.4 Senior management buy in for the Barnet project has been achieved through briefings and regular reports back to the Local Safeguarding Children Board – which includes representation from the Safeguarding Adults Board. This has been through Helen Elliott.
- 3.5 Monthly progress reports are provided to the two key stakeholders (Helen Elliott and Dadia Conti). Bi-monthly reports are provided through attendance at the Safeguarding Children - Faith and Culture sub-committee, which reports to the LSCB. This is a multi-agency group with membership drawn from statutory bodies (local authority, police etc) as well as the voluntary sector. Verbal reports are also provided to the membership of the Children and Young Peoples Network Meeting – a voluntary sector group of organisations providing services to families, meeting bi-monthly.
- 3.6 Regular updates are also posted on the news page of the faithbook website ([www.thefaithbook.co.uk](http://www.thefaithbook.co.uk)) - and a CommUNITY Barnet web page has been set up to promote the work. Faith leaders and youth workers have been contacted by e-mail on an “as and when” basis throughout the project. The mailing list for faith organisations delivering youth activities was compiled through the faithbook project (funded by the Barnet Council for Voluntary Youth Services and Youth and Connexions) – and is maintained through funding from CommUNITY Barnet.

- 3.7 The project has been promoted through Safeguarding Matters – a CommUNITY Barnet newsletter distributed to voluntary sector groups and others working with children. This publication is produced termly (copy included in the appendix).
- 3.8 The Barnet Multi-Faith Forum has been kept informed of the progress of the project, and a presentation on the work was included in the Inter-Faith week events in November 2010. There have been further briefings to the forum, most recently in July 2011.
- 3.9 In addition, events and information relating to the project have been disseminated through the weekly Children and Young Peoples e-newsletter, and regular CommUNITY Barnet members e-bulletin, as and when the need has arisen.
- 3.10 During Ramadam in 2010 Karen Walkden was interviewed on Radio Haaj about the Pan London project. This radio station is run by Hendon Mosque and Islamic Centre and broadcasts to North West London. Participation in the project was covered in the interview, as well as the importance of safeguarding and the availability of local help and resources.
- 3.11 The project builds on relationships formed through the faithbook project – mapping faith based youth services delivered in the borough through churches, synagogues, mosques etc. This project started in 2007 with mapping of Christian youth work – and concluded in 2009 with the delivery of a directory and associated website ([www.thefaitbook.co.uk](http://www.thefaitbook.co.uk)), capturing activities and resources available to faith communities of all kinds. Faithbook has proved to be a valuable tool to promote outreach and inter-faith youth projects.
- 3.12 The local safeguarding adviser post has been in place since 2008. This is a one day a week position providing advice, information and advocacy for voluntary sector organisations. It includes a reduced rate CRB service, advice on policy development, training delivery as well as scope for third party reporting.
- 3.13 Barnet Supplementary Schools Forum was established in 2008 and meets bi-monthly with discussion items that cover sustainability, networking, best practice and accessing local resources. Events and training workshops have been held for supplementary schools – including Special Educational Needs (SEN) and safeguarding. Ertanch Hidayettin is the Co-ordinator for the Forum. He is also the Supplementary Schools Mentor for Barnet, on behalf of ContinYou, the national resource centre for supplementary schools. He is currently assisting a number of Barnet schools to obtain appropriate awards under the Quality Framework Awards Scheme, administered by ContinYou. Safeguarding issues are integral parts of these awards.
- 3.14 Youth Shield is the Barnet junior safeguarding board. It is supported by CommUNITY Barnet's youth participation team, who have a strong track record of engaging young people in decision making groups – including through the BOBBY Panel (Best of Barnet Youth). Youth Shield were formed in 2010, and since October 2010 have been meeting regularly to develop and pursue their own workplan. We are aware of similar groups operating in other boroughs, and a table of youth safeguarding engagement approaches is included in the appendix for this report.
- 3.15 For the second year running Barnet Council designated November 2010 as Safeguarding month. This involved a programme of events and activities delivered jointly and separately by the local authority and the voluntary sector. These were publicised across both groups – and provided us with an opportunity to promote the

Pan London project and to run the focus groups.

3.16 In addition the project was promoted to the following groups:

- Children and Young Peoples Network – September 2010, November 2010, January 2011, March 2011
- Barnet Supplementary Schools Forum – September 2010, November 2010, March 2011
- The London Boroughs Faith Network – October 2010
- Barnet Multi-Faith Forum event for Inter-faith Week – November 2010
- Jewish Volunteer Network – November 2010
- Attendees at the LBB Equality and Diversity Training – January 2011
- Attendees at the Victoria Climbié Foundation Conference – February 2011
- Barnet Multi Faith Forum – July 2011

Also the following individuals:

- Janie Robertson – LBB EMA Consultant - September 2010
- Amreena Hussain Ali - Salaam – September 2010
- Pascale Vassie – Continyou - National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education – September 2010
- Gerald LeBrett and Karen Goodman – Norwood Ravenswood – October 2010
- Karin Ridout – Parenting Commissioner, LBB – October 2010
- Fr John Hawkins – St Johns Church (and Barnet Multi-Faith Forum) – November 2010
- Anna Sallnow – SACRE – November 2010
- Esmond Rosen – Jewish Volunteer Network – December 2010
- Shakil Ahmed – Principle of Ayesha Community Education – December 2010
- Dr Racheal Chapman, Northumbria University, re faith, belief and local authority engagement project – February 2011

3.17 The exit strategy for the project is to be agreed. The following possibilities have been discussed:

- Rescoping of the role of the faith and culture sub-committee of the BSCB to provide advice, resources and information to professionals engaged with families from different communities – and to agree and promote Barnet policies. This would require some detailed proposals and agreement from the LSCB. So further discussion needed here. It would also require a reconfiguring of the membership of this group – so that a broader range of local communities are represented and informed discussions can take place.
- Promoting the role of CommUNITY Barnet as a broker to develop communication channels between statutory sector professionals and local community and faith groups. One of the issues arising in discussion with statutory professionals was a need for a better understanding of the cultural landscape in the Borough. This is not just about demographic data, but also relates to community groups existing to support cultural heritage, and through whom questions could be channelled. Possibilities raised in discussion include CommUNITY Barnet hosting a stand in the council building on a regular basis and formally including CommUNITY Barnet in induction programmes for statutory staff.
- Developing the capacity of community and faith groups to work in partnership with statutory professionals in preventative work and on casework. This would

involve investing and training individuals in some depth to work alongside the local authority on a case by case basis – with the hours allocated to the work funded accordingly.

- Building the case for continued and enhanced funding for the local voluntary sector safeguarding adviser as an independent source of advice and information – and third party reporting. Also to provide on-going support to safeguarding leads in supplementary schools. This would increase the workload of the existing post holder, and so would need some discussion around funding and resourcing.

#### 4. Project activities

4.1 The following activities have been undertaken from July 2010 to July 2011. The aims are twofold – to improve local communities capacity to safeguard their children and also to improve professional's abilities to respond appropriately to individuals and families from BME/faith communities.

#### 4.2 **Pilot materials, toolkits and information with a variety of community and faith groups (including holding focus groups and developing learning sets)**

- Preventative work with families from a variety of faiths and cultures – through the delivery of an evidence based parenting programme – Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities. Barnet council funded training for 26 facilitators – mostly from voluntary sector BME groups eg the Somali Family Support Group, AidExcel (supporting BME parents with disabled children) and supplementary schools eg Rustam Iranian School, Community Education Support. See the appendix for a flyer promoting the training.

The 26 facilitators were recruited across different ethnic/cultural groups:

- Carribean (4)
- West African (4)
- Iranian (3)
- Somali (2)
- Afghan (2)
- Turkish (2)
- Jewish (2)
- Horn of Africa (1)
- German (1)
- Not specified (4)

Training took place during the week of 14th March 2011, and was funded by the local authority. The quid pro quo is that each facilitator will deliver at least one course in their own community. The courses cover 13 modules for 3 hours per week – and promote positive parenting practices. Two facilitators are required per course. Subsequent courses can also be delivered, though the funding for this would need to be arranged by the facilitators and their groups, or be commissioned by the local authority. Some of the facilitators are forming themselves into a consortium to bid for local government contracts to deliver parenting support programmes across the borough.

To date two programmes have been delivered – one to the West African community living on the Grahame Park Estate (one of the most economically deprived areas of the borough) and the other to Somali families in Edgware



through Broadfields School.

Further programmes are scheduled for September/October 2011, and these include:

- Childs Hill area – programme to be delivered in English and Arabic
- Rainbow Centre on Dollis Valley Estate – programme to be delivered in English and Somali
- Goldbeaters School in Burnt Oak – programme to be delivered in English and Swahili
- Copthall/Dollis junior schools in Mill Hill – programme to be delivered in English
- Brunswick Park – programme to be delivered in Turkish
- Broadfield School – a second programme for Somali families,
- West Hendon area for African and Caribbean heritage teenagers

The local authority have also spot purchased a SFSC course from one of the trained facilitators for delivery in the orthodox Jewish community in October 2011. This is another route to funding and delivery of the programme in communities according to need.

- Ertanch Hidayettin and Karen Walkden attended the Barnet Council's Equality and Diversity training delivered by Perdeep Gill on 31st January 2011. This programme is run twice a year. Participants are from a range of roles – including school staff, foster carers, statutory professionals and individuals from voluntary sector organizations. The content is robust, but one observation is that it is not centred within or connected to Barnet's on-going resources and supports. This is one change that we would want to achieve through this project – to explore a co-delivery option with CommUNITY Barnet.
- A piece of research work was undertaken to collate existing resources available to faith and cultural communities regarding safeguarding. The findings were gathered into a single document, which was distributed to London Boroughs through the Pan London project – so that any gaps could be identified and addressed. Essentially this is a signposting tool – available to attendees at local safeguarding events – and mailed out with Safeguarding Matters to all voluntary sector organizations working with children and young people in the borough of Barnet.

The document has been updated since the interim report from this project was provided in March 2011. The latest version is included in the appendix for this document, and will be distributed to faith groups etc in September 2011 when the draft outputs from the Pan London project are being tested.

#### **4.3 Develop a voluntary and community sector safeguarding advice service to include the needs of more marginal faith and unattached 'migrant' communities. Support progress in safeguarding by faith groups.**

- From June 2010 to March 2011 the local safeguarding advisor worked with the following voluntary sector organizations from faith and cultural backgrounds:

Service provided - CRB checks (58):

- Russian (13) – Russian Supplementary School (13)
- African/Caribbean groups (5) – Better Day Cancer Care (1), BACA

- (4),
- German (5) – German Saturday School (5)
  - Iranian (4) – Rushtam School (4)
  - Bangladeshi/Muslim (3) – Barnet Bangladeshi Comm. Ass (3)
  - Tamil (3) – CROFTE (3)
  - Not from faith/cultural background (21)

Service provided: Signing up for on-line child protection course (21):

- Iranian (14)
- Andisheh Persian Language School (7)
- Paiwand (7)
- Christian (2)
- Living Way Foursquare (2)
- African/Caribbean groups (1)
- OYA (1)
- Not from faith/cultural background (4)

Additional safeguarding services provided to faith and cultural groups:

- Supporting an African-Caribbean family at a strategy meeting

From March to July 2011 the following activities we included in the work of the local safeguarding adviser:

Service provided – CRB checks (48 individuals):

- African / Caribbean (20) - Barnet African Caribbean Association (9), Living Way Ministries (11)
- Somali (2) - SERAD – supplementary school (2)
- Afghan (2) - Afghan Youth Guidance Association - supplementary school (2)
- German (1) – German supplementary school (1)
- Not from faith/cultural background (23)

It should be noted that offering reduced rate CRB checks are an effective way of building relationships with voluntary sector organizations. From this platform further advice and guidance on safeguarding can be offered.

- A new safeguarding page was added to the [www.thefaithbook.co.uk](http://www.thefaithbook.co.uk) website – and attention was drawn to it through regular communications to faith leaders and youth leaders. In addition, a news page was added in the form of a blog. The majority of the entries on this news page relate to safeguarding developments.
- The monthly safeguarding surgery went on the road to faith settings. The safeguarding surgery is a drop-in for organizations and individuals to get advice and information regarding safeguarding. It is an organic service, with the content being determined by the enquiries that attendees raise. CRBs can be processed and a third party reporting service is available.

The safeguarding surgeries have previously run in CommUNITY Barnet buildings in Colindale and Barnet. As part of the pan London project the decision was taken to seek hosting arrangements in faith buildings. The hosts promoted this arrangement through their own networks to increase uptake

from faith groups. CommUNITY Barnet also promoted the arrangement through the weekly CYPNet e-newsletter. The surgery was advertised through the faithbook website – and publicity e-mailed through the faithbook mailing list.

In January the safeguarding surgery was a two hour morning session at Ayesha Community Education – a Muslim school run in partnership with the Hendon Mosque and Islamic Centre. Two people attended, and the hosting arrangement enabled the local safeguarding adviser to form relationships with Hendon Mosque/Madrassa and together a design was developed for a safeguarding awareness event – also held at Ayesha Community Education – from 4.45 to 7.45pm on Friday 25th March.

The design of the event allowed us to pose the pan London project focus group questions as well as to cover child protection awareness training – what makes a safe organisation, what is child abuse, legal breakdown, what to do if..., allegations against staff, where to get more information etc. Quotes from the Qu’ran were included. Sessions were delivered in separate gender based groups, with same sex facilitators. 22 people attended (15 male and 7 female).

A second, daytime event was run on 14th April whilst the school was closed for the holidays. This was in response to the demand created by the first event. There were over 36 people wanting to attend, with a classroom capacity of 25. In the end 41 people attended across the two events.

The Islamic Association of North London have expressed interest in a similar event. They run the second mosque in the borough – based in North Finchley.

The training materials used for this event have been provided to Aqualma Murray in Haringey to assist in the development of the Pan London training toolkit.

We are reviewing the separate gender model for delivering the training. A screen was set up in the centre of the room to separate men from women, whilst the training was delivered by a male and a female facilitator. It was noticeable that the women were more cautious in expressing their views and in asking questions – and so perhaps 2 separate events might have provided them with a greater voice.

- On 30th March 2011 the safeguarding surgery ran for two hours in the London Jewish Family Centre. This centre is the focus for a variety of Jewish groups, across different beliefs, and is also the venue for Jewish Volunteer Network meetings. The surgery was promoted through this network, as well as through CommUNITY Barnet and faithbook. Issues were raised around the time taken to complete CRB checks, and the availability of training programmes for voluntary sector organizations working with children and adults.
- On 25th May 2011 the surgery was delivered at Open Heavens Church Centre (Redeemed Christian Church of God) in Edgware. We specifically targeted a black majority church outside the Church of England, as central support on safeguarding may be less available through the local infrastructure for the church and its partners. The surgery also included promotion of the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities programme.
- The decision was made during Barnet’s safeguarding month (November each

year) to open up the 14th December 2010 faith and culture sub-group to a wider audience. This was advertised through briefings, faithbook mailout and CYPNet e-bulletins as well as targeted contact. The aim was to refresh the membership and engage a broader group with the work plan. Additional attendees came from St Josephs Pastoral Centre, Salaam, AidExcel Support Services and a School governor from Hasmorean. New groups are co-opted into this group on an opportunistic basis. Since this date many of the newcomers have continued to attend. However, the balance continues to be in favour of statutory post holders and more efforts are needed to attract and retain voluntary sector representation. A specific link to supplementary schools is described through the terms of reference for the supplementary schools safeguarding leads group. One person from the group to be designated to attend the faith and culture sub-group and report back. However, concerns have been expressed about the daytime meeting arrangements which are not so friendly to organizations depending on volunteers who are in employment, education or caring roles during the day.

- One of the issues with analyzing the impact of the actions described above is that the BSCB do not have the facility to analyze referrals and cases by faith and ethnicity. So, changes in patterns – including increased referrals from our target groups – cannot be identified, or responses developed. Such analyses are possible within the Adult Safeguarding team – and lessons could be learned from this approach, so that a responsive approach could be developed alongside a proactive one. It would also be good to know how other boroughs approach this – through the audit results.

#### **4.4 Work with Barnet's Youth Shield (Voice of Young People in Safeguarding) to include the voice of the child input to the Pan-London Project**

- Youth Shield was established in Barnet in 2010 as a young people's version of the safeguarding children board. It is supported through CommUNITY Barnet's participation team. The group emerged from a consultation with 140 young people (aged 10-22yrs). Through a combination of drop-ins and questionnaires, views were gathered on perceptions of safety. Tania Barney produced a report analyzing the findings. Faith and culture were not specifically mentioned, and the young people's faith and ethnicity data were not recorded. Two young people answered the question "Who keeps you safe?" with God/Jesus – but otherwise this consultation adds little to the Pan London project.

