



ISCP

Islington Safeguarding
Children Partnership

Partnership Plan 2024 - 2026

Victoria Lawson

Chief Executive
London Borough of Islington



Andy Carter

Chief Superintendent,
Central North Basic Command Unit,
Metropolitan Police Service



Frances O'Callaghan

Chief Executive
NHS North Central London,



1. Introduction

In accordance with the Children Act 2004, every Borough is part of a Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Islington Safeguarding Children Partnership (ISCP) aims for all Islington's children and you people to be safe, thriving and heard. The ISCP is committed to ensuring that staff and volunteers in Islington who have contact with children and/or parents, are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and have the required knowledge and skills to discharge this responsibility competently (s11 2004).

In response to the Children and Social Work Act 2017, a new partnership was created between London Borough Islington Council, North Central London Integrated Care Partnership and the Central North Basic Command Unit of the Metropolitan Police Service all of whom have shared and equal responsibility to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Islington.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 identifies that Partnerships are to “set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively”. This Partnership plan, sets out our priorities and the delivery structures for the next two years as well as the proposed areas of scrutiny. Alongside this Partnership plan, our ISCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) sets out our structures for delivering our statutory responsibilities.

2. Partnership Plan Delivery Framework

Our Priorities are held throughout the partnership and interweave throughout the Partnerships functions with linked forward and action plans, progression and delivery of these are overseen by the identified subgroup, who will report on progress to the Executive Group.

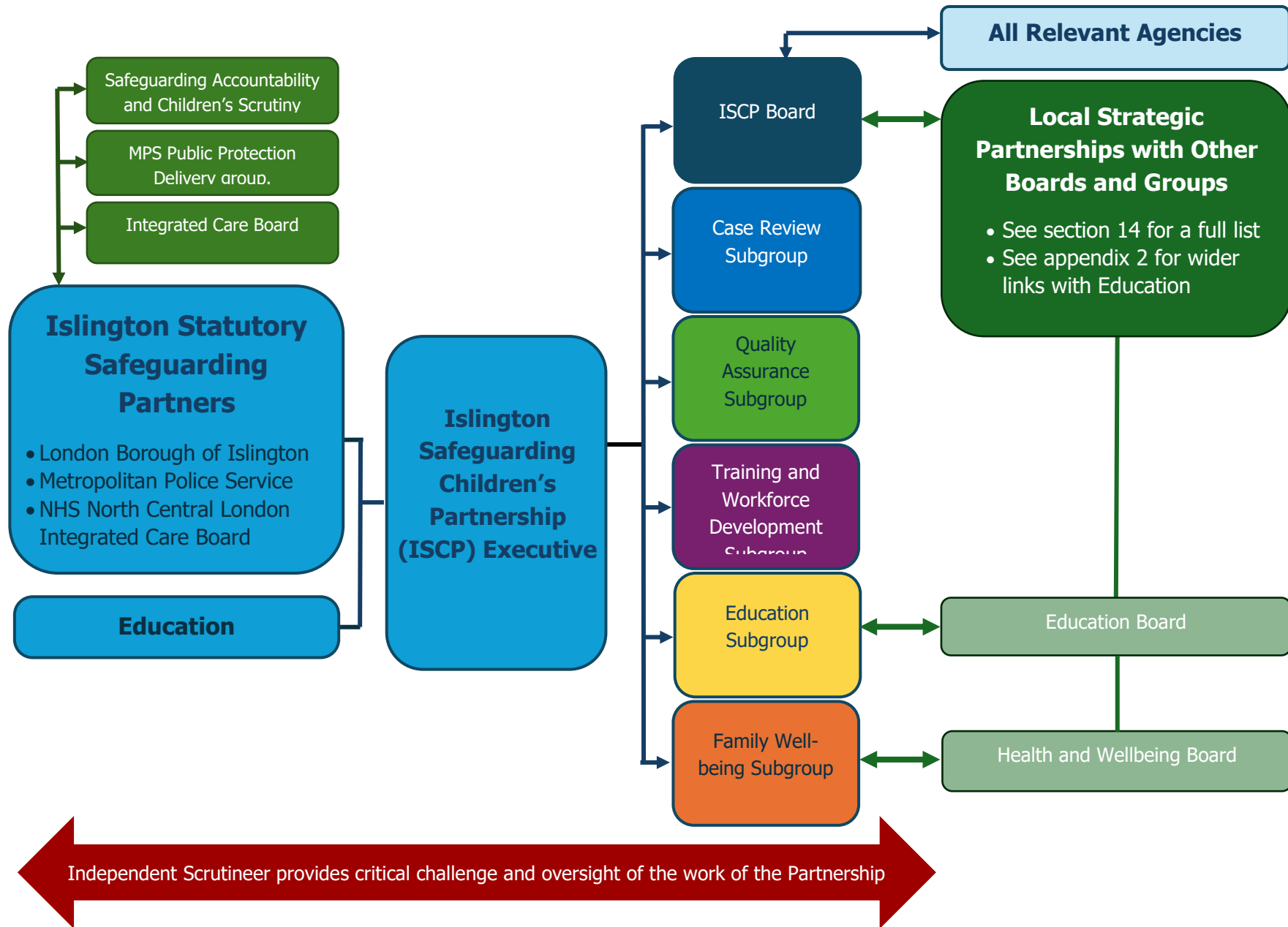
Subgroups are chaired by representations from across the partnership, who promote inter-agency collaboration and assist group members in innovative problem-solving to ensure the implementation of agreed action. Chairs also attend the Executive Group to:

