# Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.
## Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People

## The journey from Bexley Safeguarding Children's Board to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.

## February 2022

# The journey from Bexley Safeguarding Children's Board to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.

This document describes the background to the legislative changes made in 2017 to safeguarding partnership arrangements for children and young people within local authority areas and the journey in Bexley from Bexley Safeguarding Children's Board to the new partnership, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.


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The current partnership arrangements in Bexley are described in the statutory published arrangements document and this can be found on the partnership's website:

https://bexleysafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/news-publications/published-arrangements/.

## 1.1 The Alan Wood review 2015

In 2015, in response to a number of disappointing outcomes of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) inspections, the Government commissioned Alan Wood, a former President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services and ex-Director of Children's Services in Hackney, to lead a review of LSCBs. This review took place between January and March 2016 and the review team consulted a number of leaders and experts in children's services including Bexley's Director of Children's Services, Jacky Tiotto, and Jane Shuttleworth, the independent chair of Bexley Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB).

In total, the review considered over 600 responses and came to the overall conclusion that LSCBs were not sufficiently effective. Alan Wood recommended the abolition of LSCBs and their replacement by a stronger statutory partnership of the key statutory agencies - police, CCGs and local authorities – who would in turn determine local safeguarding arrangements.

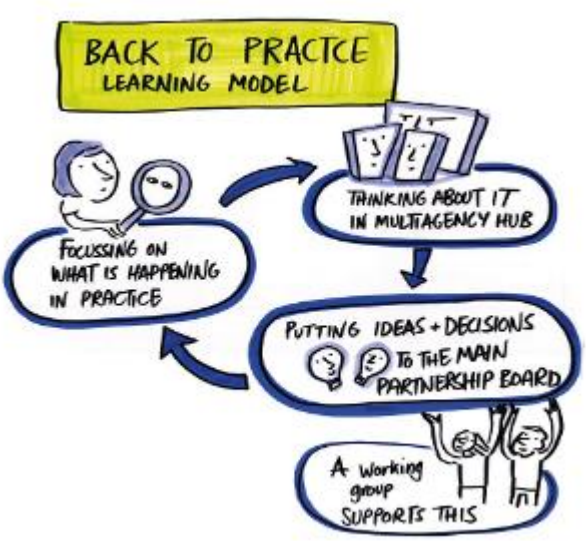
## 1.2 Children and Social Work Act 2017

In its May 2016 response, the Government said that it agreed with Alan Wood's analysis, and that "current arrangements are inflexible and too often ineffective. Meetings take place involving large numbers of people, but decision-making leading to effective action on the ground can be all too often lacking" ('Review of the role and functions of local safeguarding children boards: the government response to Alan Wood CBE', Department for Education, May 2016, page 5).

Instead, it proposed a stronger but more flexible statutory framework to support local partners to work together more effectively to protect and safeguard children and young people, embedding improved multi-agency behaviours and practices.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 received Royal Assent in April 2017. Section 30 of the Act removes the requirement for local areas to have LSCBs. Sections 16 – 23 introduce a duty on 3 key partners (local authorities, police and CCGs) to make arrangements with other partners as locally determined to work together in a local area to protect and safeguard children. These arrangements must identify and respond to the needs of children in the area and also identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area.

### 1.3 'Back to Practice' innovation




The BSCB, supported by a £125k grant from the Department for Education's (DfE) Innovation Grant, piloted significant changes in 2016 and 2017. The 'Back to Practice' innovation established stronger connections between the inter-agency policy and strategic functions of the BSCB, senior managers and front-line safeguarding practice.

The model replaced the traditional LSCB structure of Board and several subgroups with a Board, a slimmed down version of the Board with core members meeting more frequently, and a Learning Hub comprising frontline operational leads and managers from all the BSCB partner agencies. The Learning Hub considered feedback from Bexley agencies and front-line staff on what was working and what needed to change in multi-agency safeguarding practice and made recommendations for change to the senior decision-making Board – see **section 7** for a full description of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.'s structure and governance including the Learning Hub model.

### 1.4 Review of 'Back to Practice'

The 'Back to Practice' model was evaluated during April-May 2017 by an independent evaluator. His findings were presented to the BSCB in May 2017 and noted the positives with the model as well as issues to consider going forward. Some of the key positives include:

- Focus on practice – "doing what it says on the tin"
- Different ways of working
- Improvements in partnership working – relationships and conversations
- Good leadership
- Role of safeguarding champions within the model
- Small number of priorities which everyone knew about
- A more confident partnership with much potential.

