



## ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING SELF-EVALUATION: CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

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### LOCAL CONTEXT AND KEY ISSUES

Unique in context and history, the City of London (City) is the second smallest LA in the country in both size and population (7,654), but hosts the highest daytime population in the UK with workers, students and visitors amounting to over fifty times the resident population (414,600) packed into one square mile of densely developed space.

In addition to these characteristics, key aspects of our distinct local context include that:

- ❖ We are the only London LA with its own police force. Given the difference in process and systems between forces, this adds a layer of complexity to cross borough information sharing and collaboration.
- ❖ There is only one primary maintained school and no secondary maintained school in the LA. Other than the very few children and young people (CYP) who attend one of the four independent schools and the one maintained primary in the LA, most school aged CYP are educated out of borough. This puts them outside standard education reporting requirements to the City.
- ❖ The CLA population is 92% male adolescent and 88% UASC. Similarly, City Care Leavers are 86% male and 91% in care due to having been UASC. This means that in all but a few cases, CYP we know little about come into our care in unplanned and often emergency circumstances.

At 1254, children and young people 0-18 make up 16% of the resident population. Safeguarding adolescents in the City is about understanding and responding to the familial and contextual needs of those 11-18 year olds who reside here (5%, n=396), those young people with extended support needs up to the age of 25 (n=587), those who we are corporate parents of, as well as the many more CYP who work, study and pass through the City every day.

Using management information and intelligence from partnership forums, we know that we have a small vulnerable adolescent profile amongst our resident population with most Police, Education and health contacts being about non-resident CYP.

In the last 12 months there has been no more than 1 City resident CYP in each of the following risk categories: CSE, criminal exploitation, offending, radicalisation, and 1 held in custody following an assault on a family member. While no City residents have been reported missing from home, we have had 3 CLA missing from care on multiple occasions, and two resident CYP have attempted suicide this year. There are no known or suspected incidents of serious youth violence involving resident CYP as either victims or perpetrators within the City at this time.

Practitioners, managers, and leaders know the CYP receiving services and together, they effectively mobilise the partnership network in response to their needs. Careful multi agency reviews confirm that so far, there is no connection between these individual cases in terms of patterns in the context of their presentation, location or relationships.

In addition to statutory assessments and planning interventions, the strategies the City uses to respond to this cohort of CYP includes information sharing and planning via the MACE Panel, learning from internal QA processes, reflective Multi Agency Case Audits (MACA), and in the case of our missing CLA – independently conducted Return Home Interviews.

Of the 70 cases currently open, 49% are 11-18yrs old. Most CYP in this cohort are UASC in our care with others receiving support, help and protection services as a result of violence and relationship difficulties within the family, parental neglect, mental health, and in one case, trafficking and criminal exploitation.

Our Care Leavers (n=22) all have allocated social workers and receive support to 25. They are all in suitable accommodation and receive bespoke tenancy / life skills and EET support. As a result of often having the same social worker pre and post 18 and being managed within the one generic social work team, our CL are well known and often enjoy positive relationships with workers and managers.

Caseload Distribution of 11-18	
EH	6
CIN	5
CP	1
CLA	22



## EMERGING THEMES AND AREAS FOR FOCUS

### 1. Information sharing arrangements across LAs

With 100% of our CLA placed out of area, the majority of our school aged CYP attending schools outside the City, and that we share borders with 7 different LAs, it is vital that we establish smarter and more effective information sharing agreements/protocols. Indeed, as a region, London LAs could benefit from developing a suite of local profiles and protocols to facilitate information sharing for the purpose of safeguarding adolescents in all our areas (e.g. locality assessments for OOB placement planning, sharing problem profiles for MACE and community safety initiatives, agreed protocols to report CME to CYP's home LA etc.).

### 2. Serious Youth Violence

- a) The City of London Drugs Profile found that the largest area of drug misuse was among affluent City workers with the supply of drugs controlled by organised criminal groups involving male 'runners' in their 20s who often deal pre-ordered drugs out of their cars. While drug related crime involving resident CYPs is low, a recent case involving a trafficked young person highlights this as an emerging theme that requires close attention and partnership working between Police, Adult and Children's Social Care, and businesses in the City.
- b) There is concern in the north that young adults known to be associated with Islington gangs have started to hang around Golden Lane Estate. Community safety partners are monitoring this closely and report 'no hard issues' other than gang related graffiti to date. Work with the estate and Islington is needed to understand this emerging pattern and mitigate associated risks for CYP.