At the time we drew up the work programme for the pan London project the junior safeguarding board/youth shield were beginning to scope their role. The board is now set up and the young people involved are developing their own work programme. This includes interviews, questionnaires and focus group sessions to collect information from their peers on safeguarding issues. Current areas that are being highlighted include young people affected by homophobia, drug and alcohol abuse, young people in care, young carers, safety on transport, out and about in the community and faith and culture.

With regards to faith and culture, the panel will be distributing questionnaires to schools and community organizations to collect young people's views a variety of issues including safeguarding and cultural beliefs. They will be supported to make contact with Barnet's supplementary schools and faith groups and will deliver focus group sessions to explore the concerns in more depth.

Youth Shield will be presenting the findings from the consultation to BSCB in September 2011 and outcomes from the report will shape their work programme for this coming year and next.

The panel is made up of ten young people aged 14-25 years who include those from Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Atheist backgrounds.

Youth Shield work to date includes:

- Borough wide questionnaire on safeguarding fears for young people – Report sent to BSCB Feb 2010
  - Attendance at Barnet's traveller fair 2010 – Survey of young travellers views of safeguarding – Sept 2010
  - Away day with BSCB members teambuilding day – October 2010
- Youth Shield can deliver workshops to get young peoples' voices heard in different communities. This offer has been made through the Children and Young Peoples Network.
  - The major item of work for the Youth Shield group has been the development of a questionnaire to explore aspects of safety for young people. Topics included cover:
    - Healthy Relationships
    - Young Carers
    - Drugs and Alcohol
    - Disability
    - Mental Health
    - Faith and Culture
    - Transport
    - Out and About and Hate Crime

Basic data on age, gender, ethnicity and culture is gathered for each respondent so that variations can be analysed.

The Faith and Culture questions include:

- Do you or your family follow a faith?
- Can it be difficult to fit in with other communities because of your cultural background?
- Have you ever experienced bullying because of your cultural background?
- Has your family's cultural beliefs ever made you feel unsafe?
- Do you know where to go to ask for support or guidance?
- Would you like to change anything about your cultural background?

Answers are given in a yes/no format – and an opportunity is offered to provide comments. It should be noted that the questions and the response format have been designed by youth shield members. The on-line version and the questionnaires will provide limited information unless the comments section is used. However, the focus groups will use the questions as a starting point for discussions which it is hoped will reveal more detail.

An on-line survey has been developed and the young people on youth shield are seeking opportunities to undertake focus groups during the course of the

summer of 2011. The group have briefed various network meetings (including the supplementary schools safeguarding leads), and are also distributing the online survey through their own contacts on social media networks. The deadline for responses is 19th August 2011, after which we will have access to the responses to the faith and culture questions and be able to provide these as a contribution to the Pan London work.

An additional piece of work with traveller children is not being driven by Youth Shield, but forms part of the CommUNITY Barnet programme of participation work. The GRT (Gypsy Roma Traveller) pilot ran two introductory days over the May 2011 half term at Whitefields School. The purpose of the project was to engage young people from the GRT community in a two day pilot project to explore their cultural background, get them thinking about their aspirations and inspire them to put together a project plan of how they would like to celebrate their heritage and educate others to help breakdown barriers. Ten young people attended each session and used teambuilding games and outdoor sports to raise group confidence, breakdown anxiety and develop friendships and trust amongst the young people and staff team. The outcomes were very positive and the group are eager and excited to get a Barnet GRT project up and running to raise their profile, get their voices heard and make a difference within their community. Once properly formed they will possibly recruit some members onto youth shield.

- A summary of youth engagement and safeguarding work across the London is provided in the appendix. Boroughs who are not named in this document, may have not replied at this stage. An updated version of this document will be available in September 2011. Already there are examples of cross borough working in this area. Brent are interested in setting up a youth panel and are in contact with boroughs exploring the same territory.
- A Youth Faith Conference was planned for 15th March – but was cancelled due to poor uptake of places. It is worth considering why this happened, and the lessons that could be learned from the experience. The conference was the second youth event planned by the local SACRE. The first ran in November 2009 at Alyth Synagogue, and was delivered by the 3 Faiths Forum. The focus was faith and diversity – and around 20 six formers attended during a school day, with their teaching staff. During the course of the event individuals explored what their faith means to them, developed their own story and had opportunities to ask a panel of young adults about their faith journeys.

The intention in 2011 was to cover very similar ground, with youth led facilitation and a safeguarding session using youth/faith case studies to explore assumptions and understandings. The target audience were sixth formers studying RE or with a particular interest in faith.

The youth faith conference was promoted through schools, CommUNITY Barnet CYPNet and through the faithbook mailing list. We had feedback from one faith youth group that a weekend event, or an event outside school hours would be more accessible.

*NB One of the issues arising from the streamlining of Barnet Childrens Service is the loss of specialist posts with expertise around ethnic minority achievement in education – and training resources to address inclusion of pupils from diverse backgrounds in mainstream education. The relationships formed with new migrant communities achieved outcomes beyond education,*

*and provided a focus for reaching and engaging with families.*

#### **4.5 Undertake engagement with local supplementary schools to improve the safeguarding of children within the schools.**

- The Barnet Supplementary Schools Forum were briefed on the Pan London project at one of their regular bi-monthly meetings in July 2010. Over the course of subsequent meetings it was agreed that a safeguarding workshop would be held specifically for supplementary schools.
- Pascale Vassie, Continyou, ran a 3 hour workshop for supplementary schools on the evening of 1st February. Pascale has produced a paper covering the specific safeguarding issues for supplementary schools – and we discussed the scope and content of the workshop in the light of this experience and research. 23 people attended, covering around 16-17 different supplementary schools. The workshop was very well received, but there was felt to be a need for more detail, and to develop a relationship with key contacts in each supplementary school – to focus on developing their skills. The programme for the workshop is included in the appendix.
- On 29th March 2011 a proposal was taken to the BSSF to establish safeguarding leads in each supplementary school. An event with these safeguarding leads was held on 3rd May 2011 with a follow up meeting on 30th June 2011. The terms of reference for the group can be found in the appendix. This group will be one of the learning sets that we will use to test out the Pan London project outputs.
- The supplementary schools safeguarding leads are keen to take part in the 2011 safeguarding month in Barnet. Possibilities include activities to highlight the diverse nature of schools on offer in the borough, so that statutory professionals become more aware of this route to improve understanding of the cultures within Barnet. Also parenting events to look at the role of statutory professionals and to explain the UK education system. A focus on skills and knowledge of supplementary schools teachers with regard to safeguarding is another option. The next meeting of the safeguarding leads is scheduled for 15th September 2011, and this will be the primary topic.

#### **4.6 Planned activities from July 2011 to the end of the project include:**

- Pending provision of materials, toolkits and information as outputs from the Pan London project (expected September 2011). Barnet will test these with local groups – and feedback the findings (by 30th October 2011).
- Feedback the findings of the Youth Shield questionnaire – specifically covering faith and culture issues.
- Seek to increase membership of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board – faith and culture sub-group, particularly by faith groups including smaller churches. There will be a particular focus on the Black Majority Churches in the borough, specifically those in leadership positions in relation to smaller churches within the RCCG.
- Attendance at Pan London monthly project meetings from September to November – and at the conference to promote the projects outcomes on 30th November 2011.

- Another activity that stands outside the Pan London project, but could be linked, is the development of a programme of activities under the Olympic Truce banner in the summer of 2012. Through attendance at the London Boroughs Faith Network group Flourishing Consulting is working to develop some local responses to the Olympic Truce – which could include a focus on domestic violence, peace walks, knife and gun amnesties and a host of responses to a call for a ceasing of hostilities for the summer.

## 5. Project outputs

5.1 The following can be found in the appendix documents:

- Appendix 1 : Focus group findings
- Appendix 2 : On-line survey raw data for Barnet
- Appendix 3: Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities Parenting Programme flyer, Safeguarding Matters edition, Flyers to promote the safeguarding on the road sessions
- Appendix 4: Supplementary schools training workshop outline, Supplementary schools safeguarding lead terms of reference
- Appendix 5 : Faithbook resources document
- Appendix 6: Summary of youth engagement with safeguarding approaches across boroughs.

5.3 Additional outputs included in the interim report, but not repeated here, include details of the youth faith conference and the presentation used to promote the pan London project across a range of groups. These outputs are available on request – or through reference to the interim report provided in March 2011.

5.4 The details of the focus groups have been provided to Emma Aiyere, and the on-line survey results to Christine Christie. However, the Barnet findings are provided in summary form as follows:

5.5 The following table highlights issues and comments arising across the different focus groups– and incorporate the on-line responses.

### Faith and community groups

<b>Working well:</b>	<b>Not working so well</b>
<p>Safeguarding has a high profile in the borough.</p> <p>Generally very positive relationships between VCOs and statutory sector.</p> <p>There is a need for culturally appropriate places eg London Jewish Family Centre (yet funding is being cut). Services outside the community tend not to be accessed.</p> <p>“Safeguarding Children manager is great”</p> <p>“Local voluntary sector safeguarding adviser</p>	<p>Lack of understanding on the part of statutory professionals re complexities of beliefs within a faith.</p> <p>Lack of partnership working/signposting between professionals in the voluntary sector and statutory professionals. Can achieve better outcomes through working with the culture rather than against it.</p> <p>No emergency service</p> <p>Speed, need and sensitivity of feedback from statutory professionals</p>



<p>is good. CommUNITY Barnet is the starting point for advice.”</p> <p>“Faithbook is good – but do pre-schools etc know about it.”</p> <p>“Youth and Connexions are well informed”.</p> <p>“We get a safeguarding newsletter which I find very useful”</p> <p>Training from LBB is very good – especially around equality and diversity. Good case studies and real examples.</p> <p>References to Hackney as a positive model – small teams, admin support, know the children – use culturally specific service providers on a contract basis to provide professional advice.</p> <p>Ezer ran a one day of training for LA staff – tailored to cover NW London Jewish communities – could run again with funding.</p> <p>Jewish Womens Aid run one hour training sessions for the police – an introduction to the Jewish community.</p> <p>Network of Jewish organisations working with families works well as a one port of call for advice.</p>	<p>More publicity for local voluntary sector safeguarding advice service.</p> <p>Parents do not understand the law.</p> <p>Need for a prayer/multi-faith space in all schools</p> <p>Denial that safeguarding is an issue in specific communities – inconsistent with the values.</p> <p>Trying to keep on top of the legislation and keeping disclosure information upto date is difficult.</p> <p>Faith groups want information about other faith groups.</p> <p>Not enough support for lone parents who may be vulnerable in caring for children</p>
<p><b>Emerging themes:</b></p>	<p><b>Gaps in services/proposals:</b></p>
<p>Need for trust and confidentiality (mentioned repeatedly). It is a big deal for a family to be referred to statutory services outside the faith. A feeling that statutory professionals jump to conclusions and make assumptions.</p> <p>Understanding of cultural norms eg the caring role of older siblings in large Jewish families. Understanding of extremes within a faith and culture.</p> <p>Need to query and understand perceptions of disability across different faiths and cultures.</p> <p>Lack of confidence to challenge where the safeguarding issue clearly has a cultural origin.</p> <p>Confusion over parenting support and</p>	<p>Protocols to include involvement of voluntary sector groups relevant to family culture. Joint assessments. Current practice is inconsistent. Better signposting needed.</p> <p>Lack of networking across statutory and VCO professionals re safeguarding.</p> <p>Need for guidance/training on rules of engagement with a family of a different culture eg times to ring, suitable dress, norms for eye contact. Increase understanding of cultural norms and where they come from. For VCOs working across cultures.</p> <p>Educate statutory services about the local community profile and the voluntary sector – update and deliver frequently to cover new staff/turnover.</p>

<p>safeguarding. Prevention work to be valued.</p> <p>Local faith leaders are powerful and it is difficult for followers to challenge them. There is a need to positively engage and influence faith leaders across the spectrum.</p> <p>References to paedophile priests, FGM and anti-semitism – suggest that stereotyping of communities continues to be evident.</p> <p>Concerns over bringing shame on a community through reporting.</p> <p>Media stereotypes of faith groups – negative images of extremism.</p> <p>FGM is mentioned as an issue by a number of people – specifically with reference to African communities.</p> <p>Need to separate out Islamic faith and cultural issues eg some practices are associated with particular countries are not core to a faith.</p>	<p>More diversity in members of the safeguarding board.</p> <p>Explore the role of safeguarding advisers from the voluntary sector with knowledge of community languages – to advocate for a family.</p> <p>Requests for opportunities for dialogue across faiths to get a better understanding of beliefs in different areas eg faith and health, faith and parenting, faith and marriage.</p> <p>Request for a list of individuals and groups prepared to provide advice on faith/culture but with an understanding of safeguarding.</p> <p>Provide information simply and in different languages.</p> <p>Parenting programmes delivered in community languages. Preventative work with families.</p> <p>A suggestion that all faith leaders and new faith groups are included in a register of some kind.</p> <p>Prejudice and lack of support for BME families is cited.</p>
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5.6 The focus groups enabled us to respond to some requests for resources that already exist. For example, CRB checking and policy development support are provided by CommUNITY Barnet. Parenting programmes delivered by individuals from different local communities. One action to take away is to continue to promote our good practice, increase awareness and so increase uptake.

**Statutory professionals:**

<b>Working well:</b>	<b>Not working so well/gaps in services</b>
<p>Responses suggest that there is advice out there – but an awareness raising job to do.</p> <p>Develop faithbook</p> <p>Understanding that faith/culture does not excuse placing a child at risk of harm.</p>	<p>No consistent access to advice on engaging with families from different cultures.</p> <p>Emphasis on self-directed research on a case by case basis.</p> <p>There is a lack of support for working with parents.</p> <p>Some teams have a policy of not using</p>

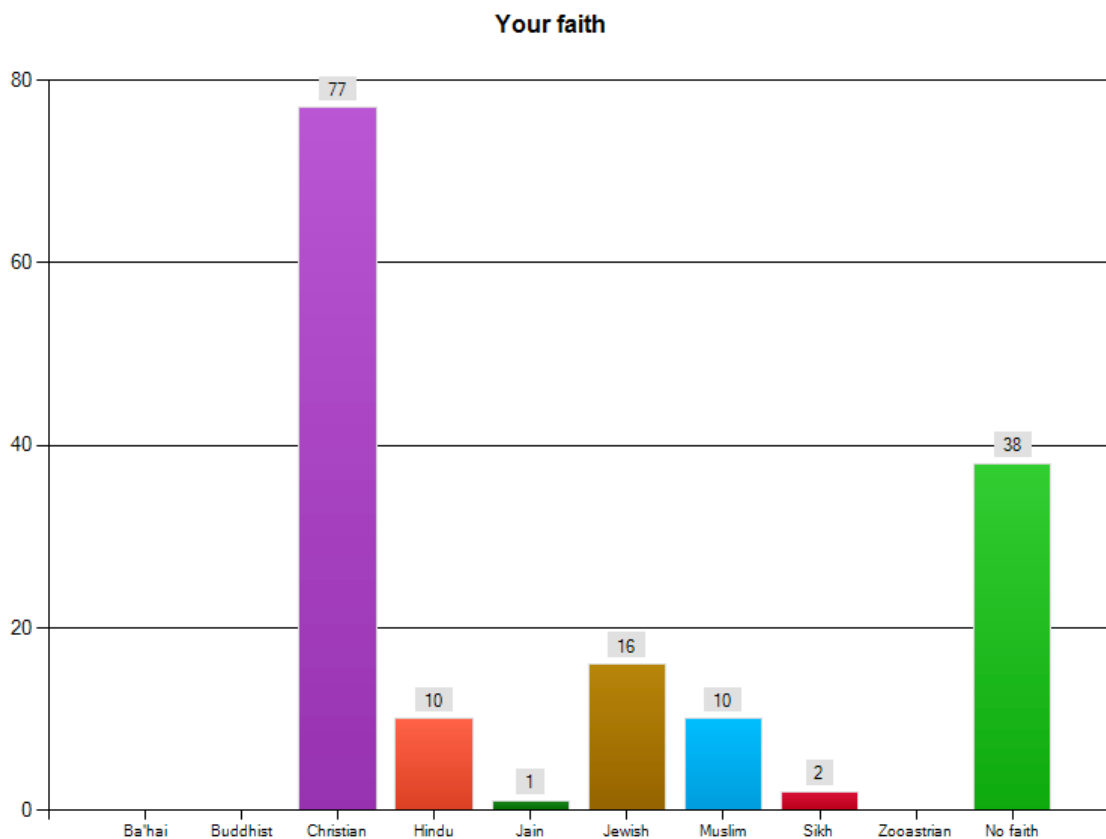
	<p>interpreters, which makes it difficult. Especially when you depend on family members.</p> <p>So much can be missed when you don't speak the same language.</p>
<p><b>Emerging issues:</b></p>	<p><b>Gaps in services/proposals</b></p>
<p>Need to understand the difference in physical chastisement approaches across different cultures.</p> <p>Need to understand cultural reluctance to disclose certain kinds of information eg around mental health, disability. There are stigmas associated with these conditions.</p> <p>There is a fear of being labelled racist – and a reluctance to offend - that impinges on willingness to challenge practices that compromise the safety of children.</p> <p>Difficulties in engaging with more orthodox, closed communities who are resistant to help/interventions from outsiders</p>	<p>How are safeguarding standards applied in independent faith schools?</p> <p>Would like information on the main cultural groups in the borough – and who to contact for advice. Can CommUNITY Barnet have a stand in the LA building? Regular seminars delivered by local VCOs.</p> <p>Seminars on cultural competence. Deliver study days around each faith/culture – hold regular information sharing events.</p> <p>Proactive engagement with faith leaders.</p> <p>Add information on safeguarding in different communities to the red book.</p> <p>Ensuring that interpreters supporting a family have a good understanding of safeguarding. Training on working with interpreters.</p> <p>One request for a helpline</p> <p>Desire for regular training covering the diversity of beliefs around childcare and cultural norms. Also a reading tool for immediate access when information is needed urgently.</p> <p>Preference for faith/community leaders to deliver training to explain diversity within and between groups and their practices.</p> <p>Identify designated people who can provide information and advice on specific cultures.</p> <p>Not enough data to identify where there may be an over-representation of different cultures in care proceedings.</p> <p>Some statements that training is not the answer – but access to a database of people who can offer cultural advice would be more practical.</p>

	We want information from this project to be fed back to us.
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5.7 The issue of safeguarding standards in supplementary schools was also mentioned – we were able to respond by describing local activities as well as the Quality Framework for supplementary schools.