Areas for development included:

- Demonstrating compliance with statutory responsibilities
- Getting an overview – not just data or Section 11 audits – and using the overview to inform selection of priorities
- Demonstrating impact – "closing the loop" – following up on progress with implementing actions agreed by the Board
- The overall vision for children and young people in Bexley
- A young people's learning hub and the 'Keeping you and your friends safe' campaign.

## 1.5 Working Together 2018

The DfE issued draft statutory guidance in October 2018 and the BSCB team led on coordinating a joint response from agencies in Bexley. Partners contributed feedback to the DfE's consultation questions during December 2017 and Bexley's joint response was submitted to the DfE. The DfE produced a response to the consultation in February 2018 and a final version of Working Together 2018 (Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf) was issued at the end of June 2018. The revised statutory guidance sets out the requirements for the 3 safeguarding partners, while allowing them freedom to determine how they organise themselves to meet those requirements and improve outcomes for children locally.

### *Transition timeline*

The DfE's timeline for agreeing, publishing and implementing the new safeguarding partnership arrangements was set out in the additional guidance on the transition arrangements, Working Together transitional arrangements 2018 (Working_Together-transitional_guidance.pdf).

Key points to note:

- 12 months from commencement of provisions of Act for 3 safeguarding partners to agree arrangements – by end of June 2019
- The arrangements must be published and notification sent to the Secretary of State
- Within 3 months of publishing arrangements, the 3 safeguarding partners must implement the arrangements
- There will be a 12-month period for LSCBs after new arrangements are in place to complete and publish any outstanding Serious Case Reviews
- There will be a 4-month grace period for CDOPs (under the LSCB) to complete child death reviews
- The child death review partners (the local authority and the CCG) will have 12 months from the end of June 2018 to agree the arrangements for child death reviews and 3 months to implement them (by the end of September 2019)
- Once the arrangements have been published and implemented, the LSCB will no longer exist.

The transition guidance detailed the arrangements which should be followed during the transition from LSCBs to safeguarding partners and child death review partners (including timelines for managing existing child death reviews) and during the transition from the previous system of Serious Case Reviews to the current national and local review arrangements.

## 1.6 New partnership arrangements – developing and agreeing the model and its governance

In late March and early April 2017, the BSCB Independent Chair met with the 3 safeguarding partners on an individual basis to have initial discussions about the future partnership arrangements post-LSCBs. A meeting of all 3 partners and the BSCB Independent Chair took place in June 2017 to begin to map out a timeline and plan for what the new arrangements might look like in Bexley. The meeting considered the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and key changes for LSCBs, the BSCB's current priorities, and the positives and areas for development arising from the evaluation of 'Back to Practice'.

The key issues and discussions are summarised below:

| Key Issue | Overview of discussion |
|---|---|
| The model for the new arrangements | 3 partners agreed that the basic architecture created by the 'Back to Practice' model – namely the Partnership Board, the Learning Hub, and the other sub-groups – would not change considerably under the new arrangements (especially given the positive feedback from the evaluation). In between formal partnership meetings, a series of business meetings between the local authority, police and CCG (initially known as the Working Group) would be scheduled to ensure that all 3 agencies were contributing to agenda setting and overall business planning. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Staffing | The BSCB team structure would remain the same to support the transition to and the rolling out of the new arrangements. |
| Role of Independent Scrutineer | It was agreed that the Scrutineer would focus on the impact of the partnership arrangements and working rather than processes (in effect, their role would be to find evidence that the 'learning loop' within the 'Back to Practice' model had been closed). |
| Timeframes for moving to the new partnership arrangements | The timeframe for the transition to the new arrangements was also discussed. The preferred option was to move to the new arrangements early (subject to the DfE's then timetable for issuing Working Together 2018). |

The proposal in June 2017 based on the then known DfE timetable for issuing new statutory guidance as well as the 3 partner's preference for building on the momentum of the 'Back to Practice' model was for the local authority, the police and the CCG to make preparations for the replacement of the BSCB with a view to implementation in April 2018 (this timeframe was subsequently changed to September 2018 based on the DfE's revised timetable for issuing Working Together 2018).
A key part of the transition plan had been to confirm the governance structure and sign-off of the new multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements by each of the 3 safeguarding partners. Activity in 2017 and 2018 are set out below:

**Local authority:** The initial scoping of the work to take a paper through the Local Authority's governance structure was done in March 2017. The first version of the paper outlining the changes to legislation and the new arrangements was presented to the Chief Executive (LBB)'s Leadership Team in July 2017. Further recommendations were suggested and the paper was presented to the Leader's Briefing in August 2017, Cabinet Briefing (September 2017), Public Cabinet and People Overview & Scrutiny Committee (both October 2017). Recommendations were agreed at Public Cabinet including implementing the new arrangements early, producing a Bexley Children and Young People Plan, and consolidating the 'Back to Practice' model.