- report on their progress;
- facilitate communication and collaboration across subgroups;
- ensure joint responsibility and oversight;
- provide a summary of data trends and key highlights relevant to the priorities;
- facilitate links to other partnership groups/boards such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Education Board and Islington Childrens Partnership Board- see full list in the [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) section 14

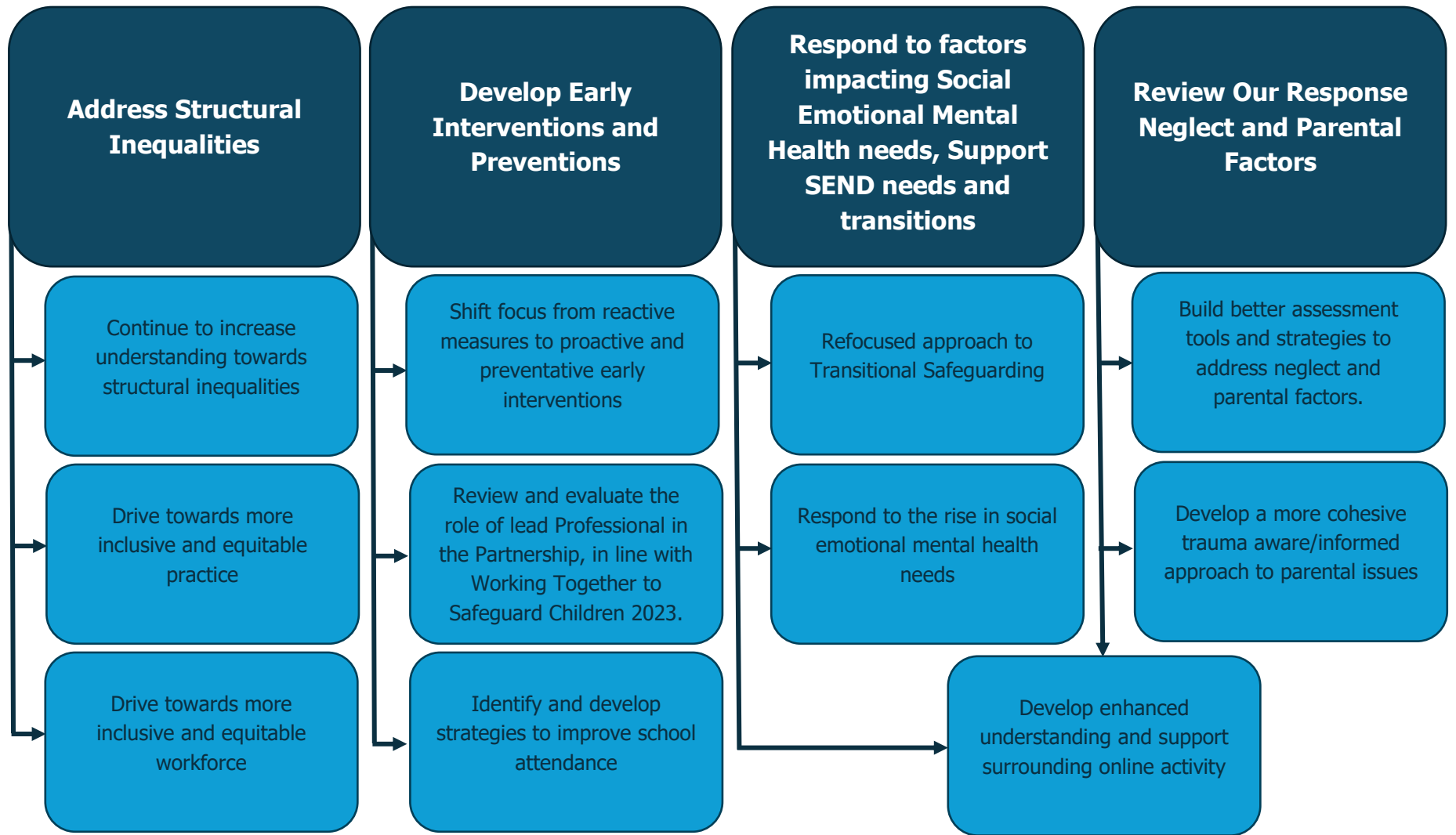
Alongside this, independent scrutiny will take place to provide critical challenge and provide assurance to the effectiveness of our arrangements in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and included within this plan.