**6. Survey responses for Barnet**

6.1 Findings from the 162 Barnet respondents to the on-line survey are outlined below. The chart below shows the declared faith of the respondents:

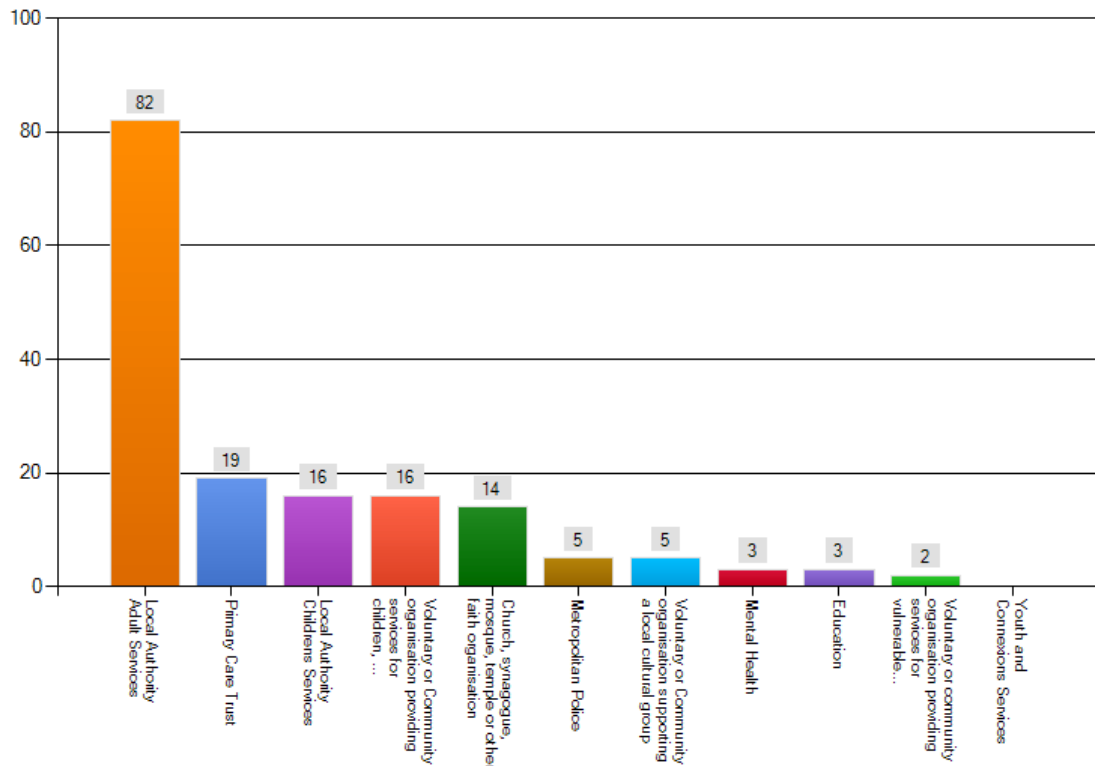


6.2 In ethnicity terms the respondents who chose to reply were:

Asian Indian 11 Asian Pakistani 2 Asian Bangladeshi 1 British Black Asian 1  Other Asian 6 Mixed White/Asian 2	Black African 11 Black Caribbean 3  Other Black 2 Other Mixed 1	White British 93 White Irish 10  Other White 14
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6.3 The area of work for the respondents is shown in the table overleaf:

What kind of organisation do you work for?



6.4 The following wordles illustrate responses to each of the focus group questions:

What do you think are the most important safeguarding children issues in your community or faith group?



(14 voluntary sector professionals working with children)

FGM stands out as an issue, as does a lack of understanding of cultural issues on the part of professionals. The local CVS is highlighted as a source of advice and help. The role of leaders is raised by several respondents, as influential individuals who can impact on the activities of members of their community.



Issues about the number of CRBs that an individual needs when working across different organizations were raised here – with concern that the speed of CRB processing holds organisations back. There should be more people of mixed backgrounds in professional roles. There is an assumption that faith and culture are the same, but they are not. More training for professionals to understand beliefs and lifestyle issues.

**What changes to access and delivery of services do you think would help keep children safe?**



(10 voluntary sector professionals working with children)

Issues around publicity of training courses etc were raised. Also registration of faith leaders by the local authority, so that they can be approached and engaged with regard to safeguarding issues.

6.5 Responses from statutory professionals are provided in wordle form below.

**What do you feel least confident about when acting to safeguard children / support families from minority ethnic cultures and faiths?**







As you can see, training is a big issue for statutory professionals working with children and with adults. Training topics to include – cultural approaches to child-rearing and working with interpreters. Training lead by people from different communities is sought. Specific sources of support mentioned include a helpline and a guide (or database) covering sources of local knowledge. Training to cover Jewish culture is well delivered already – but there is little to cover Muslim or Hindu communities.

**What do you think your local Safeguarding Children Board could do to assist you in your task of safeguarding children in different culture and faith communities and groups?**



(27 statutory professionals working with children, 32 working with adults)

Providing information stands out as the biggest need as well as the provision of information, and engagement with local community groups. Involving community groups in the membership of the LSCB, developing a designated expert role for specific cultures, providing guidance and supporting staff to discriminate between safeguarding and cultural practices. Setting up safeguarding champions within communities to provide a link to professionals and promote safeguarding from inside. Providing forums for discussion of case studies.

**7. Project outcomes**

**7.1 The anticipated outcomes from the project include:**

- Increased awareness of local safeguarding resources – and a willingness to access them.
- Increased uptake of the local voluntary sector safeguarding advice service from faith and BME communities. This would cover CRB checks, third party reporting as well as general advice and information requests.
- Increased safeguarding referrals from BME and faith communities.
- Increased CAFs from BME and faith communities. We have a strong voluntary sector involvement in the delivery of CAFs – but we would also want to see who is part of the team around the child eg representation from voluntary, community and faith groups – as part of the child’s social capital.
- Increased participation of voluntary sector faith and cultural groups in the November Safeguarding month activities – as organisers and as attendees.

- 7.2 Measurement of the impact of preventative activities is harder to measure, and so there is an element of trust involved here and belief that offering families new ways of being will impact and change behaviours.

## 8. Learning from the project

- 8.1 To date the main learning points have been:

- Step by step approaches are needed to form positive and effective relationships with specific communities. For example, trust was formed in a gradual way over time with the local Muslim community. This enabled us to progress from an open safeguarding surgery to a more focussed safeguarding awareness event. The next steps could be to explore a specific issue in some depth eg FGM.
- The need for CommUNITY Barnet to refresh and repeat publicity and awareness raising activities with local statutory professionals and to broker relationships with Barnet's community groups.
- Information on witchcraft and spirit possession derived from the Trust for London conference on 13th May 2011, and through Pan London project meeting discussions, has been brought into the faith and culture safeguarding sub-group and to the CommUNITY Barnet childrens team. Discomfort with discussing this issue needs to be continually challenged. A similar situation exists with respect to FGM, where there are sources of local expertise – and a very careful road to be trodden if an impact on behaviour is to be achieved.
- The primary learning from the project is that changing behaviours and beliefs is not achieved through any quick fixes. Focus on influential leaders can achieve much, but individuals will still revert to historic cultural patterns when in crisis. A steady and continual raising of the issues and employment of diverse means of reaching communities is to be employed to ensure that UK legislation is understood and children kept safe.

## 9. Conclusion / next steps

9. Lessons to be disseminated and adopted across London to improve the safeguarding of children in BME communities and faith groups and information to be incorporated into the Pan-London Project outputs:

### **The companion guidance to the London Child protection Procedures**

- a) Develop protocols for social care staff that include prompting to gather information on the faith and cultural background of a family. Work with the local CVS to gather information on the faith and ethnicity profile for the borough – and the associated community groups. Promote the role of the CVS as a route to gather information and advice on cultural practices. Consider building this into the CVS funding/SLA. Respect the role and professionalism of the local voluntary sector and seek to work in partnership.
- b) Build in feedback to the referring community organisation – so that there is a learning relationship between social care professionals and voluntary groups.
- c) Develop processes for capturing faith and ethnicity data as referrals are made and

cases progress. Ensure that quality management information of this kind is available to the LSCB in a form that enables strategic planning, monitoring of the impact of initiatives and effective use of resources.

- d) There is much diversity within a faith as well as between faiths and communities. Thumbnail summaries can be misleading or play to stereotypes. Consider development of key questions for practitioners to use to establish the relationship between faith/culture and potential safeguarding issues – so that a dialogue can form part of the relationship building.

### **The BME / faith training toolkit**

- a) Design the training in such a way that it can be delivered by a mixed team of facilitators from the voluntary and statutory sector.
- b) Embed safeguarding in preventative parenting programmes and deliver through practitioners from local communities.
- c) Deliver training to mixed groups of voluntary and statutory professionals.
- d) Include equality, diversity, BME and faith within core safeguarding training.
- e) Include local data, and local resources and networks.
- f) Be mindful of gender differences and influences within communities and consider
- g) Delivering single gender training programmes within some groups.
- h) Consider embedding safeguarding references into school induction activities for parents – for example as an introduction to the education system, and the professionals you may encounter as a parent and in what circumstances. Universal services will reach all families, by definition.
- i) Build references to holy scriptures into safeguarding materials to reinforce the messages. Work with faith leaders to develop these materials.

### **The LSCB community engagement guidance**

- a) Include materials for young people to use in keeping themselves safe – eg describing legislation and referring to support groups. Ensure that these materials are editable locally so that individuals and contact details can be added.
- b) Develop a toolkit for SCBs to establish Junior Safeguarding Boards – drawing on expertise in Barnet and other boroughs (see appendix on approaches in London). Research into other models eg Merthyr Tydfil, Powys, Redcar and Cleveland. Explore scope for collaborations across boroughs.
- c) Barnet has two years experience in the delivery of a safeguarding month (November) – drawing together initiatives across the local authority and the voluntary sector to provide a cohesive programme of activities with a sustained focus on safeguarding. This has been a good way of focussing on the issues.
- d) Consider reciprocal arrangements across boroughs where there is expertise in engaging with specific communities.

- e) Develop safeguarding services that offer something of value to local community groups eg reduced rate CRB checks, third party reporting, guidance on developing safeguarding policies. Undertake outreach work into local communities – delivering surgeries in community venues.
- f) Invest in the development of safeguarding leads within communities (eg supplementary schools). This provides a focus for updating information, and ensures that there are clear responsibilities for safeguarding.

**10. Appendices available as separate documents at [www.londonscb.gov.uk](http://www.londonscb.gov.uk)**

- Appendix 1: Focus group findings
- Appendix 2: On-line survey raw data for Barnet
- Appendix 3: Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities Parenting Programme flyer, Safeguarding Matters edition, Flyers to promote the safeguarding on the road sessions
- Appendix 4: Supplementary schools training workshop outline, Supplementary schools safeguarding lead terms of reference
- Appendix 5: Faithbook resources document
- Appendix 6: Summary of youth engagement with safeguarding approaches across boroughs.

## Individual borough reports

### Part Two

### The Brent Experience

**Sue Matthews**  
**March 2012**



## 1. Project background

- 1.1 Brent has been described as the most ethnically diverse local authority in England. Black and visibly minority ethnic groups make up 71% of the population. More than 130 languages are spoken in addition to English, with Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu the most widely spoken. There are established communities of Indian, black Caribbean and Irish people, however groups of Somali and other black African groups, Eastern European, Afghanistani, Iraqi and families from Hispanic groups are increasing. The borough also receives a high number of refugees and asylum seekers, estimated between 16,000 and 20,000 of whom 1,400 are asylum seekers.
- 1.2 Religion and beliefs are equally diverse in Brent, based on the last census:
- 48% of residents were Christian;
  - 17% were Hindu;
  - 12% Muslim;
  - 2% Jewish;
  - 1% Buddhist;
  - 1% Sikh;
  - 10% had no religion
- 1.3 The very diversity which gives Brent such richness also presents significant challenges in terms of meeting the diverse needs and ensuring effective communication to promote positive outcomes for children and young people. This has been a challenge for Brent LSCB to effectively engage with the range of communities that live in the borough. Whilst some communities are well established and have clear communication networks others are more difficult to reach.
- 1.4 Many within these communities, both the communities themselves and their “leaders” and supporters are not sufficiently attuned to UK law in relation to child protection work; what is required by law, what is and is not acceptable when raising children in this country, and a lack of understanding and in some cases fears, of the roles and responsibilities of the statutory services.
- 1.5 Specifically with regards to families where there is no recourse to public funds, who are often from BME groups and issues of safeguarding notably around domestic abuse, families are often fearful to seek support as disclosure may result in repatriation.
- 1.6 The Brent project is a comprehensive community engagement exercise, followed by establishment of a community-led reference-group within the LSCB framework. The reference group will develop an ongoing engagement / communications strategy between the LSCB and the local minority ethnic community and faith groups. The strategy will provide a framework for capacity building activity in the local community to safeguard children including identifying risk of harm and what to do if there are concerns about a child. The group will also provide a conduit for information sharing, both from the group to the Board and vice-versa.
- 1.7 Consideration is being given to the role of the Chair of the reference group. The Chair will link into the Board through the LSCB Development Manager but would not sit on the Board, as the reference group is not a sub group of the board. The Chair of this group would be elected by the group, unlike sub groups of the board, where the Board selects the Chair. However, there is a possibility that the elected Chair might be one of the two lay members currently being recruited to the Board, in which case the group

would have direct representation. In either event the group would have a significant role in informing the work of the Board.

## 2. Project setup

- 2.1 VCF – The Victoria Climbié Foundation UK is the leading independent organisation campaigning for improvement in child protection policies and practices, and link organisation between statutory agencies, care services and BME communities.
- 2.2 VCF will work in partnership with Brent LSCB to engage community groups to identify the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic children and families to better protect all children in Brent. The proposal was presented to the Board on 14th January and the plan was endorsed. Project oversight and monitoring is provided by Sue Matthews (Brent LSCB) and Mor Dioum (VCF). The day-to-day coordination of the project is managed by Stephanie Yorath (VCF).
- 2.3 The work in Brent builds upon the community engagement work delivered in neighbouring borough of Harrow, which is in its final stages of completion. The partnership work with Harrow LSCB has provided an opportunity to ‘pilot’ the VCF community engagement model although as an unfunded exercise currently competes with other VCF priorities.

## 3. Project activities

- 3.1 The overall scope and aims of this project are to undertake a comprehensive review to identify the safeguarding and child protection needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) children, young people and families in Brent, and what to do when there are concerns around a child within the community. It is hoped to enhance engagement with the diverse communities in Brent to both increase awareness about safeguarding issues and ensure enhanced professional responses. Significantly it is hoped that as a result of this project the LSCB will be able to work with a reference group to inform its work across both the Board itself and its sub groups. The LSCB is looking to recruit two lay members to join the Board from the community and it is hoped that the interest generated through the project may encourage community members to put themselves forward.
- 3.2 The Community Engagement (Needs Identification) Consultation is a three-step process;

- *Step 1: Pre-Seminar Consultation (Questionnaire)*  
A questionnaire distributed to all known community groups working with BME children and families in Brent. Deadline for responses: 31st March 2011.

This work has been further augmented by focused outreach activities in-borough ahead of multi agency seminar aimed at voluntary and community groups. See Annex 1: Pre-Seminar Consultation (Questionnaire) and Appendix 2: Brent Focus Group Responses (Raw Data).