A revised paper was presented to Corporate Leadership Team (August 2018), the Leader (September 2018), Adults and Children's Scrutiny Committee (October 2018) and Public Cabinet (October 2018).

**CCG:** The BSCB Independent Chair attended the CCG's Governing Body in July 2017 to outline the forthcoming legislative changes and the BSCB Programme Manager attended the Quality & Safety Sub-Committee Meeting on 16/11/17 to provide an update on the transition plan. A paper on the new partnership arrangements was agreed at the Governing Body on 30/11/17.

A revised paper was presented to the Governing Body in September 2018.

**Police:** In August 2017, the then Acting Borough Commander confirmed the governance arrangements within the Police and his delegated authority to agree the proposals set out in the transition paper taken through the Local Authority's governance structure and shared with the Police and CCG. This included agreeing the preferred timescales for moving to the new arrangements.

In July 2018, the Chief Superintendent/ Borough Commander for Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham confirmed agreement with the updated transition plans and new partnership model.

### *2018 'shadow' arrangements*

A transition project plan was produced at the end of 2017 to set out all of the preparatory work required during 2018 ahead of transitioning to new partnership arrangements and disestablishing the BSCB.

The 'shadow' arrangements agreed for January-September 2018 were agreed as follows:

- 4 'shadow' Partnership Boards (January, April, July and September 2018)
- 4 'shadow' Working Group meetings (January, March, June and September 2018).

Progress with the transition plan was reported monthly to key stakeholders and additionally at 'shadow' Partnership Board meetings. A visual record of the 'shadow' arrangements was captured at each 'shadow' Partnership Board and can be seen in **Appendix 1** below.

### 1.7 Early Adopter programme – shared priorities with Greenwich and Lewisham

In May 2018, Bexley submitted a joint bid to the Department for Education (DfE) with Lewisham and Greenwich for 'early adopter' funding to test some specific elements of the proposed new arrangements in line with changes made within the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and new statutory guidance (Working Together 2018). The application was successful with initial notification being made by the DfE at the end of June 2018.

**The table below shows the 5 issues in priority order that Bexley, Lewisham and Greenwich explored in partnership, noting that for each local authority area, the safeguarding partnership arrangements are sovereign and remain separate in governance terms from each other.**

| Key aspect of statutory guidance | Tri-borough priority and focus | Update |
|---|---|---|
| **Addressing local practice challenges** | **Priority 1:** To complete the implementation of the Bexley local learning hub, (which brings frontline practice challenges to the board) to evaluate the other authorities' learning models and to consider roll–out of a hub model and priorities. | Bexley's first Learning Hub focusing on missing children and young people took place on 30/10/18. Observers from Lewisham and Greenwich attended to consider the usefulness of the Learning Hub model. The Learning Hub model is fully established in Bexley. |
| **Geographical areas** | **Priority 2:** To establish an annual programme of safeguarding partnership improvement and delivery priorities that are shared across the new police Basic Command Unit and 3 neighbouring boroughs. | A tri-borough learning event on responses to missing young people took place in October 2019. Bexley will share a priority on adolescent vulnerability with Greenwich and Lewisham in Year 2. |
| **Independent scrutiny** | **Priority 3**: To explore the role of independent scrutiny across all 3 boroughs where a range of scrutiny arrangements will be tested. The focus will be on the impact of the partnership arrangements rather than processes. Establish a children and young people's partnership board to enable children and young people to influence local safeguarding arrangements. | Bexley has developed its independent scrutiny programme for Year 2 in response to learning from the Early Adopter programme. Both Greenwich and Lewisham have independent scrutineers in post. The children and young people's partnership board was not developed as a tri-borough arrangement but is part of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.'s work programme for Year 2. |
| **Local reviews** | **Priority 4:** To establish shared mechanisms and processes for initiating local serious case reviews, which incorporate a shared tri-borough, multi-agency serious incident and learning sub group. Each review to be led by one of the 3 participating local authorities and published across the local areas. This strand will also consider the provisions of a bi-annual learning and improvement report (with conference) for the local tri-borough area. | This priority established a project group in October 2018 looking at shared learning opportunities from local and national (formerly serious case) reviews as well as understanding and aligning local serious incidents procedures. The latter were developed locally in Bexley and agreed at the Partnership Board in October 2019. Terms of reference for the Tri-borough Learning Forum were agreed by the steering group. |
| **Child death reviews -** | **Priority 5:** To establish a tri–borough arrangement for reviews of child deaths. | The tri–borough arrangement for child death reviews became operational in September 2019. In line with statutory |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Increasing the footprint** | | guidance, the arrangements move away from the responsibility of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. and become the joint responsibility of the Local Authority and the CCG. Bexley CDOP will hand over any open cases at the end of December 2019. |

