Hackney SCPB Minutes
(Summary)
March 2025

Attendance:

- Rory McCallum (RMc), Senior Professional Advisor to the CHSCP [Chair]
- Jessie Rowland (JR), Service Manager, Cafcass
- Michael Ogundele (MO), Designated Doctor, NHS
- Sam Martin (SM), Designated Nurse (0.5), NHS
- Korkor Ceasar (KC), Deputy Director for Safeguarding Children, NHS
- Vijay Gorania (VG), Detective Chief Inspector Central East BCU, Police
- Lisa Aldridge (LA), Head of Service, Safeguarding & Learning, Hackney CFS
- Diane Benjamin (DB), Director of Children's Social Care, Hackney CFS
- Carolyn Sharpe (CS), Consultant Public Health, Public Health
- Donna Thomas (DT), Head of Early Years, Early Help & Wellbeing, Hackney Education
- Cllr Antoinette Bramble (AB), Cabinet Member for Children, Hackney Councillors
- Cllr Susan Farjana Thomas (SFT), Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Hackney Councillors
- Latoya Alfred (LA), Named Nurse Safeguarding Children, Homerton Healthcare NHSFT (present on behalf of MS)
- Diane Benjamin (DB), Director of Children's Social Work, CFS (presenter)
- Clarissa Wye (CW), Lead Professional for Safeguarding Children, LADO and Prevent ELFT (present on behalf of DP)
- Laura Bleaney (LB), Head of Corporate Parenting, CFS (presenter)
- Rushena Miah (RMi) Partnership Coordinator CHSCP [Minutes]

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

The Risk Register & Operational Risk Register was reviewed, noting a positive change in the status of one risk concerning the Partnership Board's influence, now rated amber due to the approval and publication of new Safeguarding Arrangements.

The HSCPB Terms of Reference were formally noted by the board.

A substantial discussion revolved around Children's Social Care Reforms. A detailed presentation outlined a comprehensive overhaul of the children's social care system, driven by various national reviews.

The reforms aim for a "seismic shift" in how children and families are supported, with core objectives including keeping children within their families, leveraging family networks, ensuring child safety, and providing stable homes for children in care. Key changes proposed include:

- the abolition of the distinction between early help and Section 17 services, the creation of a unified Family Help Service with new staffing models,

- and the layering of multi-agency teams, including a lead child protection practitioner, for safeguarding concerns.
- A stronger emphasis on family-led decision-making through family network plans and mandatory family group conferences before care proceedings was also detailed.
- Workforce strengthening, including addressing the use of agency social workers, was highlighted.

The implementation is envisioned as a three-year programme, focusing on engagement and system design in the first year, with phased intervention thereafter. The establishment of a dedicated multi-agency partnership board to oversee these reforms was agreed.

An update was provided on New Children's Homes in Hackney, outlining the initiative to develop two new children's homes using repurposed council-owned properties. The identified locations require extensive renovation, with capital funding secured and planning applications underway.

The homes will primarily serve secondary school-age children with complex needs, such as emotional and behavioural challenges, who are unsuitable for foster care. The objective is to provide stable, in-borough placements to maintain children's community connections, minimise disruption to their education and health, enhance care quality, and achieve cost efficiencies. The importance of keeping local councillors informed was noted, and a further update on progress was requested for a future meeting.

Under Case Review / QA / TLD Updates, reports were given from various sub-groups. Progress on ongoing case reviews, including one focused on intra-familial child sexual abuse and another investigating a tragic death, was shared, noting challenges and alignment with national findings where applicable.

In terms of Quality Assurance, plans for a new round of multi-agency case auditing were discussed, with a proposed theme focusing on cases where consent for intervention was not given, derived from recent learning.

For Training, updates on safeguarding training activities were provided, including the discontinuation of a specific app due to cost-effectiveness, the introduction of 15 new courses, and the development of attendance standards. The continued use and increased utilisation of the learning management system were also highlighted.

The Prevent Programme agenda item was deferred due to technical issues, with a representative from the Prevent team to be invited back to a subsequent meeting.

In Any Other Business, concerns were raised about the safeguarding of children and families residing in temporary accommodation, leading to a request for a detailed report at the next meeting.

Finally, two reports were noted for information, these were the Safeguarding Arrangements 2025 and an Exceptional Circumstances statement from legal services.