This plan is underpinned by our [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements \(MASA\)](#).

3. ISCP Structure and Delivery Framework



4. ISCP Strategic Priorities 2024 - 2026

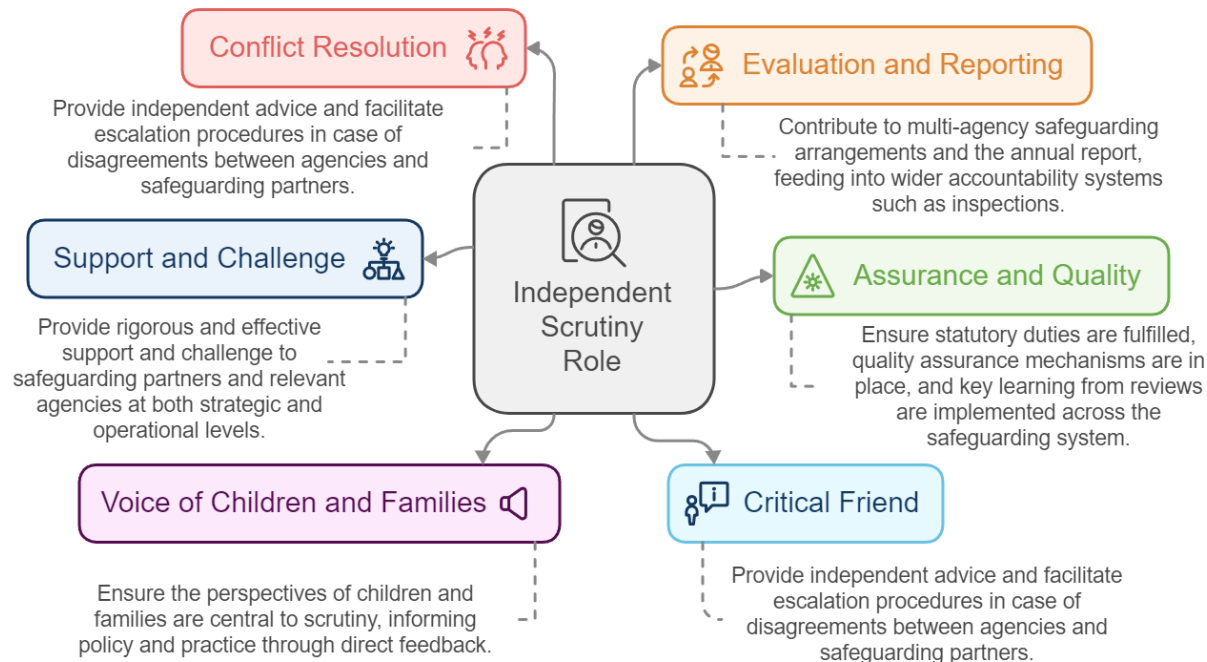


5. ISCP Independent Scrutiny

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 highlights the need to ensure continuous improvement and effective safeguarding arrangements for children, families, and practitioners through robust independent scrutiny. We are committed to ensuring independent, rigorous support and challenge to safeguarding partners and agencies at all levels via our independent scrutineer. Our scrutineer provides oversight and input to ensure that statutory duties are met, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that both local and national safeguarding reviews are analysed and implemented effectively. To support this, we have an evolving scrutiny plan, outlined below for 2024 - 2025 and 2025 - 2026, however this plan is flexible to evolve in response to the needs of the Partnership, reflecting the autonomy our Independent Scrutineer and need to explore the lines of inquiry as identified through scrutiny.

Over the period of this plan, we plan to enhance the voices of children and families in our Partnership partially via our scrutineer function, with the aim to inform policy and practice through direct feedback.

Acting as a critical friend, our scrutineer will facilitate discussions between practitioners and leaders, provide independent advice during disagreements, and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and reports, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.



Scrutiny Plan 2024-2025

| Practitioners focus group | Parents and Children focus | Auditing / Data Analysis | Testing the case reviewing system | Analysing sections of the MASA |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Aim: Ensure wider safeguarding partners, including education and all relevant agencies, are actively involved in safeguarding children, strengthening links between strategic and frontline practice.