The Early Adopter programme ran from September 2018 until June 2019. Some key points to note about the programme:

- A steering group was established made up of senior leaders from children's services, police, and health
- A project lead was appointed to coordinate activity across the tri-borough
- The University of Bedfordshire successfully applied to be the programme's academic partner and provided an internal evaluation of progress with the 5 shared priorities
- The National Children's Bureau (NCB) facilitated the learning across all 17 Early Adopter sites around the country and published its findings in August 2019 (http://www.ncb.org.uk/what-we-do/together-we-deliver-better-childhood/building-integrated-child-centred-health-services-1).

The steering group met in September 2019 and agreed to continue to meet as a group to ensure the strategic oversight of the following tri-borough arrangements and activities:

- Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham will share a practice priority focused on adolescent vulnerability during 2020 and share any learning via the Tri-borough Learning Forum (see below)
- The role of independent scrutiny will remain a focus of steering group discussions with the view to consider opportunities for peer scrutiny and shared learning
- The Tri-borough Learning Forum will meet twice a year to coordinate shared learning across Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham and to feed into an annual learning event.

## 1.8 Transitional arrangements

### *BSCB development plan 2018/19*

The BSCB formally handed over any outstanding actions or ongoing priorities from its development plan 2018/19. The outstanding actions and recommended next steps were in relation to each of the BSCB's 4 priorities:

- Multi-agency practice
- Learning, training and improvement
- Communication
- Well organized working.

As part of their handover, the BSCB suggested how these actions might align with the 3 priorities set by this safeguarding partnership for its first year (children and young people missing or at risk of exploitation, parental mental health, basic child protection). Where the suggested next steps did not

fit with these 3 priorities, the BSCB noted this and made further recommendations for taking these actions forward. The above actions and recommendations were set out in a paper at the Partnership Board on 10/9/18 and were added to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.'S work plan for the remainder of 2018/19.

### *Work of the Learning Hub under the BSCB*

The BSCB formally handed over its work from the Learning Hub during 2016-18. The BSCB looked at the following practice issues in the Learning Hub:

- Basic multi-agency child protection practice - core groups, initial child protection conferences
- Adolescent risk
- Front doors
- Neglect
- Children with disabilities
- Looked after children
- Assessments (multi-agency protocol)
- Responding effectively to unexplained injuries in babies and infants
- Early help
- Voice of children and young people
- Domestic violence
- Parent's capacity for change.

These practice issues were set out in a paper at the Partnership Board on 10/9/18 noting recommended next steps and impact measures. These next steps were added to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.'s work plan for the remainder of 2018/19.