### 3. Adolescent Neglect in Affluent Families

Identifying, naming and responding to adolescent neglect can be challenging due to misconceptions that adolescents become more resilient because of their age alone, over-reliance on older CYP to be responsible for themselves, and the assumption that they can and would ask for help if they needed. This is further exacerbated in affluent families where material wealth and access to private services can serve to keep neglect and emotional abuse of adolescents hidden. It is also the case that CYP in affluent families where there is parental substance misuse, mental ill health, or domestic violence can be harder to reach due to the way families use their resources to block access and can hide the extent of their needs through the use of privately funded services. The City sponsored research on neglect in affluent families conducted by Goldsmith University identified teens as a particularly vulnerable cohort with complex safeguarding needs and the Children's Society research found a potential link between emotional neglect and living in more affluent families. Given our demographic makeup, we need to ensure we have the necessary skills to recognise and respond to the signs and symptoms of adolescent neglect to safeguard CYP within their families and in doing so, potentially reduce their vulnerability to extra-familial risks in the community and online.

### 4. Girls and the Youth Service

There has been a number of improvements achieved in the City's local youth offer this year but data and feedback from providers indicates that we are reaching our boys more than our girls. Work is underway to understand the reason for this so we can ensure services provided to CYP are effective for both our boys and girls. This work includes building partnerships with community leaders as well as direct engagement with young people.

## QUALITY OF PRACTICE

- ❖ The City has one children's social care team where practitioners hold a generic caseload of CYP from 0-25 working with CiN, CP, CLA and Care Leavers simultaneously. To do so effectively, they have to maintain a diverse range of skills and ensure they keep up to date with standards and best practice approaches in all areas. However, some of the casework skills needed are used so rarely that they risk losing these or never picking up the experience needed to develop the skills until they are confronted with a new challenge under urgent pressure. This means that some situations that might seem routine elsewhere, can be of greater immediate challenge to the City. For example, the City will have had very limited experience in working with CYP involved in gangs or serious youth violence.



However, as in the single CSE case, experience has shown that workers take the initiative to skill up where needed, work exceptionally well with the right partners, are able to distinguish between the inter/extra familial risk and protective factors, and deliver an effective service to keep CYP safe even where prior experience is limited.

- ❖ The most distinct group of vulnerable adolescents for the City is its CLA and CL cohort. Findings from our 2018 Focused Visit on CLs and external audits of all open cases in 2019 confirms that the quality and impact of our practice on this group of CYP is strong, ensuring they receive effective help that enables good outcomes to be achieved. The City has developed an expertise in supporting UASC in placements, ETE, with their health, through their asylum claim, and transition to independence. The annual independent survey of CYP has consistently found that CLA and CL are highly satisfied with the service they receive and the quality of their relationship with their allocated worker.

The key improvement areas in our safeguarding practice with UASC relate to the need for pre-placement assessment of contextual risk, reinstatement of the enhanced CAMHS offer, management of missing from care, and the need for more timely, confident age assessments to be completed when required.

- ❖ CHSCB lead on the multi-agency response to risks online for CYP in the Safeguarding Children in the Context of their Access to Technology and Use of Social Media strategy. This includes a comprehensive handbook that offers safeguarding professionals a range of tools that can help identify and mitigate risks arising from CYP's access to technology and use of social media. Social workers and early help workers use these tools and guides to inform their practice and share the knowledge with parents and carers to assist in keeping their CYP safe at home. The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service conducts annual reviews of the quality of the Independent Fostering Agencies in use for our CLA and have recently started doing the same across all semi-independent provisions in use. This work includes specific attention to providers' e-safety policies, training and practice to complement the day-to-day work of direct practitioners and the IRO.

City Police are working to improve awareness across the force of social media platforms being used to exploit vulnerable adolescents to better identify emerging patterns and trends as part of their work to disrupt perpetrators' criminal activity and keep CYP safe.