- *Step 2: Seminar*  
The seminar provided an opportunity for further consultation and launch of the community engagement model. Details were distributed and publicised on the Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board website:  
<http://www.brentlscb.org.uk/>. VCF provides the main point of contact.

The project has been affected by funding cuts to the voluntary sector; the local

CVS had ceased to function in its previous form, which impacted the project in terms of wider distribution within the community. A VCF volunteer was provided with additional workload to compile lists of children, youth, faith and community groups in Brent a time consuming exercise, albeit productive as it could potentially provide a useful tool for the future. During July and August 2011, VCF focused its outreach work in Brent to consult more widely with community groups in the borough. At the same time, the project communicated with voluntary sector partners who see an opportunity to positively engage with communities through the work that is being taken forward by this project.

The seminar took place on 20th October 2011 at a venue identified by community groups as being popular and accessible. It was well attended and there was a high level of interest in the proposed reference group.

- *Step 3: Creation of community-led reference group; structure, terms of reference*

Step 3 provides the opportunity for consolidation of previous work undertaken with the formation of LSCB 'community-led' reference group.

The recruitment process for the Lay Members is underway. The adverts have been distributed through the Brent Magazine, a free magazine circulated to all the households in Brent, to all who attended the seminar, all the groups visited through the outreach work and through the new CVS, Brent BASIS (Building and Sustaining Infrastructures). The closing date is 15th March. Dates have been set for the interviews at the end of April. Once the Lay Members are recruited, it is proposed to set up the inaugural meeting of the community Faith and Culture reference group. The event will take place in the evening to ensure optimum attendance.

There will be a sustained publicity campaign to ensure as wide attendance as possible. Materials will be developed and relevant people will be contacted; the event will be promoted via VCF, BASIS, through the MPS Community Cohesion Officer and the LSCB.

The first meeting will elect the Chair, establish terms of reference and consider the frequency of meetings. It is proposed that there could also be a virtual reference group connected with the actual group that will enable a broader involvement, whilst the actual group will be available for those without internet access. Contact with the LSCB will be via the LSCB Development Manager

#### 4. Project outputs

- 14 Jan 2011: Presentation & Project Briefing to Brent LSCB Steering Group
- 11 Mar 2011: Consultation Questionnaire to Funded and Other Community Groups (also provided online: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5R2KXYJ> )
- 15 Mar 2011: Briefing delivered to Brent Multi Faith Forum
- 08 Apr 2011: Submission of Pan London Culture & Faith Project Interim Report
- 13 May 2011: Safeguarding Children Conference
- 14 Jun 2011: Detailed briefing to Brent Multi Faith Forum
- Jul/Aug 2011: Focus sessions with community groups
- 21 Sep 2011: Brent BME User Forum
- Sep/Oct 2011: Materials developed for the Community Seminar
- 20 Oct: 2011 Community Seminar



## 5. Project outcomes

5.1 The communications work will set the strategic direction for a community led reference group within the local LSCB framework. A strategy will be drafted as part of the initial work of the group, for approval for the LSCB Board; we hope to meet individual members of the community / voluntary groups to establish views and inform the strategy.

- The communications strategy will ensure the LSCB communicates effectively with our local community and that professionals at the front line are informed about developments;
- Campaigns to raise child protection awareness will promote self-protection skills in children and young people;
- The public will have increased awareness about safeguarding children, and what to do if they are concerned about a child;
- Actual and virtual groups to undertake work, with a steer from the LSCB business plan;
- Input into LSCB Task and Finish subgroups as appropriate.

5.2 There has been a keen willingness by Brent LSCB members and their contacts to work with VCF to achieve our joint aims, and already we have identified two opportunities that could be taken forward by a community-led group:

- to maintain list of groups working with children and young people;
- to ensure cohesive set of safeguarding needs / communication are addressed / disseminated in future funding applications for groups working with children and young people. The possibility of recruiting potential lay members from the community group contacts has been actioned.

## 6. Learning from the project

6.1 This project is similar to the 'pilot' delivered by VCF in the neighbouring borough of Harrow and VCF has already learned lessons about some of the challenges and critical success factors to ensure completion. However, work within Brent has proved to be very different.

6.2 At the point of commencement of the project, BRAVA, Brent's CVS had ceased to exist and the usual medium for connecting with the borough's voluntary sector was not available. There was discussion about a new umbrella organisation but no clarity about when it would emerge. Council officers were very helpful and both the Diversity and Commissioning units provided invaluable information. The process however took much longer than would have been anticipated.

6.3 Equally, the impact of reduced funding to the voluntary sector, resulted in a level of hostility in some cases, where the suggestion to become involved in further activity at a time when resources were significantly constrained, were seen as making unreasonable demands, for all the groups committed to safeguarding children.

6.4 VCF's response to these challenges was to intensively involve outreach services over August and September. This initiative was beneficial on a number of levels. The face to face connection with groups offered an opportunity to allay fears and discuss openly concerns about safeguarding. The worker involved was able to link in with affiliated groups through word of mouth, who had not previously been known. This also offered the opportunity for VCF to raise its own profile and alert groups to the work they provided.

- 6.5 VCF was gathering information from the community, via consultation questionnaires (printed and online) to, and focus sessions with, community groups in Brent. The deadline for initial responses was 31st March; so that responses could be analysed ahead of seminar that eventually took place in October. Whilst the questionnaires provided some information, the return was poor and for community engagement to work more effectively, VCF has determined that in-depth outreach activities within the community should be the entry-point for the model going forward.
- 6.6 The initiative did suffer from not being able to access the CVS. This is now in place and the LSCB Development Manager recently addressed a safeguarding seminar hosted by BASIS and was able to discuss both the Lay Member and reference group to a group of diverse community groups. This would have been helpful to springboard the initiative in January.

#### Learning for Brent LSCB

- Models are there to be adapted. LSCB had expected that as a similar project had run in the neighbouring borough of Harrow, the process should have been easily transferable. This has not been the case due to a number of differing circumstances but we have been able to adapt the core model to suit our purposes.
- The “community” is very diverse and moves at its own pace. It will not be rushed. Leadership can be very flexible within groups, often with the seeming leader being a mouthpiece, rather than having influence.
- The “trickle effect” of sharing information is of benefit, a series of messages over a longer core period, through different mediums can be as effective as a comprehensive “launch”.
- Ensure you consult fully with statutory partners to explore what community engagement initiatives are already in place, there may be more than you think!

#### Learning from VCF – using the model

- To deliver the project effectively where community groups and their representatives are engaged in the full scheme of the project, during its activity, in-depth outreach work is needed in order to achieve cooperation and understanding between the community and our strategic partners, in this case, the LSCB.
- The allocated budget did not enable VCF to provide a dedicated resource to meet the aggressive timescale for this project; the risk of using a shared resource is likely to result in competing priorities. VCF remains committed to the Brent project and continues to work with Brent LSCB to deliver a community-led reference group beyond the end date for this project.
- To develop and implement the model requires full support by the LSCB with close working relationship with the LSCB Business Manager.
- The model provides a mechanism to recruit lay members for the LSCB.
- The model allows us to identify community groups (both funded and unfunded) delivering services to children, young people and families, and the needs of

these groups around safeguarding (the legal framework) and the protection of children.

## 7. Conclusion / next steps

- 7.1 A key output of the Pan London Culture & Faith project is the LSCB strategy to engage minority ethnic (often socially excluded) families, communities and groups, at the heart of which is a community-led approach being piloted by VCF in partnership with the Brent LSCB. The LSCB strategy has been agreed by the London Board and was launched at the Safeguarding London's Children Conference on 5 December 2011. The training materials and practice guidance were also agreed and are on the London website accessible for voluntary and statutory groups alike.
- 7.2 The development of the Community Engagement programme was initially funded through London Councils with a one off grant of £10,000. The model has now been included in the London Culture and Faith LSCB Strategy *"to assist Local Safeguarding Children Boards to develop sound, effective and sustainable partnership working with local groups, communities and third sector agencies"*; VCF remains committed to the project despite the funding period being over but will clearly not be able to provide the same level of support. If this model is used across London consideration could be given to how such groups could be generically supported.
- 7.3 It is planned for a reference group to emerge from the consultation process undertaken in Brent and the LSCB will be able to draw upon the knowledge of the group to inform the work of the Board. It is also hoped that awareness of safeguarding processes will be broadly disseminated across the community groups of Brent enhancing safeguarding for the children, young people and families of Brent supported by the materials developed through the Pan London culture and Faith initiative. It will be useful to consider the usage of the London material through the reference group.
- 7.4 The role of the Chair of the reference group is clearly a significant role although there would be no direct feed into the Board as the reference group is not a sub group of the Board. However information will flow both into and out of the LSCB through the Development Manager. There has been some consideration of combining the two roles to ensure the Chair of the group sits on the Board; however this would remove the autonomy of the group as there would be no choice about the Chair. The role of the lay member and Chair are different and discrete roles, and whilst there are merits in the lay member and Chair being the same person, there are also advantages of a separate and autonomous role.
- 7.5 Brent is a borough which takes pride in its diversity however, with over 131 different languages spoken there is likely to be challenges in working together, facing the difficulties of trying to engage a full range of groups within a significantly diverse authority where some groups seemingly have no clear contact points.
- 7.6 Community agendas can often be different to those of statutory bodies. The pace and immediacy of work can be different and a "culture" of how to work at the right pace to ensure the "right" outcomes will need to be developed, perhaps using more flexible timescales. The process of engagement undertaken for this project is likely to produce some useful guidance in terms of what worked and what did not; this is likely to emerge over time and there may be benefit in taking time after a period of 6 months to review the work of the group.

# Individual borough reports

## Part Three

### The Enfield Experience

**Daniel Crampton**  
**April 2012**



## 1. Project background

- 1.1 In 2010, a number of concerns were raised in Enfield around the establishment of an increasing number of faith groups catering predominantly for community members of African origin, where both spirit possession and exorcism feature significantly within the programme of worship. The issue had also been raised with ECYPS by a Trust Funding Body that was not happy to provide financial support to organisations with management committee members who were involved in faith groups who had come to the attention of the trust in a negative way as a result of their involvement in this form of worship.
- 1.2 In the first instance, the prevention sub group of Enfield SCB had organised a series of workshops in conjunction with CCPAS, specifically to address local faith groups about issues of spirit possession. In addition to this, a member of the prevention sub group attended a service of exorcism at one of the larger church groups that were setting up a branch in Edmonton. As a result of concerns regarding this event, a meeting was held with the relevant pastor and a range of issues discussed, that could lead to safeguarding concerns. Meetings with the pastor and with members of other congregations gave rise to significant concerns on how parents might be encouraged to deal with issues such as disability and behavioural problems among their children.
- 1.3 Although there were a number of meetings led by CCPAS, it was extremely difficult to get the engagement of the specific faith groups that might best benefit from the discussion around safeguarding.
- 1.4 A series of safeguarding events and workshops were carried out with BAME communities across the borough, within this programme, other concerns raised were with regards appropriate discipline for children and young people within different communities. Within the culture and faith meetings hosted by London Councils, there was extensive discussion on the demographic changes within individual boroughs and the prevalence of different BAME communities in each. Within the safeguarding agenda, the priority areas initially identified by Enfield, with regards its BAME communities, were:
  - Spirit possession
  - FGM
  - Forced marriage
  - Safe sleeping arrangements
  - Child immunisations
  - Experience and trauma of families from war torn countries

## 2. Culture and faith forum funding

- 2.1 These issues were raised within the meetings at the London Councils' Pan London Culture and Faith meetings. A number of boroughs had a range of similar concerns and were attempting to address them in different ways.
- 2.2 A funding proposal was submitted by the coordinator. Although this proved successful, the funding accruing to Enfield as a result was ring-fenced specifically for Afruca – who attended the discussions at London Councils – and had been informed that the total funding available to Enfield, could be used to buy them in to conduct the training. Enfield representatives were unaware of this and it led to some difficulties in initial negotiations, as clearly Enfield had to pay for premises and administration of training as well as outreach and refreshments.

2.3 Afruca had a very specific programme that they wished to deliver that needed to be adapted to accommodate the needs and appropriate timescales already identified in Enfield.

### **3. Programme delivery**

3.1 A three- pronged approach was agreed between the agencies that would offer:

- Workshops for professionals working with African families on issues arising for them
- Workshops for parents from African communities
- Workshops for faith and community leaders within African communities

3.2 It was agreed to spread the sessions over the full term of the funding.

### **4. Feedback from community leaders**

4.1 The feedback from the two community leaders who participated in the workshops was that, although they enjoyed the workshops and felt that there were enormous positives for the parents who attended, the training was too generic.

4.2 They queried the assumption that there was such a thing as 'African' families as the cultures of the individual countries is so diverse and there needs to be an individual and sometimes tailor made response to the different cultures. They felt that the assumptions of similarities did not necessarily stand up to scrutiny and would have welcomed a more in depth exploration of the differences and individualities of the cultures.

4.3 The two communities primarily in attendance were the Congolese and Somali communities – who saw their similarities in that both have families who have experienced the traumas and ravages of war and violence, but also have very specific safeguarding issues that need to be addressed.

4.4 For the Somali community, one of the significant issues would have been a deeper exploration of the roots and practice of FGM – addressing this from both a cultural and religious perspective.

4.5 For the Congolese community, there are two issues of primary concern. The first is the issue of inappropriate chastisement that can amount to physical abuse, the second is that of spirit possession – a common belief within the community. The Congolese community leader commented that the issue of spirit possession was not even raised in the session – even though he feels that this is such a key issue. He felt that as the African trainer was from Rwanda, that he was perhaps not au fait with the needs and issues of the two communities in attendance.

4.6 The community leaders felt that they receive excellent training locally and that they did not get a greater insight by attending. They also felt that there was a need to have an interpreting service on the day to enable in depth discussion of the trickier issues. This is in line with the way in which safeguarding training is delivered locally for the community, but there was no funding component for interpreting within the allocation from London Councils.

4.7 The final comment was regarding the need for parents to have a greater insight into the work of social services teams in UK. It was felt that it was useful that the Safeguarding Board Development Officer was present at the parents' workshop, as

this facilitated some of the discussion around the concerns and fears of families about social services intervention.

## **5. Feedback from professionals**

- 5.1 There were two sessions for professionals – each one day training but with different trainers / facilitators. Professionals in attendance had different degrees of understanding of the subject matter and the feedback reflects this.
- 5.2 For many participants who had previously accessed very little training on diversity, the sessions were found to be extremely useful and provided participants with insight and information on sources of support. Particularly within the second training session, many of the participants felt that the training had increased their knowledge base and given them a basis to extend their work with families. Participants found the case studies very helpful.
- 5.3 For those participants with more experience, the feedback echoes that of the community leaders, in that the sessions were too generic and insufficiently focussed on practical intervention. They felt that there was little acknowledgement of the difference in African cultures and that the training did not provide them with the necessary tools to implement intervention plans.
- 5.4 Each session was led with different trainers. It would be fair to say that participants felt that the trainers were very competent and certainly knew their subject. However, it would equally appear that the abrasive approach of one of the trainers had not been received well by participants.
- 5.5 Participants appreciate the information packs provided and stated that these will be useful within service delivery in future.
- 5.6 Evaluations raised an interesting question for ESCB, in that it was recognised that attendance of representatives - themselves from BAME communities – was disproportionate. The question arises as to why this was the case and is something for the training sub group of the ESCB to address.

## **6. Feedback from parents and carers**

- 6.1 Parents were very enthusiastic about the training and expressed their thanks that this had taken place. Evaluation responses were overwhelmingly positive.
- 6.2 Parents felt that it had given them some insight into and understanding of the UK systems and how they work as well as the safeguarding background in the UK. They did however feel that there was a need for more sessions with more in-depth information about safeguarding systems in UK and expectations of the community. Parents found the interventions and explanations by the Safeguarding Board representative really helpful and would like further sessions to explore these.
- 6.3 They would like more focus on witchcraft and spirit possession and religious and cultural practices in African countries as well as the effects of abuse on children and young people.
- 6.4 They would also like longer sessions.

## 7. Learning from the programme

- The funding did not take into account the needs of organising such a programme.
- To get community and particularly faith leaders involved, there is a need to conduct targeted outreach – using community leaders - which needs to be properly funded.
- Sessions with parents – particularly hard to reach parents – require use of interpreting services which have to be properly funded
- Training for professionals should be targeted, specific and in depth and provide tools for engagement and cascading of training
- Families newly arrived in UK or previously with little knowledge of English, benefit from target induction workshops on the workings of social care teams
- Community leaders need to be involved with the structuring of training and workshops
- More in depth diversity training is required locally
- Representative attendance at professionals' workshops needs to be addressed.



## Individual borough reports

### Part Four

## The Greenwich Experience

**Amanda Harry**  
**March 2012**



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Staff and volunteers in community settings and in Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are often well placed to identify and work with vulnerable families from culture and faith communities, alongside statutory agencies to address safeguarding concerns. Strengths of CSOs in this work are varied but can include; the amount of time spent with children and families in an informal setting, strong relationships developed with the family and an ability to observe the child and family over a significant period of time. Both the Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) and local CSOs identified that the engagement between the organisations and the GSCB needed to be improved. This has consistently been identified as a priority in the GSCB work plan in previous years and significant progress has now been achieved.