### *Serious Case Reviews and multi-agency local learning reviews*

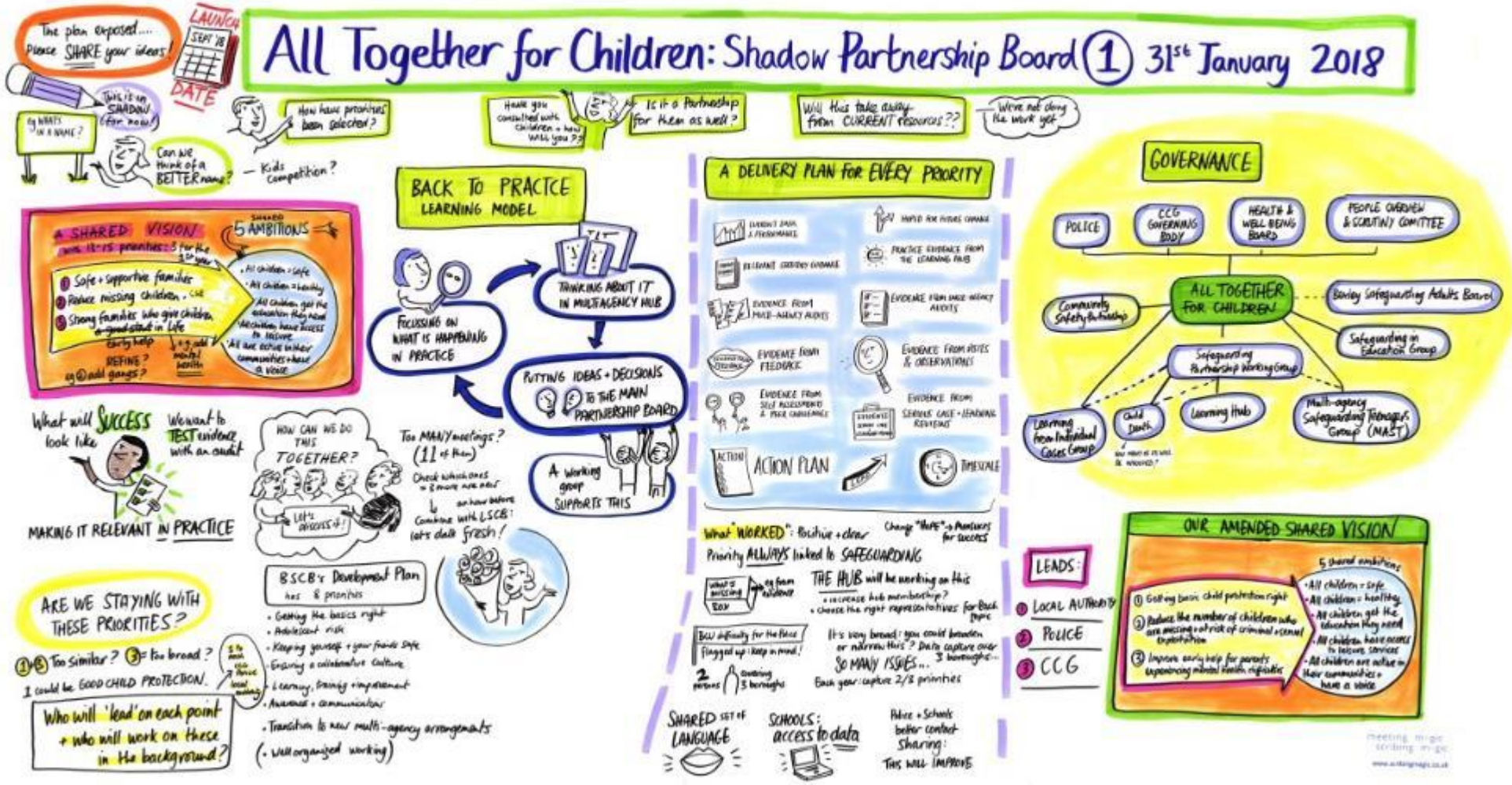
The BSCB formally handed over 4 cases to the new safeguarding partnership: 1 Serious Case Review which had been completed and 3 local learning reviews which were all at different stages. The Serious Case Review (Baby John) was published on 13/09/18. The learning from this case commenced with safeguarding champion events which are took place in September 2018. Progress with the 3 local learning reviews was monitored by the Learning from Practice Group.