</p> | <p>Aim: To understand the experiences and needs of families directly impacted by safeguarding practices.</p> | <p>Aim: To assess the effectiveness of current safeguarding practices through data analysis.</p> | <p>Aim: To ensure the case reviewing system is effective and identifies areas for improvement</p> | <p>Aim: To evaluate and contribute to the development of effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.</p> |
| <p>Plan: Independent Scrutineer to host sessions in person and Online across the partnership for frontline staff: wider anonymous questionnaire to be offered. Focused on Neglect.</p> | <p>Plan: Host Sessions with the Partnership's Parent Champions and groups Focusing on early identification and intervention.</p> | <p>Plan: Respond to findings of multi-agency audits. Input to the QA subgroup multi-agency data collation and analysis.</p> | <p>Plan: Chair the Case Review Subgroup. Report findings and recommendations for system improvements</p> | <p>Plan: Input and review MASA arrangements due creation and beyond. Assess how well these sections are being implemented and their impact.</p> |
| <p>Priority link: Neglect and Parental Factors</p> | <p>Priority link: Early identification and intervention.</p> | <p>Priority link: Neglect and Parental Factors</p> | <p>Priority link: All</p> | <p>Priority link: All</p> |
| <p>Reporting/Evaluation: to the Exec and Board. Overview of report included in the Annual Report</p> | <p>Reporting/Evaluation: to the Exec and Board. Overview of report included in the Annual Report</p> | <p>Reporting/Evaluation: link to the QA Subgroup. Overview of report included in the Annual Report</p> | <p>Reporting/Evaluation: link to the Case Review Subgroup, Overview of report included in the Annual Report</p> | <p>Reporting/Evaluation: Input and oversight to the MASA (to be published 20th December 2024)</p> |
| <p>Approx. completion: October 2024 - January 2025</p> | <p>Approx. completion: January 2025 - March 2025</p> | <p>Approx. completion: Throughout 2024 - 2025</p> | <p>Approx. completion: Throughout 2024 - 2025</p> | <p>Approx. completion: December 2023 – December 2024.</p> |