## 2. Project background

- 2.1 Greenwich Action for Voluntary Service (GAVS) is a relatively new Community Voluntary Service and is beginning to build its reputation amongst the voluntary sector in Greenwich. GAVS Civil Society Sector Profile report, March 2011<sup>2</sup>, identified that of the 718 CSOs in the borough, almost 39% have specific services targeted at children and young people (CYP) and 34% have services targeted at Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. GAVS, therefore, has a particular focus on supporting CYP and BME CSOs through its one-to-one capacity building work and through its CYP Forum and BME Forum. Historically, there has been minimal representation and engagement between the CSO Sector and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### Project setup

- 2.2 One of the priorities in the GSCB work plan was to establish effective engagement and representation of culture, faith and BME communities. The GSCB Development Officer has led the work in conjunction with the Children and Young People's Development Officer at GAVS.

## 3. Project activities

- 3.1 The aim of the project was to improve the collaboration between the GSCB and local CSOs with the goal of improving engagement and safeguarding practice, particularly within BME communities. The GSCB undertook focused work with CSOs, through GAVS in five areas:

- Participation and representation
- Information gathering
- Information sharing
- Training
- Consultation, advice and guidance

## 4. Participation and representation

### Executive Board and Work Group participation

- 4.1 One of the statutory requirements of LSCBs is to ensure appropriate membership and engagement. *Working Together* advises that this should include the involvement of local voluntary and community sector organisations, either on the board or through existing networks or forums or by encouraging and developing suitable networks or forums to facilitate communication between organisations and with the LSCB. Historically, there had been minimal representation and engagement between the

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<sup>2</sup> [Greenwich Civil Society Sector Profile Report](#), GAVS, March 2011.

GSCB and local CSOs and no forums or mechanisms in place for this to develop. A structure of engagement therefore needed to be implemented. A meeting was held between the Development Officer for the GSCB and the Children and Young People's Development Officer for GAVS to establish how to increase participation and representation.

- 4.2 The GSCB has a clear structure comprising of the Executive Board and Work Groups. This provided a straight forward way to involve CSOs. Local CSOs are now formally represented at the GSCB Executive Board and on the majority of Work Groups. The Children and Young People's Development Officer from GAVS sits on the board and is a member of the Policy and Procedures, Training & Development and Prevention Work Groups. Additionally, the Her Centre, Greenwich Women's Aid, Voluntary Group for Special Needs and MOSAC participate in the Prevention Work Group. Listening Ears is represented on the Health Work Group. There are plans to further increase CSO representation in relevant work groups in the coming year.

#### GSCB participation in GAVS Forums

- 4.3 GAVS facilitates a Children and Young People's Forum and a BME Forum, for CSOs in Greenwich that work with C&YP and BME communities respectively. The GSCB Development Officer now regularly attends these quarterly Forum meetings and has increased awareness of the GSCB amongst the network by delivering a presentation on the role and function of the Board to the BME Forum. At the following meeting, the GSCB Development Officer presented information on support and services for unaccompanied minors. In addition, the Children and Young People's Forum received a training session on safeguarding children. By regularly attending these Forums, the GSCB Development Officer has been able to get to know the CSOs and vice versa, building up trust and more likelihood of CSOs getting in touch with the GSCB for support and advice.

### **5. Information gathering**

- 5.1 In order to better understand local CSOs engagement with and understanding of Safeguarding issues, GAVS and the GSCB undertook two information gathering exercises.
- 5.2 Since 2010 GAVS has undertaken a survey of training needs across local CSOs on safeguarding. Results have generally indicated that awareness of and access to safeguarding training was excellent/good. However, the return rate/response has been relatively low so it is possible that only those organisations that are already engaged with issues around safeguarding took the time to complete the survey. This survey will be undertaken again in 2012. It is hoped that there will be a larger response rate and that results will provide further information about the increasing work and knowledge of local CSOs on safeguarding issues.
- 5.3 The London Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Culture and Faith Work Group developed a survey about professional's views and needs in relation to safeguarding issues for children from different BME and faith communities. GAVS disseminated this survey across their networks to establish the views of local CSOs. The LSCB reported that Greenwich had the highest level of response to the survey across all London Boroughs which was a positive indication of the developing levels of engagement between the GSCB and CSOs. The results from the survey highlighted a need to raise awareness about services available to work with children and families in the borough, further develop partnership work with BME organisations, and help parents/carers to understand the role of professionals, as well as UK laws, policies and protocols.

Finally, the survey highlighted the need to increase the training courses that the GSCB offers to include issues including Female Genital Mutilation, Private Fostering, Trafficking, Forced Marriage, Working with Difficult Families and Safeguarding Children Across Culture and Faith.

## 6. Information sharing

- 6.1 With increased engagement and interest in safeguarding issues, it has been important to develop a clear way to share and disseminate information between the GSCB, GAVS and local CSOs.
- 6.2 Both GAVS and the GSCB had developed systems to share information through their networks. However, prior to this project, information was not regularly shared between the two networks. Both organisations agreed to regularly disseminate relevant information using their existing methods of communication.
- 6.3 As a result, the GSCB has contributed information to the development of a new safeguarding children section on the GAVS website. Additionally, the GSCB regularly contributes to the monthly GAVS e-bulletin aimed at organisations working with Children and Young People and the 8-weekly BME e-Bulletin (both go to approx 250 CSOs in the borough). Interest in issues related to safeguarding children in CSOs was evidenced by feedback that the safeguarding information in the e-bulletin was among the most viewed and downloaded. GAVS regularly forwards the GSCB quarterly "Safe and Sound" newsletter throughout their network which has resulted in an increase in requests coming from CSOs for further information.

### 'Supporting BME Parents' Workshops

- 6.4 Through the culture and faith survey and the BME forum, BME CSOs highlighted that there was a growing need for more information, discussion and training via topic specific workshops. Local CSOs raised concerns that parents do not understand the UK system or what support is available to them.
- 6.5 The BME Forum and GAVS worked with Children's Services and the GSCB to develop workshops. The purpose of the workshops were to provide the representatives of CSOs that work with parents from BME communities in Greenwich with information to cascade through their community to encourage an increase in access to universal and specialist BME services.
- 6.6 The aims of workshops were to:
- Increase awareness of the additional issues and challenges that BME parents face in supporting and caring for their children (e.g. due to cultural, language differences);
  - Increase awareness amongst BME CSOs of the services and support available for BME parents (universal services and BME specialist services), and how CSOs can support BME parents to access these;
  - Identify ways that BME CSOs and statutory sector agencies in Greenwich can work better together to improve support to BME parents;
- 6.7 Three workshops took place between November 2011 and March 2012, focusing on parenting for 0-5s; 5-13s and 13-19 year olds. Topics included looking at the cultural, language and contextual issues/barriers that arise for parents from BME communities, disabilities, safeguarding issues including FGM, discipline, private fostering, forced marriage, health, and education. A 'Supporting BME Dads' workshop has been planned for April.

6.8 The workshops were well attended (approx 25 participants from a range of BME CSOs) and feedback was very positive. All participants said they 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they would attend a similar workshop. Workshops enabled the Council's Children's Services and the GSCB to form stronger links with BME groups, developing familiarity with the services and providing them with contacts in each organisation.

## **7. Training**

7.1 The multi agency training provided by the GSCB is available free of charge to local not for profit organisations and commissioned CSOs.

7.2 Since the beginning of this project, GAVS has promoted the GSCB training programme through their forums, newsletters, bulletins and website. This has resulted in a 70% increase in attendance from CSOs in the last year.

7.3 In the training survey and in GAVS' Forums, many CSOs identified that the regularly scheduled GSCB Training did not meet their needs as it is only held during business hours, which is when most of their volunteers are unable to attend due to other commitments. In order to better meet the needs of the CSOs, the GSCB delivered evening Basic Induction sessions for volunteers. This included an evening safeguarding training for Supplementary Schools alongside 'ContinYou'. Attendance at this training was good and further support for supplementary schools will be offered by the Child Protection Co-ordinator (Schools) who will be the link to the network.

## **8. Consultation, advice and guidance**

8.1 Local CSOs have regularly identified that they prefer to have a single point of contact for their queries. The GSCB Development Officer acts as the main point of contact for safeguarding consultation, advice and guidance for CSOs. This has included providing advice around appropriate checks on volunteers and giving guidance around making a referral to Children's Social Care division.

### Child protection policies and procedures

8.2 With increased awareness about safeguarding and requirements from commissioners that child protection policies and procedures be in place, local CSOs began asking for support when creating or reviewing their policies to ensure that they had put appropriate safeguards in place. The GSCB Development Officer is now routinely receiving draft child protection policies and procedures from CSOs. The documents are reviewed and any necessary information or support is provided to organisations. This is a key opportunity to engage with the sector, increase awareness about Safeguarding and promote the GSCB's 'Safe Organisation Toolkit' which is a document that highlights what organisations need to consider around safeguarding.

## **9. Project outputs and outcomes**

9.1 Outputs from the project include:

- Development of an "Engagement Action Plan"
- Supporting BME Parents Workshops
- Training Courses commissioned in response to identified needs
- Evening Basic Induction Courses delivered for volunteers

9.2 Outcomes from the project include:

- Increased representation of CSOs on GSCB work groups
- Increase in targeted safeguarding resources and information available to CSOs through the GAVS Website and regular communications from GSCB through GAVS and GSCB Newsletters.
- Increased understanding of GSCB's role, responsibilities and support available to CSOs through presentations at Forums and workshops.
- Increase in safeguarding training accessed by CSOs.
- Link between GSCB and supplementary schools developed.
- Improved safeguarding children policies by CSOs
- Increase in the amount of advice given to CSO's around safeguarding issues

## **10. Learning from the project**

- 10.1 The link between the GSCB and local CSOs has started to develop successfully because of the commitment from the GSCB and GAVS to incorporate one another throughout the activities of the organisations and consistently look for opportunities to further engage with local BME, Culture and Faith Groups. This structure has developed a basis for building stronger ties and undertaking further work with CSOs in the future.
- 10.2 It was important for the GSCB to develop an understanding about how CSOs operate, and take this into consideration when planning and undertaking work with the sector. This meant taking a long term approach to the work and developing a view that engagement with CSOs needed to become "business as usual".

## **11. Conclusion / next steps**

- 11.1 GAVS will continue to; support CSOs in GSCB work groups, disseminate relevant information throughout the sector and work to enhance engagement with the GSCB. The GSCB will also be working with GAVS to reach out to those organisations who are not already engaged.
- 11.2 The next step is to write an engagement protocol between GAVS and the GSCB which will formalise the commitment to the work streams noted above.

## Individual borough reports

### Part Five

### The Hackney Experience

**Leethen Bartholomew**  
**March 2012**





## 1. Hackney context

- 1.1 41.2% of Hackney's 215,987 residents are from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, ranking the borough as the 9<sup>th</sup> most ethnically diverse in London<sup>3</sup>, and there are a large number of Black African, Black Caribbean, Turkish-speaking, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot community groups (amongst others) operating locally. Hackney's 56,100 children and young people are more ethnically diverse than any other age group in the borough, and approximately 26% of Hackney residents are under the age of 20<sup>4</sup>. Young people belonging to ethnic minority groups make up 56.5% of this group, with 35.8% being Black African, Black Caribbean or Black British<sup>5</sup>.
- 1.2 The borough has the second highest rate of domestic violence reporting in London per 1000 population, when compared with the 9 most similar boroughs<sup>6</sup>. Domestic violence as an issue affects all communities within the borough. There were 4,665 reports to police in Hackney recorded 2009/10<sup>7</sup> and for the first half of the financial year (April-October inclusive) there were 2,706 reports to the police. Referrals to Hackney's Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Team increased by 45% during 2009/10<sup>8</sup>. It is widely recognised that some communities may find it more difficult to report domestic violence due to cultural and language barriers and a lack of awareness of available services. Prevention is one of the main ingredients in combating domestic violence and as part of this it is vital to educate children and young people about domestic and gender violence. It is equally important for professionals to hear the voices of young people about the extent of their knowledge and the impact domestic violence has on them and their communities.
- 1.3 In 2010, a young person within the borough committed suicide and there was a possible link to forced marriage. Therefore, the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) embarked upon a project that focused on obtaining the views of BME young people about domestic and gender based violence. The project particularly wanted to hear the views of Turkish and Kurdish young people, although the views of other BME young people were also included.

## 2. Methodology

- 2.1 The project utilised a peer research model, which involved recruiting ten young people as peer researchers. Eleven young people were initially recruited, but this was reduced to nine as two young people felt that they could not manage the demands of school work and the project. The young people were recruited from Hackney Youth Parliament and a voluntary sector organisation. The nine peer researchers were aged between 14 and 17, and comprised three males and six females. They received three days of training on being peer researchers, which included: interviewing skills, communication skills, recording skills, managing disclosures made during the interview process and facilitating groups. They were also provided with child protection and domestic and gender violence training.
- 2.2 The method of data collection was divided into two phases. The first phase involved administering questionnaires to young people between the ages of 13 and 19 years. These young people either had to be residing in the borough or had used a Hackney service (e.g. attended a school or a community project). Each peer researcher was given 20 questionnaires to complete. Therefore, 180 questionnaires were expected to

<sup>3</sup> [http://data.london.gov.uk/datafiles/demographics/egpp\\_r2009\\_shlaa\\_revised\\_all\\_boroughs.xls](http://data.london.gov.uk/datafiles/demographics/egpp_r2009_shlaa_revised_all_boroughs.xls)

<sup>4</sup> ONS 2008

<sup>5</sup> Hackney Borough Profile 2010

<sup>6</sup> Hackney Chief Executive's Directorate, Policy and Performance Team, June 2010

<sup>7</sup> Metropolitan Police Data 2010

<sup>8</sup> Hackney Domestic and Gender Violence Strategy 2011 -2013



be returned, but 172 were actually completed.

- 2.3 The second stage involved analysing the questionnaires and using the major themes highlighted as questions to be discussed with young people in focus groups. The peer researchers facilitated four focus groups with young people from a Turkish dance group, church youth group, African supplementary school and a young women's youth group. Thirty young people participated in these focus groups.
- 2.4 The focus groups were video recorded with the consent of the young people and their parents, and those who wished not to be video recorded were audio recorded instead. The footage of the video recording was then used to produce a DVD entitled 'Our Communities, Our Voices, Our Views: Hackney young people speak out about safeguarding issues'.
- 2.5 In order to ensure that the peer researchers were rewarded for their service to the project, they were provided with £125 in vouchers. Additionally, as a further incentive to engage them throughout the life of the project, they were encouraged to be involved on the production side of the DVD production and this was linked to them aspiring to obtain an AQA in film production and editing. In the end, five young people received this qualification.

### **3. Limitations**

- 3.1 The findings from this research may be regarded as subjective, given that it is the peer researchers' role to decide what respondents deemed to be important and pertinent to the questions being asked. Additionally, given the small scale sample used in this project, the respondents are not representative of Hackney young people. Therefore, generalisations cannot be made. It is also worth noting that the focus groups were held following the summer disturbances of 2010, which may have had an impact on the responses given by the young people.

### **4. Ethical considerations**

- 4.1 Work with young people can present a number of ethical issues, so the project was directed by an advisory group to mitigate the possibility of mistakes being made. The project ensured that informed consent was obtained, as respondents were informed about the project before the interview commenced, the consent form to participate in the focus groups was explained to them and they were verbally informed that they could end the interview at any stage. Additionally, buy-in for the project had to be obtained from the community leaders from each organisation where the focus groups were being held.
- 4.2 The young people involved in the focus groups were reminded that the intention was not to obtain information about their personal situations but rather to hear their general views of the topics discussed. However, if a young person did make a disclosure that they have been or are being harmed, the peer researchers had the support of the project lead in being able to manage this situation. The project lead within the local safeguarding children board supported and co-ordinated the work of the young people during the focus groups. The personal details of the children involved were not obtained. This action ensured that the anonymity of the children involved was protected. The project was not intrusive in nature as it did not delve into the personal lives of the respondents therefore, the respondents did not experience distress.

## 5. Project setup

- 5.1 The CHSCB was responsible for the overall management of the project. At the inception of the project an advisory group was implemented, comprising of partners from: Children's Social Care, Young Hackney (Youth Service and Youth offending Team), The Learning Trust, Domestic Violence Team, Nia Project, Derman and Social Action for Health.
- 5.2 Members of the advisory group from the voluntary sector initially took responsibility for organising the focus groups but, due to funding cuts and illness, this did not materialise and the CHSCB project lead organised the focus groups.
- 5.3 The views expressed by the young people would help the CHSCB and other partners to gain insight into the level of awareness and understanding of young people. This will aid in helping agencies to identify the level of need required to safeguard children, especially in relation to raising awareness and support services.