- ❖ The Education and Early Years Service has established a rigorous school tracker to identify, monitor and support all the school aged CYP the City is responsible for. With City CYP attending at least 85 different schools across London and beyond, and conversely, CYP attending schools in our area coming from a wide range of LAs near and far, the CME database and school tracker are essential systems in our safeguarding in education work. Implemented in 2016, this has proven to be an effective approach to manage our unique education landscape ensuring that we identify and respond to the needs of CYP who are at risk of or actually missing education, those who are electively home education, CYP with SEND, and that we are able to reach those in need of early help.
- ❖ Early help is delivered via the full network of partner agencies in the City. Support ranges from preventative universal services such as a drop-in Tier 2 CAMHS provision, through to targeted family support provided by the Early Help Service. The service reaches all communities in the City and is consistently found to be effective in delivering the right help at the right time with external and internal reviews highlighting its positive impact on CYP and their families.
- ❖ The City's commissioning team is working diligently to improve the reach and positive impact of youth services. Through increasingly reliable data and close monitoring, the City is building better quality intelligence of what CYP want, need, and what is working well. There is however, a need for strategic oversight and more integration of community work between commissioning, the youth provision, and the estate management teams.

#### PARTNERSHIP

Key partnership forums relevant to adolescent safeguarding work include: CHSCB, MACE and the Vulnerable Adolescent (VA) Forum, MARAC, City & Tower Hamlet's Youth Justice Board, Education Safeguarding Forum, the early help services' Multi Agency Practitioners' Forum, and LASC.



There is good quality investment by partners across the City, Hackney, and commissioned services with participants sharing relevant information, learning, networking, and collaborating to strengthen practice and to share best practice and resources. Through these forums, the City is assured that it understands the adolescent safeguarding profile and that partners work together effectively to respond to existing need and prevent future need.

In recognition of the overlapping vulnerabilities adolescents face, the City *MASE* panel was changed to *MACE* to increase the scope of the panel from CSE to all forms of abuse and exploitation that adolescents are at increased risk of. Although few in number and type and relatively lower level risk in comparison to neighbouring LAs, the City is not complacent and maintains an 'it could happen here' stance.

For example, City Police provide Prevent training to schools, youth providers and businesses; they run CSE operations in hotels to test businesses' ability to appropriately recognise and respond to this risk and offer training where needed; they are working closely with the Metropolitan Police Force on the new CSE protocol; they take part in pan-London and cross-regional working groups on issues including FGM and honour-based violence; and they bring this learning back to the City partnership at a strategic level as well as in their joint work with social workers on individual cases. This year, City Police are leading a Stop and Search workshop for 13-19 year olds and up to 25 for care leavers and young people with SEND at a local community centre as part of the City's summer activities program.

The Education Safeguarding Forum brings together the Virtual School, maintained, academy and independent schools to focus on pupils' welfare and safeguarding needs. This forum has been effective in connecting schools to much needed resources such as the Youth Mental Health First Aid Course, the Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) project, and the Healthy Relationships Primary School Project – a two day project for Year 5 or 6s that focuses on healthy relationships as a preventative response to the fact that 16-24yr olds are at highest risk of experiencing abusive relationships.

The City social work team make good use of LASC (London Asylum Seekers Consortium). Attending pan London LASC meeting on a monthly basis, the City uses this space to receive and share information about the systems, patterns and areas of concern in the work with UASC. For example, at the next LASC, the City will be sharing its experience of the significant increase in UASC from Sudan and reporting concern about the heightened physical violence and abuse they are experiencing en route via Libya to see how other LAs and the Home Office are responding to this and explore what can be done to safeguarding this vulnerable young people earlier in their journey.

Importantly, the City is improving its direct partnerships with parents, carers and CYP to increase participation and co-production of the services intended for them. Examples of this include The Parent Carer Forum for parents and carers of all City CYP with SEND and the City Youth Forum for 11-19yr olds (25years for SEND) for CYP who live, work or study in the City, with the Children in Care Council continuing to be the main CYP led forum for CLA and care leavers.

All three groups are inclusive with both the membership and executive group reflecting the community they are representing. In the case of the City Youth Forum, inclusivity and accessibility will be further assisted by a mobile application once its use becomes more embedded.