Scrutiny Plan 2025 - 2026

Structured against the 6 steps of scrutiny, this scrutiny plan will be informed by the Subgroup and Executive objectives status during this period, findings from the S11 responses (due in 2025) and the scrutiny findings from 2024 - 2025. The below outlines a basic plan;

| Providing Independent Support and Challenge | Voice of Children and Families | Assuring System Effectiveness | Learning from Reviews | Analysing sections of the MASA |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Aim: To ensure that safeguarding partners and relevant agencies receive rigorous and effective support and challenge, promoting robust and effective safeguarding practices.</p> | <p>Aim: To champion and involve children and families voice in the provision of services in the Partnership</p> | <p>Aim: To provide assurance on the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through comprehensive scrutiny methods.</p> | <p>Aim: To ensure that lessons from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews are identified, disseminated, and effectively implemented.</p> | <p>Aim: To evaluate and contribute to the development of effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements</p> |
| <p>Plan: Attend and contribute to strategic meetings with safeguarding partners to provide independent perspectives. Review how strategic decisions address systemic issues and promote inclusivity. Feedback Sessions with frontline practitioners</p> | <p>Plan: Ensure that feedback from children and families is integrated into safeguarding policies and practices. Advocate for the needs and perspectives of children and families in all strategic discussions.</p> | <p>Plan: Respond to findings of multi-agency audits. Evaluate the effectiveness of early support measures and changes to Lead Practitioner role in line with Working together 2023</p> | <p>Plan: Monitor the implementation of recommendations from case reviews to ensure they are effectively integrated into practice. Draw attention to areas of development or delay and highlight strengths in practice, policy and procedure.</p> | <p>Plan: To be confirmed following updates to the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and informed by scrutiny plan 2024 - 2025</p> |
| <p>Priority link: TBC</p> | <p>Priority link: All</p> | <p>Priority link: Early Intervention and Prevention</p> | <p>Priority link: All</p> | <p>Priority link: All</p> |
| <p>Reporting/Evaluation: to the Exec and Board. Overview of report included in the Annual Report</p> | <p>Reporting/Evaluation: to the Exec and Board. Overview of report included in the Annual Report</p> | <p>Reporting/Evaluation: link to the QA Subgroup. Overview of report included in the Annual Report</p> | <p>Reporting/Evaluation: link to the Case Review Subgroup, Overview of report included in the Annual Report</p> | <p>Reporting/Evaluation: Input and oversight to the MASA (to be published 20th December 2024)</p> |
| <p>Approx. completion: April 2025 - March 2026</p> | <p>Approx. completion: April 2025 - March 2026</p> | <p>Approx. completion: April 2025 - March 2026</p> | <p>Approx. completion: April 2025 - March 2026</p> | <p>Approx. completion: April 2025 - March 2026</p> |

Structural Inequalities

Aim: To create a fairer Islington where every child and family can thrive, free from systemic inequalities.

The ISCP strives to deepen understanding of systemic issues and their diverse impacts, driving towards more inclusive and equitable practices by continuing to increase our understanding towards structural inequalities and driving towards more inclusive and equitable practice and workforce.

Current Context/What We Know: Islington is a diverse borough with significant disparities. Approximately 33% of residents were born outside the UK, and 14% live with a disability¹. Despite its diversity, Islington faces stark inequalities, with approximately 21.7% of people living in income-deprived households and 38.2% of children growing up in poverty². The borough is the 6th most deprived in London. Further information pertaining to Health inequalities can be found via the [North Central Healthcare Board](#).

Policy Contexts/National Guidance: The Equality Act 2010 mandates public bodies to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. Each statutory agency has shared plans to address inequalities; including Islington Council's [Challenging Inequalities Programme](#), The Metropolitan Police Service [Children's Strategy](#) and the NHS [North Central London Health Inequalities Insights Report](#).

Going Forward: We will continue to deepen the Partnership understanding of systemic issues and their impacts, addressing disparities by promoting inclusive practices and policies. We will collaborate with local and national partners to implement inclusive practices, ensuring all children and families receive equitable support.