## 6. The meaning of ethnicity

- 6.1 Since the project aimed to capture the views of BME young people, it was important for the peer researchers to have an understanding of the meaning of ethnicity. Whilst ethnicity is commonly denoted to mean non-western or countries of origin, this is inaccurate and a more formal definition is:
- An ethnic group is one whose members have common origins, a shared sense of history, a shared culture and a collective identity<sup>9</sup>.
- 6.2 The majority of peer researchers described themselves ethnically in terms of their parents' nationality, which sometimes involved a mixture of different nationalities. Their hybrid descriptions of themselves sometimes seemed to provide them with an esteemed sense of identity. This highlights the point that the rigid labelling of young people by professionals can perhaps be restrictive and suppress their sense of self.
- 6.3 A small group of the young people identified themselves as being Black British during the focus groups. The choice of this description was centred on the view that they were born in the UK, they had never been to their parents' homeland or that they could not identify with the culture of their parents due to enculturation. Therefore, they sought to identify themselves in a way that reflected this demarcation.

## 7. Analysis of questionnaires

- 7.1 There were 80 young men and 92 young women in the sample, with most being in the age range 13-16 years old. 63% of the young men and 61% of the young women said they felt safe in Hackney. It is important to note that the questionnaires were administered before the disturbances that affected Hackney and the rest of the country during the summer of 2011. The young men interviewed indicated that 'family' and 'friends' were the most popular reasons for feeling safe, whilst 'friends', 'police' and 'knowing the area' were the most popular reasons given by young women. Young women and young men had similar responses to where they felt safe or unsafe; they felt most safe at home and seemed to feel least safe in 'parks', 'the street' and on 'public transport'. Both groups displayed some concerns about internet safety.
- 7.2 Both young men and women said that family made them feel most safe, followed by friends. With regard to 'professionals' making you feel safe; 'teachers', 'police' and

<sup>9</sup> Parekh, B. (2000), *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report*, Profile Books: London.

'social workers' were rated at a similar level, with 'youth workers' slightly ahead.

- 7.3 Respondents shared concerns about the safety of young people at school, citing bullying in particular. Gangs and fear of gang violence was a concern for many, particularly young men.
- 7.4 Respondents showed little real understanding of domestic & gender violence and honour-based violence. In spite of this, 33% of young women and 28% of young men felt that domestic & gender violence were a problem for their particular community.
- 7.5 Some of the responses expressed by young people about the definition of domestic violence included:
- Young women:
    - Neglect
    - Wife and husband beating each other
    - Men beating women behind closed doors
    - (you) can't talk about it
    - Violence that is against you mentally, emotionally or physically
  - Young men:
    - Where a male and female mentally and physically abuse each other
    - Violence towards people of the opposite sex because they are of the opposite sex
    - Being abusive and violent towards a certain gender
- 7.6 Responses on what young people believe is gender based violence:
- Young men:
    - I think it means when someone gets abused by someone they should feel protected by. Its kept secret, people are fearful.
    - Violence between two people like parents
  - Young women:
    - Crime against the opposite gender
    - Partners being violent towards each other
    - Being against gay people

## 8. Analysis of focus groups

- 8.1 The key themes from the questionnaires were used as points of discussions during the focus groups. Therefore a schedule of topic questions was devised to be used within the focus groups. The focus groups sought to elicit young people's views about domestic violence, honour based violence, forced marriage and gender violence in order to explore their level of understanding of these terms, how they manifest themselves within their community and what solutions they thought were best.

### Domestic violence

- 8.2 There was a unanimous consensus in all of the focus groups that domestic violence was wrong, but many of the young people were oblivious to what the term actually means. Therefore, one learning point was that the use of this terminology meant nothing to the young people, but they were better able to understand the behaviours associated with domestic violence. They noted that under reporting of domestic

violence related to the fact that some may be unaware that it is wrong. Therefore, by unravelling the definition of domestic violence in the form of behaviours, attitudes and cultural presentations of the violence helped the young people to better understand and engage in discussions about the issue.

- 8.3 Some of the young people had an “out of sight, out of mind” approach to domestic violence. In that, if they do not see or hear about domestic violence within their immediate environment then it was difficult to accept that it is an issue in their community. However, the reporting of domestic violence in the media, especially in relation to the experiences of celebrities, helped to increase awareness amongst young people.
- 8.4 In the young women’s focus group, they discussed the secrecy within which domestic violence may exist and situations where the victim may be unaware that what is happening to them is domestic violence:
- *I haven’t heard of it in my community but I have heard it over the news and from other people that it is happening.*  
(16 year old Kurdish female)
  - *It is tradition in Africa that the man is superior to the woman so it probably happens.*  
(14 year old Black African female)
- 8.5 Generally, the discussions about domestic violence focused on adult behaviours and were less focused on such behaviour occurring between peers. The sexuality of the victim and perpetrator received little attention in their discussions.

#### Gender based violence

- 8.6 All of the young people were unaware of what is meant by gender based violence. Once the term was simplified to ‘violence against women and girls’, the young people were able to explore this and how it occurs within their respective cultures. The discussions about this focused primarily on the manner in which males and females are treated differently within their community and how this disproportionately affects females. This can be seen in some of the responses provided by the young people:
- Nutritional violence:  
*Boys get more food than girls and it is kind of painful because I like food.*  
(14 year old female)
  - Preference for baby boys:  
*In the Turkish / Kurdish community if a mother is pregnant and they don’t know what it is, they actually pray for a boy which hurts obviously because it’s her child no matter what it is. Maybe they are not abandoned but they are meant to feel that they are not wanted.*  
(14 year old Kurdish female)
  - Domestic work and restrictions of liberty:  
*Boys just get to do whatever they want. They get to go out but girls they have to stay in the house and do cleaning. Yeah, just being the slave in the house.*  
(16 year old Kurdish male)

### Forced Marriage

- 8.7 The majority of the young people in the focus groups had a good understanding of forced marriage and this was partly because the term is somewhat self-explanatory. However, they were more likely to express a view that it was more prevalent in the country of their parents' origin compared to the UK. These are some of the views expressed by them:
- *In terms of my community in Western society, I don't think that it happens that much. In Africa mainly in the villages not in the city definitely forced marriages are regular.*  
(16 year old Black African female)
  - *In Turkey it is probably more common there because people don't feel confident complaining about their own family... I know that there are laws about it but most people won't complain about their own flesh and blood.*  
(15 year old Turkish male)
  - *You have those adverts that come you and you see that a girl has to get married to a man who is 50 years old, it still happens... Some people, like, find a man they love and have dreams of the type of wedding they want but then suddenly they are told they are marrying someone they don't even know.*  
(14 year old Turkish female)
  - *If your family wants you to get married to this person, even if you love someone, you have to forget about them and marry them (the person chosen by your family). If you don't then there are consequences.*  
(16 year old Kurdish female)
  - *You are meant to enjoy your day but your wedding day is like your funeral.*  
(14 year old Turkish female)
- 8.8 In all of the focus groups the young people were uninformed about males being victims and the reason why they could be forced into a marriage. Only the Turkish group of young people seemed to be aware of the occurrences of forced marriages within their community but they were most likely to believe that it was more prevalent in Turkey. The use of legislation to curb forced marriages was not seen as an effective measure as they felt that no young person would want their family to be prosecuted or imprisoned.
- "Honour" based violence (HBV):
- 8.9 The young people displayed varying degrees of understanding of what the term HBV entailed. Apart from a number of them lacking awareness of what the term meant, others linked it to violence perpetrated by gangs. For the latter, the term honour was framed within the context of violence perpetrated within gangs due to the issue of respect being important within the gang context.
- 8.10 The Turkish group of young people was ignorant of what the term meant and only understood when the Turkish translation of the term was used. This seems to suggest that language may be a barrier and may disadvantage this group of young people. They were highly aware of the reasons why it occurs but they expressed mixed views with regard to how common the occurrence of HBV was in the UK. They were most likely to believe that it was more common in Turkey. Males being victims of HBV received no attention during the discussions. Therefore, this seems to highlight a gap

in the understanding of young people in this area. The Turkish focus group highlighted the sense of powerlessness some young people may experience due to the threat of HBV.

8.11 The use of storylines in literature and movies proved to be a good way to facilitate discussions on HBV with young people:

- *It's like Romeo and Juliet, you have a Capulet side. If the Capulets kill the Montague side, they get revenge back. It goes on and on and on until one side gives up, which hardly ever happens. People dying all the time.*  
(Turkish 13 year old female)

## 9. Conclusion / next steps

- 9.1 Hearing the voice of young people is a critical part of safeguarding them and this project provided an opportunity for City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board to hear their voice. The views expressed by the young people provided an insight into their understanding of the major themes and their perspective on solutions. It was positive that overall the young people felt safe within their community and home. However, there were certain key areas where they emphasized the need for further work.
- 9.2 The threat of gang violence appeared to be at the forefront of the minds of most of the young people and they seemed to view the main threat to their safety through the lens of gang violence. The project highlighted the need for further work with young people, who view this as a perceived threat to their safety.
- 9.3 The project mainly highlighted that for those who took part, there is a need to increase their awareness of domestic violence, HBV, forced marriage and gender based violence. Although broad generalisations are unable to be made, it is suspected that this is a reality of other young people. A major learning point related to the young people's lack of understanding of the labels of domestic violence, HBV and gender based violence. Although there are already ongoing domestic violence initiatives in schools within the borough, there seems to be a need to ensure that this is continued.
- 9.4 The young people emphasised the need for professionals to be aware of the culture of the young people they work with and the need to have workers that reflect the same ethnicity as the community. They also expressed the view that employing an ethnic mix of young professionals could be a solution, as they are most likely to be "modern" and able to relinquish harmful aspects of their culture and will be better placed to work with young people. The young people undoubtedly announced the need for education across all communities and professionals.
- 9.5 Since the completion of the project the CHSCB have been using the learning generated from the project's DVD produced by the young people in training, and this is expected to be delivered within the content of our training on 'Cultural and economic diversity and child protection'. The DVD will also be used in engaging with communities and voluntary sector organisations on domestic violence and in raising awareness in minority ethnic and faith communities about safeguarding children. The Hackney Youth Parliament (HYP) are planning to develop a training programme for young people on diversity and this will feature use of the DVD. The project illuminated the importance of engaging with young people and providing them with the opportunity to participate. Therefore, the CHSCB would continue to actively engage with young people and provide them with opportunities to have their voice heard and positively direct the work of agencies within the borough.

# Individual borough reports

## Part Six

### The Merton Experience

**Simon Deakin**  
**November 2011**



## 1. Introduction and original specification

1.1 The Merton Safeguarding Children Board set up its contribution to the pan-London culture and faith project under the following specification:

### Improved child protection for BAME and Faith communities

1.2 Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) will work in partnership with Merton Council, and BAME and faith groups in the borough to improve child protection outcomes and address and reduce any disproportionality in Child Protection Plans (CPPs). This will involve using a variety of routes to improve understanding, engage and improve communication with BAME and faith communities, including through supplementary schools and intergenerational dialogue.

### Project model

1.3 The project will have three workstreams:

- Data mining, analysis and research into the extent and causes of disproportionality in uptake of CPPs by BAME and faith communities. We are already aware of this in both CPPs and use of the CAF (well developed in Merton), eg. there are more African Caribbean children on CPPs and virtually no Chinese.
- Engagement and awareness raising with BAME and faith communities, including fostering intergenerational understanding to achieve extended family and community involvement, as well as the immediate family, giving us additional way to influence cultural understanding practices. Dialogue with communities will be achieved by:
  - Engaging and consulting community leaders through the Merton Inter-Faith Forum, the Merton Unity Network (the BAME umbrella organisation) and other bodies, including faith groups.
  - Engaging cultural practice by liaising and supporting supplementary and faith schools in their child protection practice, with the support of ContinYou, the national resource centre for supplementary education.
  - Brokering intergenerational dialogue on safeguarding and child protection between younger and older generations, as a means of influencing cultural practice, using Merton's unique Acacia Intergenerational Centre (also a SureStart Children's Centre), the first purpose built centre of its type in the country.
  - Running an awareness and communication programme for BAME and faith communities on child protection, including promoting and increasing use of family support services.
- Integrating the learning and best practice established from the first two workstreams into the work of the MSCB and partners through its three-year business plan and partners' own workplans. Develop a training package and toolkit to ensure this practice is maintained.

1.4 Outcomes will be:

- Greater understanding of the extent of disproportionality in issuing of Child Protection Plans for BAME and faith communities



- Greater understanding of the needs and issues of families from BAME and faith communities among practitioners, to ensure that we make better informed assessments in referrals, interventions and CPPs.
- Greater influence and input into the development of MSCB policy and front line practice by BAME and faith communities.
- Greater understanding and by BAME and faith families of child protection issues for their communities, including between the generations.
- Greater uptake by BAME and faith communities of family support and early intervention services.
- Fewer children from BAME and faith communities on Child Protection Plans.

## 2. Project background

- 2.1 Merton is an increasingly diverse borough with a pattern of mobility which has seen great changes in demography in the last ten years – it has the second highest level of mobility in outer London. Whereas the total non-white population was recorded at 25% in the 2001 Census, the figure is now much higher, probably over 50% - the school population is certainly around that number. Inward migration is reflected in the increase of 10% in school place numbers in the last few years.
- 2.2 A number of communities have had issues with child protection or other concerns, and these have been specifically targeted in the preparatory work for the project. Examples include: Tamil families where there have been incidences of family and parenting attitudes coming into conflict with the law, and the Polish community where we know that the second highest level of referrals for domestic violence after white British come from this community.
- 2.3 While Merton's record on partnership with its communities and community groups is very good, eg. an award winning compact and excellent relationships with faith group leaders, there are still areas of conflict and cohesion issues between some communities, eg. a very large Ahmadiyya community where there is tension with the mainstream Muslim groups.
- 2.4 There is an historical disparity in the number of children from minority backgrounds on Child Protection Plans and this is a major driver for seeking to engage and raise awareness on both sides of child protection issues.

## 3. Project setup

- 3.1 The Project is managed by the business support officer for the MSCB and the Safeguarding Team from Merton Council. It partners with community and faith groups and is part delivered by some of them, notably Merton Voluntary Service Council and Merton & Sutton Mediation Service. It has engaged with the community through the Merton Inter-Faith Forum, the BME Forum and individual groups – Tamil Welfare group, SW London African Women's Organisation, Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, Association for the Polish Family.

## 4. Project activities

- 4.1 The project aims are set out at 1. above. It became clear as the project developed that the amount of preparatory and groundwork required is actually one of the most significant elements of the project in itself, by beginning dialogue and raising awareness and moving beyond suspicion. This is also the consensus of the Project's steering group.

- 4.2 Activities have involved engagement with borough wide forums, eg. the Inter-Faith Forum, and specific community groups as well as commissioning groups to deliver parts of the project.
- 4.3 Focus groups have been run with women from the Tamil Welfare Group, representing one of the target communities and with Polish mothers via a group meeting at one of Merton Children's Centres. This is run with Merton & Sutton Mediation who have a community conversation model which very effectively brokers dialogue and awareness. The first focus group was very successful and has led to continuing contact and dialogue. The second group was not so successful, as most of the women backed off from participation at the last moment. This has been a real learning point, and we plan to improve the preparatory work and try again in early 2012.
- 4.4 Other focus groups are being planned with the Ahmadiyya community, African women, and the Sunni Muslim community. There is a separate set of focus groups being run for young people.
- 4.5 Work on mapping supplementary schools and other research continues, commissioned from Merton Voluntary Service Council to complement their existing mapping of faith and cultural groups.
- 4.6 While the Pan-London Project finished in December 2011, the Merton project will continue as models of dialogue and engagement are developed and mainstreamed into core activity.

## **5. Project outputs**

- 5.1 Project outputs included:
- Reports from the focus groups
  - Mapping of supplementary and faith schools – published on the Merton Voluntary Service council website.
  - Development of a specific 'community conversations' model to be used with future community engagement sessions.

## **6. Project outcomes**

- 6.1 Outcomes from the project are part of a complex matrix of benefits for the improvement of child protection and safeguarding in Merton. It will be a long term effort, but the project has already raised the profile of work to address diversity with Merton council and children's social care, the local safeguarding children board and partnership in general. Community representatives have also pointed out during consultation that while it is important to reduce any disparity in the number of children on Child Protection Plans, it is important for agencies to also recognise that those communities and families within them are under pressure – immigration, deprivation, internal tensions etc, which will be a factor in their safeguarding.

## **7. Learning from the project**

### About the project

- 7.1 Any sort of community engagement or cohesion work requires extensive preparation and dialogue with community leaders and representatives, so that it becomes a collaborative process. This is long term activity.

- 7.2 Attempts to consult and engage specific community groups should involve partners from those groups to ensure that any barriers or suspicions are overcome before conversations begin, particularly where those communities have fears and concerns about intervention of the state and public authorities.
- 7.3 There is a willingness to engage and better understand child protection in most faith and culture communities in Merton, but this dialogue can not be imposed.