#### STRENGTHS

##### 1. *Top 3 Case Forum*

Once a quarter, the senior management team (SMT) across the directorate comes together to review 3 cases. To qualify for a review at this forum, the cases must:

- ❖ Be open to at least two of the 6 service areas: Children's Social Care, Early Help, Education & Early Years, Adult Social Care, Homelessness, Rough Sleeping, Tenancy Support Team or the Benefit team
- ❖ Present a significant risk of harm to a person or the City
- ❖ Have been opened for a minimum of 6 months
- ❖ Involve issues of non-engagement from the service user
- ❖ Involve a plan that is not meeting the proposed objective – i.e. the case is stuck
- ❖ Be agreed by the relevant member of SMT



In the last year, this forum has demonstrably helped progress stuck plans through collaboration in at least 3 cases of young people with overlapping vulnerabilities in complex systems.

This forum is based in the City's Think Family practice model; it takes a holistic view of the family system, brings together different perspectives from across the directorate, promotes shared ownership of the most complex cases, and provides an opportunity for SMT to gather additional insight into practice, case work challenges, and the quality of integration across service areas.

## 2. *Virtual School*

In response to the uncertainty of the National Transfer Scheme for newly arrived UASC, the Virtual School collaborated with the Adult Education and Skills team initially and then also with the City of London School (CLS), an independent school for boys, to set up an in-house tuition classes and a 9week enrichment program. The tuition class was set up in a local community centre and teaching was based on ESOL and life skills activities with some arts and culture outings for 3 hours 3x a week. The enrichment program was developed to give students a wider experience and exposure to learning. This included CLS staff and sixth-form students joining CLA once a week for lunch and Art, Drama, Sport, Science, Design & Technology, Music and paired reading sessions. With the CLS staff and students enthusiastically volunteering to be part of this program and the CLA enjoying every learning opportunity available, it was clear that this program was enriching for both groups and in doing so, provides a strong foundation for continued collaboration between the most privileged in our community with the most vulnerable.

As a safeguarding measure, these programs offered vulnerable adolescents with structure to their weeks, a sense of belonging, opportunity to create and communicate, and hopefully helped widen their aspirations. These are ideal protective alternatives to the all too familiar risks UASC experience in the UK.

## 3. *Keeping Children Safe in Education*

- a) The EWO service in the City goes beyond minimum requirements to support and respond to the needs of CYP attending City schools to include City residents who attend schools in other LAs.
- b) The City commissioned an independent review to audit the safeguarding arrangements and practice standards across the City of London Family of Schools, which is made up 15 schools across 6 different LAs. In addition to quality assuring safeguarding arrangements, the review sought to identify opportunities to align best practice approaches across the Family of Schools. Building on the existing effective arrangements, the outcome of this review is expected to strengthen safeguarding practice, promote greater collaboration, and create a sustainable and structured system of scrutiny and support from the City of London to the member schools.

## IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITY

Improvement Priority	Priority Actions	Measures of Success
2019 Vulnerability Profile	1. City Police to update the Vulnerable Adolescents Profile to reflect available intelligence (including City Drugs Profile) and progress against 2018 recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ A completed profile that clearly distinguishes between City residents and non-residents</li> <li>❖ The profile is used across the partnership as an effective tool to improve safeguards and shape services</li> </ul>
	2. A Contextual Safeguarding Assessment of the Square Mile to be completed bringing together intelligence from the VA Profile, City Youth Forum, Community Safety, Neighbourhood teams, and relevant intelligence from LAs on our boarder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ A whole system understanding of the extra-familial risks and safety factors in the City</li> <li>❖ A vulnerable adolescent action plan reflective of the findings</li> <li>❖ CYP remain safe in the City</li> </ul>
MACE & VA Forum	1. Updated Terms of Reference to be finalised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Remit, objective, governance and expectations of the forum are clear</li> </ul>