The ISCP Case Review Subgroup will ensure all reviews explore whether discrimination or systemic inequalities were present and how they impacted the children's lived experiences, creating clear action plans across the Partnership to combat this in future practice. The Education Subgroup will identify and respond to inequalities to improve attendance, education access, and promote strong inclusion practices. The ISCP will support this effort by providing targeted training through the Training Subgroup, helping staff across agencies better understand and address the needs of Islington's diverse population.

Through data and audits, agencies will report on how representative their workforce is compared to the Islington population and service users. Coordinated by the Quality Assurance (QA) Subgroup, these audits will identify gaps in representation and inform strategies for a more inclusive workforce. Agencies must ensure their QA reports include analysis on disproportionality and plans to address it. The QA Subgroup will scrutinise this data to ensure progression and hold agencies accountable on these critical issues.

¹ <https://www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/equality-and-diversity/challenging-inequality/a-our-story>

² [Appendix F - Budget Equality Impact Assessment.pdf](#)

Early Intervention and Prevention

Aim: To shift from reactive measures to proactive, preventative strategies to ensure families receive early support. Identify and develop strategies to improve school attendance, including reviewing and evaluating the role of the Lead Professional in the Partnership, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

Current Context/What We Know: Early intervention is crucial in addressing issues before they escalate. Islington is a relatively small, densely populated inner London Borough. It is the 6th most deprived borough in London and has the highest proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals in the country in 2022/2023.

Policy Contexts/National Guidance: Early intervention and prevention are crucial themes across several key documents in children's social care, emphasising the need to shift from reactive to proactive practices. Josh MacAlister's Review of Children's Social Care highlights the importance of early support to prevent issues from escalating, advocating for a system that prioritises family support and early help. The Children's Social Care National Framework 2023 reinforces this by outlining principles for effective practice, including early intervention and multi-agency collaboration. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 focuses on strengthening multi-agency working to protect children, promoting early identification of risks and proactive measures. The policy statement "Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive" supports these ideas by committing to whole-system reform, aiming to keep families together and children safe through early intervention, better data sharing, and inclusive practices. Additionally, the "Myth of the Invisible Man" document highlights the need to engage fathers more effectively in safeguarding practices. Together, these documents advocate for a proactive, preventative approach in children's social care, ensuring families receive the support they need early on and reducing the need for reactive measures.

Going Forward: Multi-agency collaboration across the Partnership will be key to achieving this aim. This includes early identification and access to services and resources that address emerging needs before they become critical. We will focus on improving school attendance by developing targeted strategies through the Education Subgroup and links to the Education Board. We will use the recommendations from case reviews, alongside the development of the Family Hub model, to place a stronger emphasis on early intervention and prevention, offering a centralised, accessible point for early help services. Once the lead practitioners have been outlined by the Delegated Safeguarding Partners, we will continue to support upskilling the workforce led by the Training Subgroup, expanding or refocusing the training offer where identified.

The creation of the Family Well-being Subgroup aims to keep early intervention and prevention at the forefront of Partnership practice. Using the Joint Targeted Area Inspection's Early Help Terms of Reference as a guide, we will conduct scoping and auditing activities to identify gaps within the early help system. This ensures that services are comprehensive and responsive to the needs of children and families, engaging the whole family and wider network, including fathers. Any identified gaps will be communicated to the Quality Assurance (QA) Subgroup for further analysis and action.

Additionally, the Executive Board will place a greater emphasis on the whole partnership to identify and respond to Young Carers and Private Fostering Arrangements. The Partnership will also develop a Joint Supervision Protocol between services and an Exploitation Protocol to support a collaborative and clear multi-agency response to these cohorts.

Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH), Special Educational Needs Disability (SEND) and Inclusion

Aim: To ensure that children with SEND and SEMH needs receive comprehensive support, fostering inclusive and safe practice across the Partnership, responding to the rise in SEMH needs. Creating a refocused approach to Transitional Safeguarding and develop enhanced understanding and support surrounding online activity.