#### About the content

- 7.4 The willingness to engage among most faith and culture groups and the information gathered is positive but the most useful learning is that maintaining the dialogue itself and moving issues forward in the spirit of partnership rather than intervention is critical to success.
- 7.5 Safeguarding and child protection is improved by greater knowledge on both sides – communities on what is expected in terms of parenting, attitudes and other behaviours under UK law - and agencies in what the pressures and issues within the communities are.

### **8. Conclusion / next steps**

- 8.1 Merton will attempt to mainstream the learning and methodology of engagement to continue understanding and dialogue with diverse communities. The toolkit and guidance will be widely distributed to partners, and the MSCB will further assess the impact of its diversity and cohesion work.

## Individual borough reports

### Part Seven

### The Newham Experience

**Michael McKay**  
**November 2011**



## 1. Project background

- 1.1 Newham is a diverse borough with the highest population of non-white ethnic groups in the country. Newham is also the most deprived local authority in the country, and has a higher proportion of looked after children than London and national comparators. Newham also has higher than average rates of children whose first language is not English.
- 1.2 As part of the wider Pan London Project, Newham Local Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) was allocated a total sum of £10,000 in order to develop a community and multi-agency/faith education programme. The programme aims to raise understanding and awareness of child abuse linked to the labelling of children as 'possessed'. It also aims to ensure appropriate services are available, and that communities are supported to actively engage in these services.
- 1.3 The particular focus of Newham's project was identified from a local evidence base, outlined below.

### Spirit Possession in the Muslim Community

- 1.4 Throughout 2010, Newham's Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) began to encounter Spirit Possession 'Djin' in the Muslim community at child protection conferences. In one case, the family felt so strongly that the child was possessed that they had taken her to see religious leaders across the country for exorcisms which involved prayers and holy water after which she was declared 'cured'. Initial scoping work with local Islamic community groups was undertaken between August and September 2010. Participants described knowing of children and young women who had been labelled as 'possessed' who were displaying behaviours which may have been indicators of sexual abuse.

### Spirit Possession in African Christian Communities

- 1.5 Nationally, there has been an increasing number of high profile cases (often accompanied by a high level of media interest) reaching criminal trial or referral to child protection agencies, especially around the issue of abuse where a parent or carer believed the child to be possessed. Local learning around these issues prompted the partnership in Newham to broaden the scope of the project to include African Christian communities.

## 2. Project setup

- 2.1 In order to deliver the work, the NSCB appointed a fixed term Faith and Culture Project Manager who has been supported by colleagues from across the partnership. The project is overseen by a multi-agency Faith and Culture Sub-Group. One of the main successes of this project relates to how the project structure has helped to embed a cohesive, responsive and diverse partnership of local leads for this critical issue. The Faith and Culture Sub-Group has been energised by this project, and there is strong partnership involvement around the issue. Emerging from the project is a network of partners able to communicate key messages to and from their agencies, and help to ensure this issue is very much on the 'radar' of managers and practitioners in their agencies.
- 2.2 As it is overseen by an NSCB Sub-Group, project work is regularly reported to the main business management group of the NSCB, which includes the Independent Chair and the CYPS Executive Director; as part of this process, senior level advice

and challenge is provided.

- 2.3 As it is managed by the Faith and Culture Sub-Group, the project is fully integrated with other work undertaken by the partnership. This integration will enable a seamless exit strategy as project work can be mainstreamed into the core business of the Sub-Group.

### **3. Project activities**

- 3.1 The over-arching aim of the project was to improve the capacity of identified communities to safeguard children, and to sustain improvements within their communities. Further, the project aimed to hone practitioners' skills around assessment and intervention where there is concern around abuse linked to belief in spirit possession.

#### Phase 1 – Mapping

- 3.2 The first phase of the programme involved developing a shared and agreed definition of abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession. This was followed by a mapping exercise to establish the number and variety of faith and community based groups in Newham based on information provided by the charity commission, LBN commissioning department, the intranet and membership lists from Pan London umbrella organisations including AFRUCA and Volunteer Bureau. This was completed in June 2011.

#### Phase 2 - Community engagement

- 3.3 The next phase of the programme involved facilitating a number of focus groups with community stakeholders in order to consider the views of the wider community in relation to safeguarding, identify barriers to partnership working and gauge the sort of content required in an education programme. Six semi-structured interviews took place with faith organisations, which provided rich information to inform the community education programme. As it has proved more challenging to engage with certain communities, in particular Congolese Christian communities, focus group work is ongoing and efforts are continuing to ensure the broadest range of views is sought. This work will be carried on by the NSCB Faith and Culture Sub-Group.

- 3.4 Focus groups explored:

- The number and prevalence of Newham residents which operate a belief system which might equate misfortune or unwelcome behaviour to possession;
- The number of provisions which offer 'deliverance' for children and how this is undertaken;
- What makes some families more susceptible to a belief that their child/children may be possessed;
- How families are able to protect their children from harm once an accusation of spirit possession is made;
- Promote partnership working with local minority ethnic and faith communities and groups;
- Identification of risks associated with abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession;
- Ways in which professionals engage with families

- 3.5 In addition to face to face focus groups, a self-assessment tool was developed to enable faith based organisations to benchmark themselves in relation to safeguarding

children. Once complete, the tool provides organisations with a framework for developing their own local safeguarding children policy. Self assessment tools were sent to the 94 organisations identified as part of the mapping exercise. Data from this exercise will be collated and analysed by January 2012. There is a recognition that many organisations may have difficulty completing the questionnaire, or may be unwilling to do so. This process will also serve as a way to target organisations that may require more intensive intervention, i.e. organisations which either do not respond or which send back concerning responses, will be targeted by the NSCB for direct support.

### Phase 3 - Delivery

- 3.6 The information gathered during these focus groups is being used to devise a local education programme. The programme is targeted at faith sector organisations and aims to address the themes raised during focus group consultations; in particular, it will explore the barriers to partnership working and ensure clarity in relation to organisations' safeguarding responsibilities. While devised locally, the programme is flexible and will draw on learning from the pan-London project. It is envisaged delivery will commence in early 2012. The programme will be delivered jointly by members of Faith and Culture Sub-Group and community leaders.
- 3.7 The project group has also partnered with Project Violet to deliver a briefing for practitioners in respect of assessment and intervention skills where there is suspicion of abuse linked to spirit possession. This session is scheduled to take place on 1 December 2011.

## **4. Project outputs**

- 4.1 Project outputs to date include:
- An expanded, cohesive and diverse multi-agency forum which represents a broad cross section of the partnership;
  - A 'map' of faith organisations in the borough;
  - Self-assessment tool designed to assist local organisations benchmark themselves in respect of safeguarding children;
  - Rich information from community groups, which has contributed to the development of the education programme, and moreover assisted in the development of improved working relationships.

## **5. Project outcomes**

- 5.1 The work undertaken by this project has made clear to the partnership the level of complexity involved in building relationships with faith sector organisations, and the amount of time it takes to bring about change. Outcomes from the delivery of the education programme and the process of self-assessment will not be seen during the life of this project, however as this work has been successfully mainstreamed into the NSCB Faith and Culture Sub-Group, there will be multi-agency oversight of the outcomes throughout 2012. There have, however, been outcomes achieved thus far which include:
- Improved partnership working with faith organisations, as evidenced by more diverse representation on the NSCB Faith and Culture Sub-Group;
  - Improved multi-agency understanding of the views, needs and concerns of community/faith sector organisations, which will inform strategic development across the partnership;



- Through the mapping exercise, an improved knowledge of the breadth of faith organisations in the borough;
- The development of relationships with community leaders which will assist us in linking with organisations which have historically not been actively engaged in the safeguarding partnership.

## **6. Learning from the project**

### About the project

- 6.1 The scoping data that informed the development of the project was useful and accurate, in that it enabled the project group to target particular communities where there were perceived concerns. What presented a challenge was the length of time afforded the project and the complexity involved in establishing relationships with communities. Our relationships with faith organisations are indeed improved, but are still developing and there will be considerable work to do for the NSCB Sub-Group that is continuing the work of the project.
- 6.2 One of the most significant successes of the project involves the partnership working that has emerged. While a Faith and Culture Sub-Group existed in the borough, this project contributed further focus for the group, and the result is a considerably improved partnership which is more reflective of the broader community.
- 6.3 A key challenge for the project involves the level of entrenched mistrust some faith sector organisations have in relation to statutory services, and the amount of time it will take to address this. Encouragingly though, the project has provided considerable evidence on which to base future strategic development.

### About the content

- 6.4 The work of the project has provided considerable learning about the way in which safeguarding is perceived in some faith sector organisations; this is a significant step towards developing a network of organisations which consistently and robustly safeguard children. Particular learning points include the following:
- Community and faith groups have concerns about trust and confidentiality in respect of the statutory sector;
  - Community and faith groups are, broadly, not clear about the legal framework for safeguarding children;
  - There is a level of reticence among some community members around reporting safeguarding concerns due to fear that statutory intervention may bring shame to the community;
  - Faith and community leaders should be identified as 'change agents' as they hold powerful positions in the community and can be influential within the community;
  - There was a lack of professional understanding about Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, particularly in relation to understanding culture norms and dynamics.
  - Professionals will need to develop the confidence and cultural competence to challenge and 'unpack' safeguarding issues that may have cultural origins

## **7. Conclusion / next steps**

- 7.1 As a result of this project, there has been considerable learning about engagement with faith sector organisations, and a multi-agency commitment to progress the work.



The partnership set itself ambitious goals and timescales, and has learned that meaningful engagement with communities, including responding to their views and concerns takes considerably more time. While delivery of the education programme has not yet commenced, the partnership views this time limited project as a success, insofar as:

- There is now an expanded multi-agency partnership, including community leaders, prepared to carry on the project's work;
- Faith sector organisations have contributed to the development of an education programme;
- Work is underway to review safeguarding arrangements in faith sector organisations.

7.2 In terms of next steps, the partnership will be focusing on the following over the coming months:

- Delivery of professional develop sessions from December 2011;
- Delivery of community education programme from January 2012;
- Mainstreaming of project work via the NSCB Sub-Group;
- Analysis of faith sector organisations self-assessments and targeted support;
- Work around disseminating and utilising:
  - the companion guidance to the London Child protection Procedures
  - the BME / faith Training Toolkit and
  - the LSCB community engagement guidance

## Individual borough reports

### Part Eight

### The Sutton Experience

**Howard Baines**  
**September 2011**



## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Sutton project seeks to map all local faith, cultural, community groups and supplementary schools. The project will assist these groups to establish, improve and share child protection good practice, to keep up to date in terms of policy, research and training and link with the Sutton LSCB. It will also consider implementation of an accreditation scheme based on the Safe Network Standards.

## **2. Project background**

- 2.1 Over recent years the Sutton LSCB in partnership with Sutton CVS has been exploring ways of facilitating better engagement with local groups in relation to safeguarding children. It was recorded as an objective in the Sutton LSCB Business Plan 2010-11 and is also listed in the current Business Plan. Local group leaders are significantly under represented on child protection training courses and groups often lack the infrastructure relating to safeguarding children. This may be because policies and procedures are not in place or regularly monitored and reviewed. It may also be that a group does not have a designated person identified to oversee child protection matters. Sutton has a strong history of voluntary sector involvement and is well placed to address these issues.
- 2.2 The Sutton LSCB has noted that where a child protection issue arises within a faith, community or cultural group there is often misunderstanding and a lack of trust when statutory agencies decide to investigate. It is envisaged that by engaging with the groups now this will avoid barriers getting in the way and increase trust and communication to protect children from harm in the future.

## **3. Project setup**

- 3.1 Sutton LSCB and Sutton CVS jointly set up the project and appointed a project worker. The project is managed by Sutton CVS on behalf of Sutton LSCB. Funding was secured from London Councils and match funded by Sutton LSCB to resource a project worker (4 days a week) for 6 months from 4th April 2011. The project has been successful and Sutton LSCB has agreed further funding until the end of December 2011. Some additional resources are available for other costs to support the project.
- 3.2 The broad overview of the project worker's role is to:
- To support individual faith, cultural and community groups in Sutton to establish and maintain high standards in child protection practices, and
  - To enhance the opportunities for the network of faith, cultural and community groups in Sutton to share best practice and keep up to date on child protection practice and training issues.
- 3.3 The Sutton LSCB received a report in January 2011 setting out the project aims, objectives and proposed workplan. The Board gave full approval for the project to proceed. Regular update reports have been given to the Sutton LSCB Policy & Practice Sub Group and the main Board.
- 3.4 A stakeholders meeting was held in February 2011 with Emma Aiyere (from Bexley LSCB) in attendance. Attendees included representatives from Sutton LSCB, Sutton CVS, faith groups, voluntary groups and Sutton Councillors. This forum helped shape some aspects of the project; that time be spent engaging with faith groups first and if resources are available in the future cultural and community groups will also be targeted.

#### 4. Project activities

- 4.1 A detailed workplan with timescales and reporting points was agreed. The project activities identified in the initial scoping document and subsequent new areas of work are summarised below with an update on progress.

Project activities	Update at end September 2011
Research the numbers and types of faith groups (including supplementary schools) in Sutton and identify which groups have no contact with Sutton CVS on child protection practices and training.	Significant progress made, with more groups being uncovered on a regular basis. See report by Project Worker at appendix 1.
Engage directly with faith groups, plus supplementary schools, with particular targeting of hard to reach groups and those who have not identified that they have safeguarding children practices in place.	Significant progress made with more groups having direct contact with the Project Worker as awareness has been raised. Groups are encouraged to complete a safeguarding children self assessment and return this to the Project Worker. See report by Project Worker at appendix 1.
Provide visits to groups to help them review whether they have the essentials in place to safeguard children (using the 'Safe Network Standards: Core standards and guidance for the voluntary and community sector' and the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service 10 core standards).	Completed. The Project Worker has arranged visits and more groups want this as awareness is raised. See report by Project Worker at appendix 1.
Work with the voluntary sector on improving the contact/circulation list for all local groups.	This work has largely been completed. A database has been set up that links with the Sutton CVS records.
Act as a point of contact for enquiries from groups wanting to develop policies, procedures etc and linking groups to relevant child protection training.	Completed. Point of contact set up and advertised by Project Worker at appendix 1.
Organise a stakeholders' meeting for faith leaders to identify how the local network could be enhanced and maintained.	The merits of this were reviewed and it was considered more time was needed before a decision could be made. Ideally this should take place after 1 year and when it is known that the project will continue. However, presentations have been given at key forums (such as the Faith & Belief Forum and the Equality & Diversity Forum).
Explore with stakeholders and the LSCB the idea of a kind of accreditation scheme based on Safe Network	Not completed as too early in the life of the project. This could only

Standards.	be feasible if the project is to continue on a long term basis.
NEW AREA OF WORK: Engage with supplementary schools to provide advice and training.	Significant progress made with engaging with these groups. See Project Worker's report at appendix 1.

## 5. Project outputs

### 5.1 The following have been identified:

- Faith groups have been assisted to have up to date policies and procedures on child protection, including an identified person who oversees child protection in the group;
- Faith group leaders are better aware of who to contact if they have a concern about a child or an adult (e.g. member of congregation, volunteer);
- The local network for faith groups now receive regular information about child protection issues, such as, training, changes in national guidance and what support is available from the Sutton LSCB, statutory agencies and Sutton CVS;
- Other groups have benefited from the project. For example, supplementary schools are fully engaged in the project and have benefited from training from ContinU on running a safe group and additional child protection basic awareness.
- It is recognised that some groups do not seem to want to engage with this project. It is anticipated that as the benefits of the project are communicated within the faith community that more groups will seek the advice and support of the project worker.

## 6. Project outcomes

- 6.1 Over time we wish to see children consistently protected from harm in faith, community and cultural groups. This will be achieved through these groups gaining confidence in dealing with child protection issues. We will monitor the number and types of referrals that Children's Social Care receives from faith, cultural and community groups over the project period. These may of course increase over time as the project is embedded. We will set up a way of gathering feedback from faith groups during the project to gauge whether faith leaders consider they are more confident in dealing with child protection matters as a result of the projects activities.
- 6.2 Feedback from groups indicates they are more confident and better placed to protect children from harm and know what to do if they are concerned about a child. This has taken about 6 months to achieve, but the project is well placed now to continue to make significant links with faith groups.
- 6.3 Although we have been able to extend the project until the end of the year, we are mindful that the project is time restricted and our longer term aspirations may not be achieved unless future funding can be secured.
- 6.4 See Project Worker's report at appendix 1 for more detailed evidence.