	2. Forum membership to be extended to include representatives from the Neighbourhood teams, community centre managers and public health	❖ Effective information sharing, problem/solution identification, and impact as a result of having the right people around the table
	3. Access problem profiles of neighbouring LAs	❖ The City is informed of risks on its boarder and agencies work across boundaries to prevent and safeguard CYP at the earliest opportunity
Improved information sharing protocols and data sharing agreements across LAs	1. Local: Pre-placement assessment of contextual risks and safeguards to become routine practice in all placement decisions	❖ CLA are safe in placement as indicated by placement stability, CLA report feeling safe to workers, carers, IRO and in annual survey ❖ Risk assessments and safety plans are in place in any case where CLA are placed in areas with known risks
	2. Regional: Promote a system of sharing locality assessments across LAs as part of this Adolescent Safeguarding SLI	❖ All London LAs have contextual safeguarding assessments that are available for informing placement decisions ❖ Pan London agreement for minimum content standards, minimum frequency for updates, where they will be kept and how they are to be accessed ❖ LAs make better placement matching decisions ❖ CLA are safe in OOB placement
	3. Local: Ensure Data Sharing Agreements are in place with all identified schools where City CYP attend	❖ City CYP attending schools OOB receive help and support at the right time where this is needed. ❖ City ensures its services reflect the community need
	4. National: Liaise with the DfE to explore how to strengthen information sharing across LAs in the case of CME and SEND for safeguarding purposes	❖ National guidance is issued on information sharing of statutory data that reflects increasing likelihood of CYP attending schools outside their home authority
	5. Local: Commissioning to ensure Data Sharing Agreements are in place with youth service provisions in neighbouring LAs	❖ City knows how many resident CYP are opting to attend youth provision elsewhere and are able to review local youth offer accordingly ❖ City is able to share data about non-City residents attending local youth services as needed ❖ CYP and their families understand the reason for this and consent to the release of their information
Missing from Care	1. Review application of missing form care procedures	❖ Social workers, managers, carers, provider and CLA have a shared understanding of what Missing means and what steps are taken safeguarding young people from going missing, when they are missing and when they return
	2. Review referral, conduct, recording and use of RHIs	❖ RHIs take place at the right time ❖ RHIs are reviewed by social workers and managers and inform safeguarding decisions ❖ RHIs are effective in keeping CLA safe



	3. Commissioning to improve reporting requirement and contract monitoring of RHI provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ RHIs are conducted according to requirements</li> <li>❖ Barriers to achieving this are understood and addressed</li> </ul>
Age Assessments	1. Timely, skilled and compliant age assessments need to be completed when needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ CYP are safeguarded</li> <li>❖ Asylum seekers receive age appropriate support and services</li> <li>❖ Resources are appropriately distributed</li> </ul>
Enhanced CAMHS offer for UASC	1. In recognition of the significant trauma, separation and loss experienced by UASC and the challenges to securing mental health services across all LAs and CCGs, the City needs to progress plans to reinstate their arrangements with Hackney CAMHS to provide an extended service that covers all consenting UASC with a baseline assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The mental health and emotional wellbeing of UASC in care is better understood and supported</li> <li>❖ UASC in care receive equal access to an initial assessment irrespective of their placement location</li> </ul>
Adolescent Neglect	2. Bespoke training to be arranged for social worker and consideration to be given to rolling this out the Education Safeguarding Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Agencies recognise signs and symptoms of adolescent neglect and know how to respond</li> <li>❖ CYP are kept safe</li> <li>❖ Families are supported</li> </ul>
VAWG	1. In addition to the work on healthy relationships in education across City Schools, specialist support for resident women, girls and children at risk of violence and abuse needs to be agreed as part of the new VAWG strategy that is currently under development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ CYP exposed to or at risk of domestic violence and abuse within their families or in their own relationships receive effective specialist support to be safe and heal as needed</li> </ul>
Online Safety	2. Ensure new members of the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service are introduced to and make good use of the Safeguarding Children in the Context of their Access to Technology and Use of Social Media strategy and handbook 3. City Police to improve their awareness of social media platforms being used to exploit vulnerable adolescents to better identify emerging patterns/trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Practitioners are equipped with the knowledge and resources to identify and respond to risks related to CYP's access to technology and use of social media</li> <li>❖ Police can better detect and prevent abuse and exploitation of CYP online</li> <li>❖ CYP are safe online</li> </ul>
Youth Services	4. Youth outreach initiatives to learn from CYP what's working well and what may not be for both boys and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Identification and removal of any barriers to increased engagement from girls.</li> </ul>