Current Context/What We Know: Locally we have seen year-on-year increase in the number of school-aged children identified with SEND; adolescents with multiple needs. This requires a sufficient and skilled workforce across the partnership to support children and their families in the right place to provide support at the right time crossing over with early help and intervention; staffing, retention and budget changes across the partnership create challenges to practice.

Policy Contexts/National Guidance: The SEND Code of Practice provides statutory guidance for supporting children with special educational needs. National strategies also emphasise the integration of mental health support within educational settings

Going Forward: We are committed to ensuring that children with SEND and SEMH needs receive comprehensive support, fostering inclusive and safe practices across the Partnership. In response to the rise in SEMH needs, we will create a refocused approach to Transitional Safeguarding and develop enhanced understanding and support surrounding online activity. We will address mental health concerns and SEND needs by tackling contributing factors such as online safety, domestic violence, and poverty.

We plan to develop a comprehensive Pledge/Statement/Plan for SEND and SEMH, where relevant agencies and education providers within the ISCP will collaborate to create a unified approach to supporting the increasing number of children and young people with SEND. This initiative, coordinated by the Education Subgroup, will ensure a clear and committed strategy within the educational framework. Health Partners will focus on a plan/pledge for addressing the growing number of children and young people experiencing SEMH challenges.

The Quality Assurance Subgroup will analyse multiagency data to maintain a current understanding of the local landscape and support early identification of emerging needs. This analysis will be overseen by the Executive Group, guiding the partnership's approach to supporting mental health within the community. Additionally, the Training Subgroup will continue to deliver training to increase awareness and confidence surrounding the online world and its impact on children, young people, and families. By enhancing our understanding and support for online activities, we aim to create a safer and more supportive environment for all.

Through these efforts, we aim to grow our inclusive and supportive environment for children with SEND and SEMH needs, ensuring they receive the comprehensive support they require.

Neglect and Parental Factors

Aim: To reduce neglect and mitigate the impact of parental factors by implementing effective, trauma-informed strategies and tools. To develop enhanced understanding and support around online activities for professionals and families.

Current Context/What We Know: Neglect and parental issues, such as mental health challenges, substance misuse, and domestic abuse, are significant concerns. In Islington, 85% of child protection plans are due to emotional abuse or neglect³.

Policy Contexts/National Guidance: The Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guidelines emphasise the importance of multi-agency collaboration in addressing neglect and parental factors; highlighting the importance of a child-centred approach, promoting early identification of risks and proactive measures to safeguard children. The policy statement "Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive" commits to whole-system reform, aiming to support families and ensure children live in safe, nurturing environments. Islington's revised Neglect toolkit aims to improve assessment and intervention strategies.

Going Forward: We are dedicated to reducing neglect and mitigating the impact of parental factors by implementing effective, trauma-informed strategies and tools. To achieve this, we will focus on enhancing our understanding and support around online activities for both professionals and families. A key initiative will be the promotion of the revised Neglect toolkit, which will be embedded into routine safeguarding practice across the partnership. The Training Subgroup will lead the development of comprehensive training and support programme, aiming to increase the confidence and competence of frontline workers in recognising and addressing neglect. This will ensure that practitioners are well-equipped to intervene early and effectively.

Additionally, our Scrutineer plan includes organising focused practitioner events on neglect. These events will provide valuable opportunities for practitioners to share insights, discuss challenges, and identify best practices. By fostering a collaborative environment, we aim to strengthen our collective ability to tackle neglect and support vulnerable children and families.

The Quality Assurance Subgroup will play a crucial role in analysing data related to neglect and parental factors. This ongoing analysis will help us maintain a current understanding of the local landscape, enabling us to identify emerging trends and shifts in needs. By staying informed, we can adapt our strategies and focus areas to ensure we are meeting the needs of our community effectively. We will continue to work closely with local and national partners to implement inclusive practices and policies, fostering strong multi-agency collaboration. Through these efforts, the ISCP is committed to creating a safer, more supportive environment for children and families in Islington, addressing neglect and parental factors proactively and effectively.

³ [Child Protection Annual Report 2023-24.pdf](#)