### *Training and development*

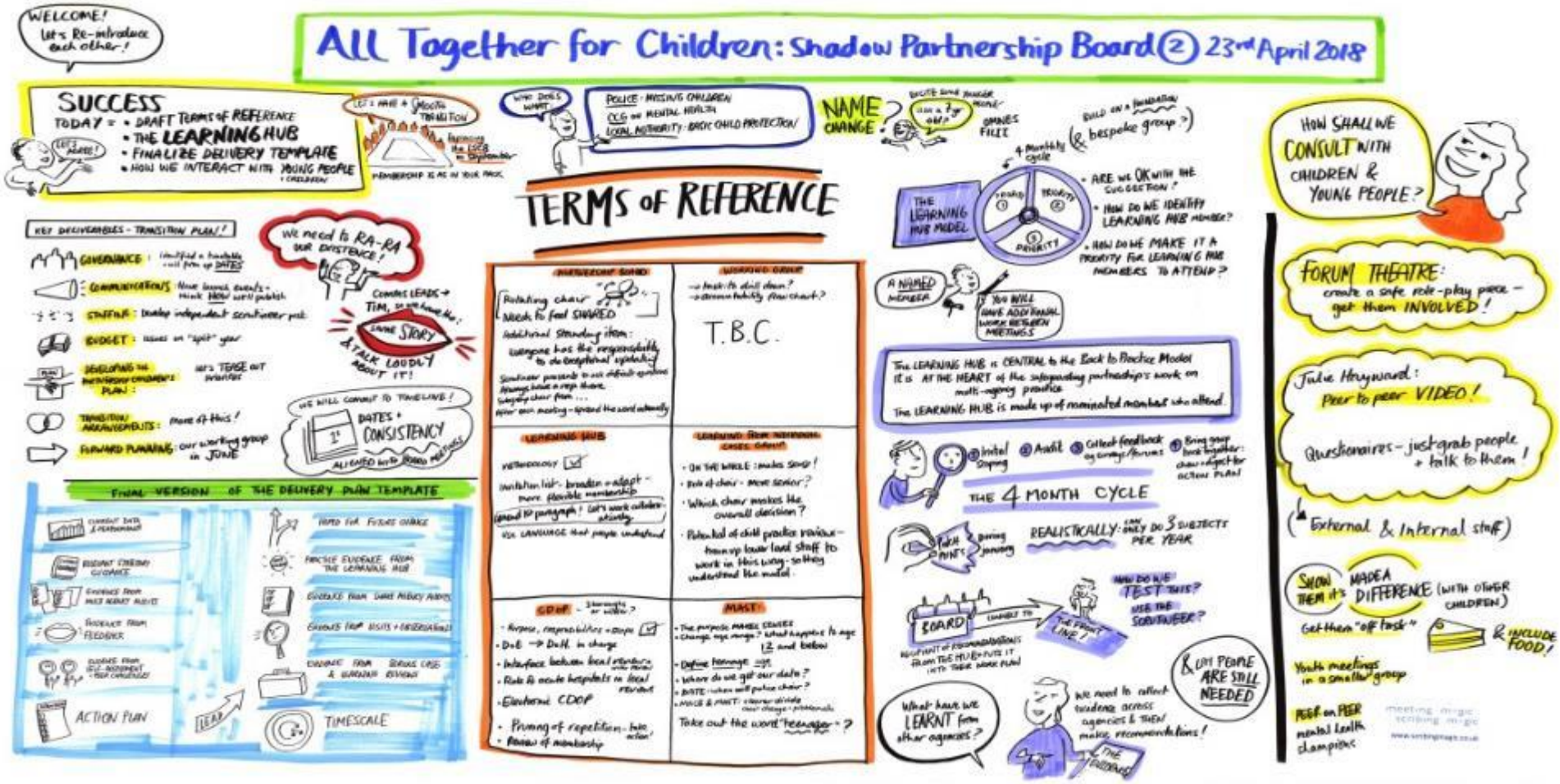
Training and development activity commissioned by the BSCB prior to the handover to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. was noted at