## **7. Learning from the Project**

- 7.1 We consider we are still at an early stage of the project, but the first 6 months has shown that a great deal can be achieved with a dedicated post in place.
- 7.2 Faith groups need time to familiarise themselves with what is on offer, see the benefits and accept the advice and support that is available.
- 7.3 Building up trust and confidence in faith leaders has been a constant theme.
- 7.4 Understanding and respecting that many leaders have 'day jobs' and the project needs to be flexible to accommodate them.
- 7.5 Through the stakeholders' meeting in February 2011 we noted that engaging with faith groups can be complex. For example, some independent faith groups are not visible in that the group attracts people from a certain part of the community – perhaps due to language or cultural identity. Working out where such groups meet and who is the leader may not be straight forward and may take time.
- 7.6 We continue to gain learning via other LSCBs who are more advanced in their projects and we will continue to be represented at the Pan-London Safeguarding Children Culture & Faith Project Operations Group.
- 7.7 See Project Worker's report at appendix 1 for additional information.

## **8. Conclusion / next steps**

- 8.1 The local project will continue for the time being, with a focus on engaging with as many groups as possible up until the end of December 2011.
- 8.2 The Sutton LSCB continues to support this work and has agreed additional funding up until the end of December 2011. We would want the project to continue on a long term basis. Further discussions will take place between the Board and Sutton CVS.
- 8.3 We have held initial discussions with the Sutton Adult Safeguarding Services as there appear to be opportunities for joint working – particularly on training. It is also an objective of the Sutton Adult Safeguarding Board to better engage with faith groups for vulnerable people.
- 8.4 We are continuing to contribute towards the learning across London and the Pan-London Project outputs; guidance for practitioners, guidance for LSCBs and the training toolkit.

## **9. Appendices available as separate documents at [www.londonscb.gov.uk](http://www.londonscb.gov.uk)**

- Appendix 1: Project worker's report
- Appendix 2: Safeguarding for supplementary schools report
- Appendix 3: Safeguarding for supplementary schools report (2)
- Appendix 4 – Faith, cultural community groups safeguarding health checks feedback

## Appendix 2 – Survey results

Compiled by Radlene Butcher, London Councils, December 2011

### 1. Methodology

- 1.1 An online survey was developed by Barnet LSCB and made available for all London LSCBs to use with their local statutory and voluntary groups. The objective of this survey was to identify the training and support needs of safeguarding practitioners across a wide range of organisations. Four questions were posed to each of the groups<sup>10</sup> and a summary of responses per question has been provided in the findings of this report.
- 1.2 It must be noted at this stage that each borough assumed responsibility for their individual method of distribution and the recipients / participants of the survey.
- 1.3 The targeted statutory and voluntary groups with accompanying response rates and counts are also listed below.

#### Statutory

	Response%	Response Count
- Local Authority Children's Services	31.7	262
- Local Authority Adult Services	12.8	106
- Youth and Connexions services	1.1	9
- Primary Care Trust	13.8	114
- Mental Health	0.6	5
- Education	22.6	187
- Metropolitan Police	3.4	28

#### Voluntary and Community Groups

- Church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other faith organisation	5.8	48
- Voluntary or community organisations supporting a local cultural group	1.7	14
- Voluntary or community organisation providing services for children, young people and families	11.0	91
- Voluntary or community organisations providing services for vulnerable adults	1.9	16

<sup>10</sup> These questions are outlined the findings/conclusions section of the report.

## 2. Findings <sup>11</sup>

### 2.1 Statutory Services

*What you feel least confident about when acting to safeguard children/support families from minority ethnic cultures and faiths?*

- knowledge of about cultural and faith norms, particularly those that conflict with what is acceptable and legal in the UK
- language barriers and access to reliable interpretation
- procedure - bureaucracy, lack of expertise, and the ever changing expectations and perceptions of the system.

*Do you have easy access to expert advisers for the minority ethnic communities and faith groups that you deal with in your area?*

- 50% of those who responded to this question do have access, but 20% of these find it limited and difficult
- 40% do not have access and the fact that 7% do not even know who these communities and groups are is noteworthy.
- 6% are unsure and 4% do not need to have this information to fulfil their current roles.

*What can training and support do you need and how can the LSCB assist you in your task of safeguarding children in different cultures and faith communities and groups (combination of Questions 3 & 4)*

Information (both online and documented)

- Case studies highlighting both best and worst practice
- Cultural norms and faith groups;
  1. who are they and how can they be contacted
  2. the leaders of these groups and their contact details
  3. the norms that conflict with/are unacceptable with UK standards and how to communicate this, e.g. discipline, FGM and dispossession of evil spirits
- Clarity of the safeguarding process for both voluntary and statutory groups

Training (through courses, e-learning, seminars and workshops) - for both voluntary and statutory groups

- Faith and culture norms that conflict with what is legal and acceptable in the UK
- Safeguarding policies and legislature
- Child neglect and behavioural problems
- Language and its interpretation

Services

- Dedicated points of contacts i.e. 24 hr telephone services and online resource
- Dedicated practitioners
- Online – hard copy documentation on faith and cultural norms
- Free translations services.

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<sup>11</sup> An appendix providing a more detailed summary of findings has been included.



## 2.2 Community Groups (both voluntary and faith)

*What are the most important safeguarding children issues in your community or faith group?*

- Cultural and faith norms that conflict with what is legal and acceptable in the UK, i.e. discipline, FGM, and arranged marriage.
- Abuse due to domestic violence and other forms
- Adequate qualified staffing resources
- Training and development of the voluntary group professionals
- Same as above for cultural and faith leaders

*What is your experience of the statutory and voluntary services for supporting families and keeping children safe in your area?*

- Excellent (10%)
- Good (24%)
- Average (24%)
- Poor (18%)
- N/A (24%)

*What information and assistance do the statutory groups from the voluntary groups and what changes should they make to improve safeguarding?*

Information and training

- Cultural and faith norms that conflict with what is legal and acceptable in the UK, i.e. discipline, FGM, and arranged marriage.
- The partnership groups, who they are and how they can be contacted

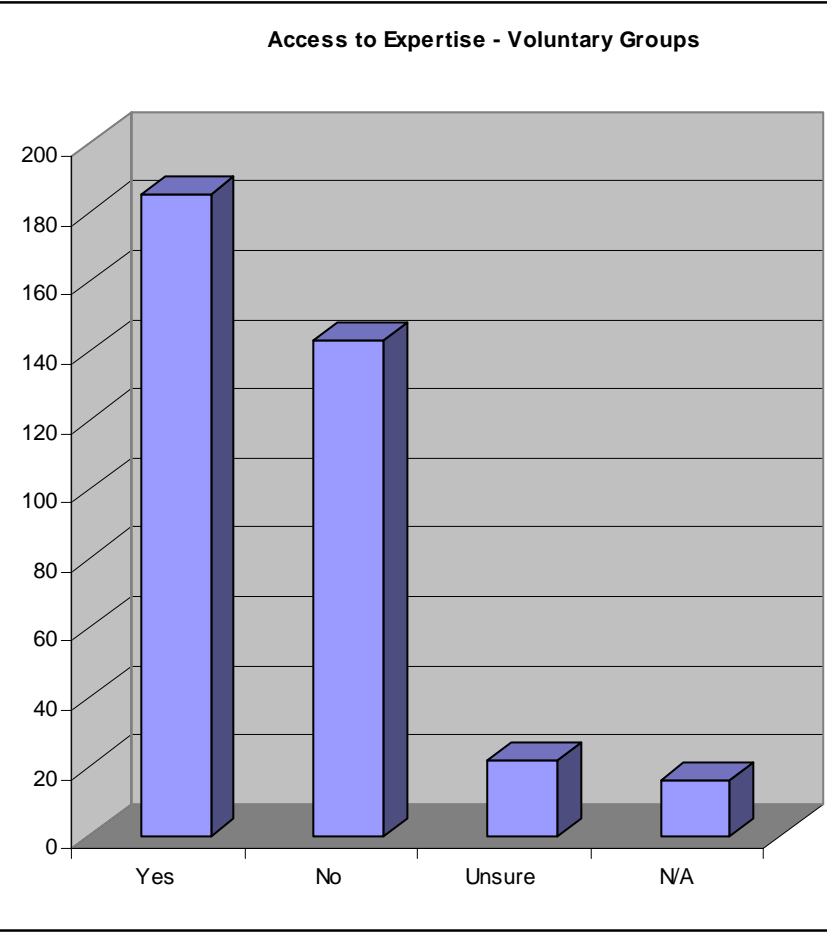
Recommendations

- More partnership working and liaison with the voluntary groups
- Training in the cultural and faith norms, particularly those that are conflict with what is acceptable and legal in the UK
- Training in safeguarding policy and legislature
- Lobby for more funding to develop the cultural and faith groups
- A greater appreciation for the role of the voluntary and faith groups, *balanced with the knowledge that this could also be an area for corruption*
- More promotion of the statutory groups, their role and the services they provide to enhance the perception (sometimes negative) in the community. Emphasis should also be placed on the LSCB in this area.

### **3. Conclusions and recommendations**

- 3.1 The consensual need for both groups is to be able to identify and contact each other, with details that are available, accessible and current, particularly for the statutory groups. Whilst more than half of each group is aware of and can contact professionals in the other, it is significant that many find the process and access difficult and limited.
- 3.2 This is crucial since all of the other needs involving training and intelligence sharing are dependent on the success of this. Once this has been achieved, all parties can work together to address the other areas of concern.
- 3.3 In conclusion, it is encouraging that both groups appear committed to partnership working so as to improve safeguarding in their local communities and by extension in London.

Statutory Groups: Local Authority Children’s Services, Youth and Connexions Services, Primary Care Trusts, Education, Mental Health and Metropolitan police

Barriers	Access to Expertise from voluntary groups : Assessment	Support - General	Support - LSCB										
<p><b>Accusations</b> – insensitivity, racism, intimidation</p> <p><b>Balance</b> – procedure/needless distress to family, respect for cultural norms/safety of the child</p> <p><b>Communication</b> – with parents, how to communicate with the different cultures and family under a veil of secrecy because of immigration issues.</p> <p><b>Conflict</b> – personal belief/faith of minority groups, cultural norms/UK law (<i>more below</i>)</p> <p><b>Cultural impacts</b> – on parenting (forced marriage and FGM) discipline, relations with adults and diet and perception of the role of the woman.</p> <p><b>Faiths (their impact)</b> – knowledge of these norms, conflict with beliefs and UK law e.g. dispossession of evil spirits/witchcraft),</p> <p><b>Knowledge</b> – faith and cultural groups and the main contacts of both, voluntary groups and their services, Prejudices faced by these groups and asylum seekers.</p> <p><b>Language</b> – varieties both verbal and non- verbal and interpretation</p> <p><b>Procedure</b> – lack of expertise, lack of knowledge of faiths and cultures, appropriate procedure and ever changing perceptions, expectations and government legislation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Access to Expertise - Voluntary Groups</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="566 279 1338 1150"> <caption>Access to Expertise - Voluntary Groups Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>185</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>142</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unsure</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N/A</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes (185) – to note that 15 find the process difficult and the access of 22 is limited.</li> <li>• No (142) – to note that 10 do not even know who these groups are</li> <li>• Unsure (22)</li> <li>• N/A (16) – did not need this information/service to fulfil their current roles.</li> </ul>	Response	Count	Yes	185	No	142	Unsure	22	N/A	16	<p><b>Information (both online and documented)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practice and case studies</li> <li>• Cultural and faith norms and the leaders of both.</li> <li>• Language – both verbal and non-verbal including sign-language</li> <li>• Clarity on the role of statutory groups in safeguarding</li> <li>• Immigration law and procedure</li> <li>• Pan-London developments in safeguarding and other local issues/hot topics</li> <li>• Available training for statutory groups in safeguarding.</li> <li>• The voluntary group and departments and the main contact of each</li> </ul> <p><b>Training – the following are the main themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith and cultures and their impact on parenting, discipline, <i>disability</i>, expectations, perceptions and most importantly, safeguarding.</li> <li>• Child neglect</li> <li>• Children with behavioural problems</li> <li>• Conflicts – norms and UK law e.g. FGM, forced marriages etc, procedure and respect for these norms</li> <li>• for interpreters</li> </ul> <p><b>Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained and qualified staff</li> <li>• Facilitation of multi-agency working</li> </ul> <p><b>More access to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpreters</li> <li>• Psychological and legal advice</li> <li>• Expertise in faith and cultures</li> <li>• Voluntary groups and departments and the relevant contacts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Information (both online and documented)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best and worst practice and case studies.</li> <li>• Contact details for the boards themselves</li> <li>• Contact details for the voluntary groups and departments</li> <li>• Cultural and faith norms that can be misinterpreted or conflict with UK law i.e. FGM, forced marriages and dispossession of evil spirits</li> <li>• Differences between the statutory and voluntary processes</li> <li>• New safeguarding policies and initiatives</li> <li>• Feedback on referrals</li> </ul> <p><b>Involvement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation of faith and cultural groups on LSCB boards and more engagement with the leaders of these groups</li> <li>• Commitment to multi-faith and multi cultural approach</li> <li>• Practice and promotion of equality</li> <li>• Joint work with community groups</li> <li>• Promotion of the LSCB in the community</li> </ul> <p><b>Attendance at:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD sessions</li> <li>• School staff meetings</li> <li>• Meetings with individual families</li> </ul> <p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the voluntary experts</li> <li>• Faith and cultural norms that conflict with the law</li> <li>• Correct safeguarding procedure and policy and follow-up</li> <li>• <i>Specific to the demography of an area</i></li> <li>• Negotiation</li> </ul> <p><b>Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear safeguarding guidelines</li> <li>• Confidential dedicated point of contact – 24 hr telephone service</li> <li>• Dedicated 24 hr practitioner</li> <li>• Translation services – free</li> <li>• Events – workshops, seminars and forums that bring for both statutory and voluntary groups</li> <li>• <i>Visible presence in schools</i></li> </ul>
Response	Count												
Yes	185												
No	142												
Unsure	22												
N/A	16												

Voluntary Groups: Faith Groups (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and other faith organisations). Voluntary and Community groups (supporting local cultural groups, providing services for young people and families)

Key Issues/Concerns	Performance rating of service providers both statutory and voluntary and	Statutory Service Providers – Knowledge and Recommendations	Statutory Service Providers – Changes/Improvement												
<p><b>Abuse:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic violence</li> <li>Neglect</li> <li>Mental (<i>stigmatisation due to poverty</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Norms</b> – both faith and cultural that conflict with UK Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FGM</li> <li>Arranged marriage</li> <li>dispossession of evil spirits</li> <li>discipline - e.g. some cultures consider eye contact with adults as rudeness and discipline accordingly</li> <li><i>perceptions and treatment of disabled children</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current information on safeguarding policy and legislation</li> <li>The fostering processes and procedure</li> <li>Adequate and qualified staffing</li> <li>Training and development of voluntary group professionals</li> <li>Training and development of faith and cultural leaders</li> </ul>	<p><i>The ratings and percentages are provided below with relevant comments</i></p> <p><b>Average (24%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When there was access</li> <li>Excellent some areas and poor in others</li> <li>More joint work needed</li> </ul> <p><b>Excellent (10%)</b></p> <p><b>Good (24%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding board (8%)</li> <li>Churches</li> </ul> <p><b>Poor (18%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on observations at a childcare nursery</li> <li>Delay due to protocol</li> <li>Volume of work</li> </ul> <p><b>N/A (24%)</b></p> <div data-bbox="528 1262 1436 1829"> <table border="1"> <caption>Performance Rating - Statutory and Voluntary</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Excellent</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N/A</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Rating	Percentage	Excellent	10%	Good	24%	Average	24%	Poor	18%	N/A	24%	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural and faith norms (treatment of demon possession) that <b>do not</b> conflict UK law in addition to those that do</li> <li>Moral and spiritual values of the different faiths but <i>from the faith leaders</i></li> <li><i>Awareness of the negative perception of social services in the community and how to address it</i></li> <li>more training in statutory procedure</li> <li>the partnership groups, their identity and roles</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acceptance, appreciation and respect for the work of the voluntary and religious groups</li> <li><i>Tighter safeguarding procedures in churches and day nurseries – i.e. not allowing trusting nature of these groups to be a cover for corruption</i></li> <li>more training in statutory procedures</li> <li>lobby in Government for more funding for safeguarding and reduction in bureaucracy</li> <li>better promotion of the statutory services and their role</li> <li>more joint working with the partnership groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communication</b></p> <p><b>Improved links (through partnership work in intelligence sharing) with the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>voluntary groups</li> <li>social services/local authorities</li> <li>families</li> <li>faith leaders of the religious groups</li> </ul> <p><b>Training (for both statutory and voluntary groups)</b></p> <p><b>Key areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>safeguarding policy and legislation</li> <li>faith and cultural groups – norms and behaviours</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lobby for increased funding for voluntary groups</li> <li><i>formal registration of faith leaders and access to this information for both statutory and voluntary groups</i></li> <li>more recognition for the contribution of the religious group in the safeguarding process</li> <li>improvements in the referral system</li> <li><i>more promotion of the role and services of the LSCB among the voluntary groups</i></li> </ul>
Rating	Percentage														
Excellent	10%														
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