the Partnership Board on 10/9/18 and it was agreed that these would be progressed by this partnership.

**Appendix 1 – visual records**

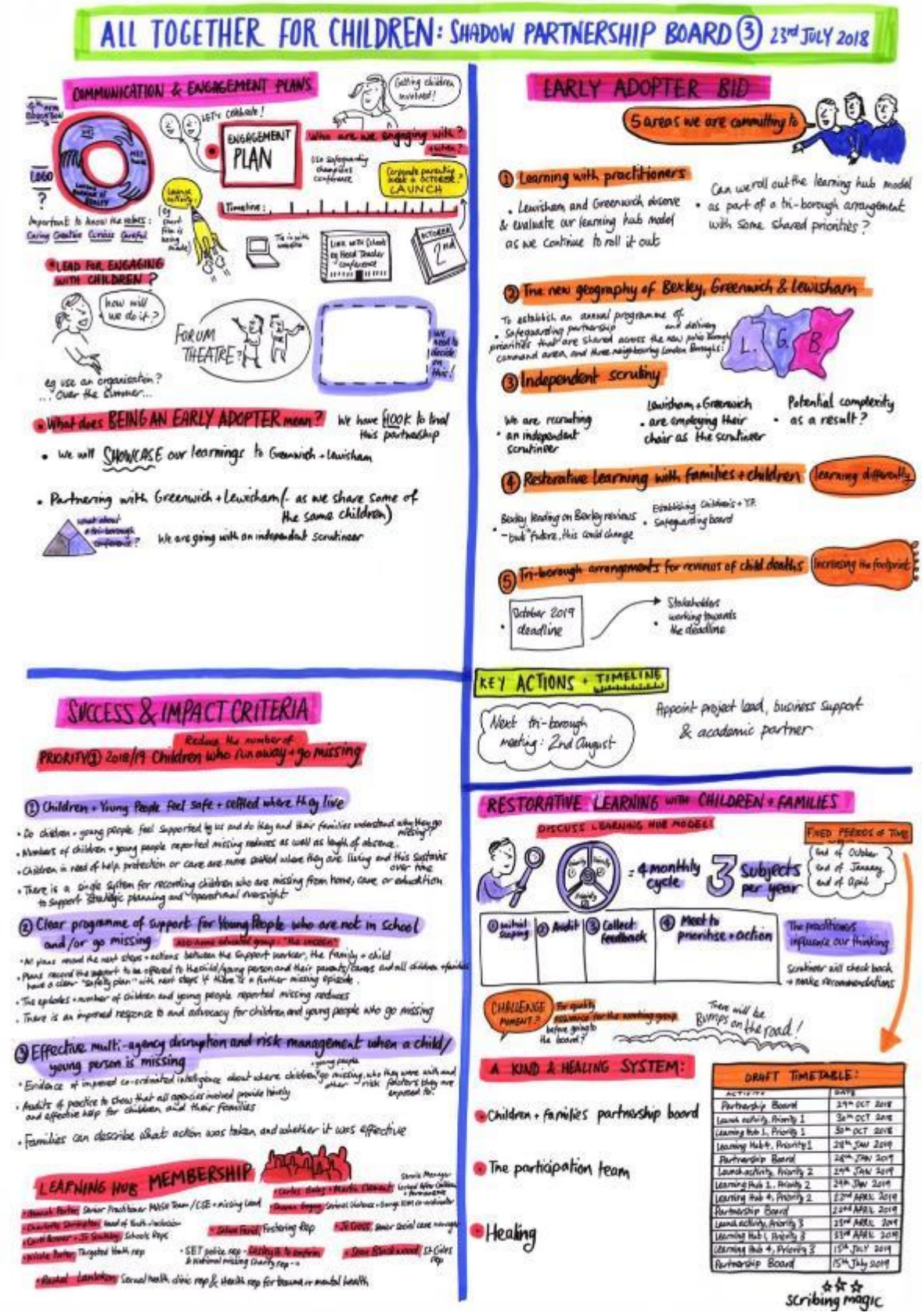
## 'Shadow' Partnership Board 31 January 2018

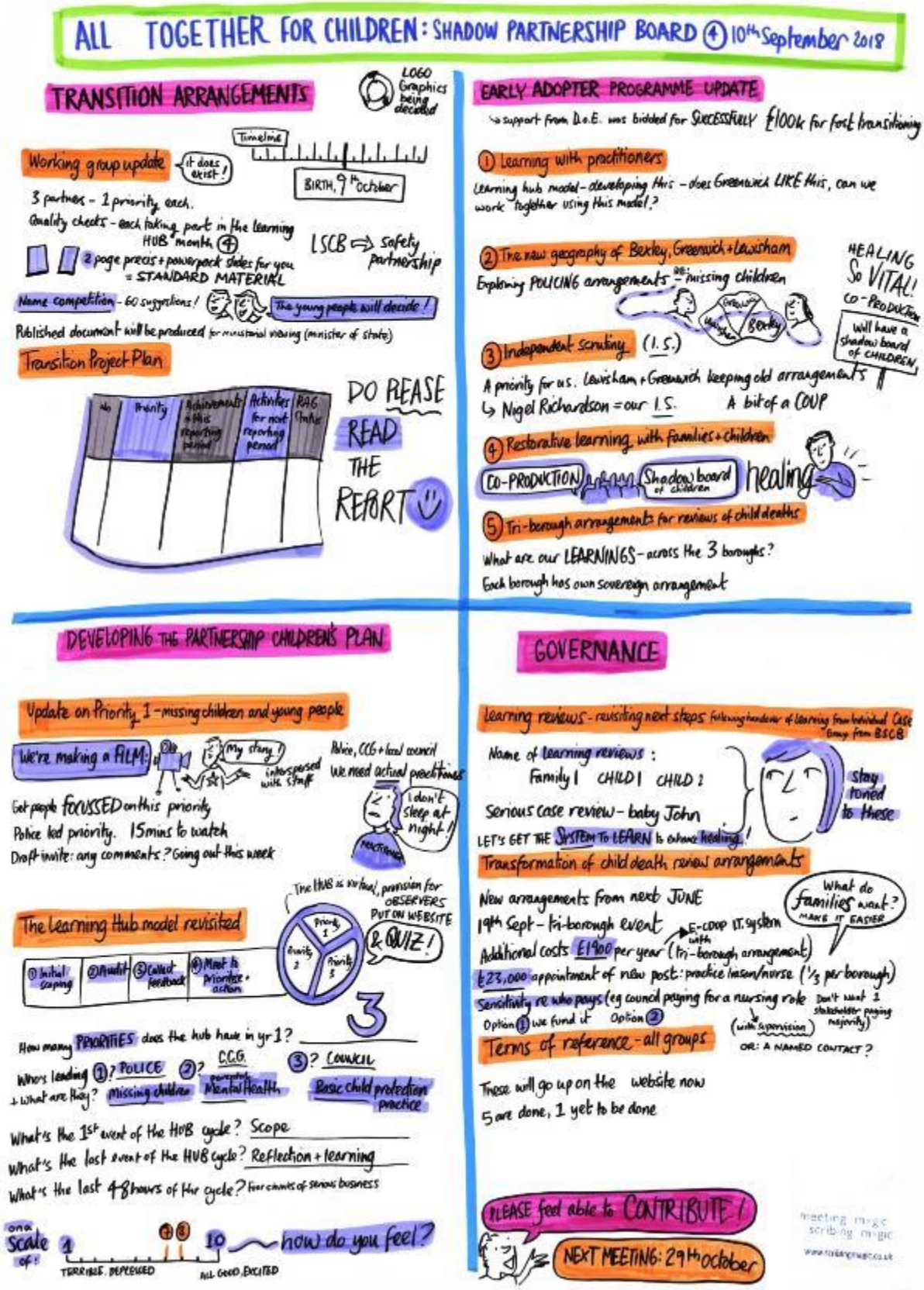


## ‘Shadow’ Partnership Board 23 April 2018



## Shadow' Partnership Board 23 July 2018




ALL TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN: SHADOW PARTNERSHIP BOARD ④ 10th September 2018
TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS
LOGO Graphics being decided
Working group update
it does exist!
Timeline
BIRTH, 9th October
3 partners - 1 priority each.
Quality checks - each taking part in the learning HUB month ④
2 page precis + powerpack slides for you = STANDARD MATERIAL
LSCB ⇨ Safety partnership
Name competition - 60 suggestions!
The young people will decide!
Published document will be produced for ministerial viewing (minister of state)
Transition Project Plan
No | Priority | Achievements in this reporting period | Activities for next reporting period | RAG Status
DO PLEASE READ THE REPORT
EARLY ADOPTER PROGRAMME UPDATE
↳ support from D.o.E. was bidded for SUCCESSFULLY £100k for fast transitioning
① Learning with practitioners
Learning hub model - developing this - does Greenwich LIKE this, can we work together using this model?
② The new geography of Bexley, Greenwich + Lewisham
Exploring POLICING arrangements re: missing children
Greenwich
Lewisham
Bexley
HEALING SO VITAL!
CO-PRODUCTION
Will have a shadow board of CHILDREN
③ Independent scrutiny (I.S.)
A priority for us. Lewisham + Greenwich keeping old arrangements
↳ Nigel Richardson = our I.S.
A bit of a COUP
④ Restorative learning with families + children
CO-PRODUCTION
Shadow board of children
healing
⑤ Tri-borough arrangements for reviews of child deaths
What are our LEARNINGS - across the 3 boroughs?
Each borough has own sovereign arrangement
DEVELOPING THE PARTNERSHIP CHILDREN'S PLAN
Update on Priority 1 - missing children and young people
We're making a FILM:
My story!
interspersed with staff
Police, CCG + local council
We need actual practitioners
I don't sleep at night!
practitioner
Get people FOCUSSED on this priority
Police led priority. 15mins to watch
Draft invite: any comments? Going out this week
The Learning Hub model revisited
The HUB is virtual, provision for OBSERVERS PUT ON WEBSITE & QUIZ!
① Initial scoping | ② Audit | ③ Collect feedback | ④ Meet to prioritise + action
Priority 1
Priority 2
Priority 3
3
How many PRIORITIES does the hub have in yr 1?
Who's leading ①? POLICE ②? CCG ③? Council
+ What are they? missing children perception Mental Health Basic child protection practice
What's the 1st event of the HUB cycle? Scope
What's the last event of the HUB cycle? Reflection + learning
What's the last 48 hours of the cycle? four corners of serious business
on a scale of 1 to 10 how do you feel?
TERRIBLE, DEPRESSED
ALL GOOD, EXCITED
GOVERNANCE
Learning reviews - revisiting next steps following handover of learning from Individual Case Group from BSCB
Name of learning reviews:
Family 1 CHILD 1 CHILD 2
Serious case review - baby John
Stay tuned to these
LET'S GET THE SYSTEM TO LEARN to enhance healing!
Transformation of child death review arrangements
New arrangements from next JUNE
19th Sept - tri-borough event
What do families want? MAKE IT EASIER
E-COP IT system with tri-borough arrangement
Additional costs £1900 per year
£23,000 appointment of new post: practice liason/nurse (⅓ per borough)
Sensitivity re who pays (eg council paying for a nursing role)
Option ① we fund it
Option ② (with supervision)
Don't want 1 stakeholder paying majority)
OR: A NAMED CONTACT?
Terms of reference - all groups
These will go up on the website now
5 are done, 1 yet to be done
PLEASE feel able to CONTRIBUTE!
NEXT MEETING: 29th October
meeting magic scribing magic