

Safe-guarding across Faith + Cultures in the **Tri-Borough** **area**: Report of the short-life working group to the **Tri-Borough LSCB**

By Debbie Raymond, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance for Westminster
June 2013

Illustrations courtesy of Year 6 - Gateway Primary School, Westminster.



1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report will review practice and propose recommendations for improving Safeguarding arrangements for children and young people across diverse Faith and Cultural groups in the Tri-Borough area. The available demographic and practice information indicates a need to consider that children from Black, Asian, and other minority ethnic backgrounds are the priority in this regard because in some cases their vulnerability levels are increased by a mix of socio-economic and cultural factors.

1.2 The Tri-Borough LSCB should lead on developing a sustainable strategy for community engagement that will enhance safe-guarding arrangements for children from a diverse range of backgrounds. The short-life working group made an early recommendation to the LSCB that in order to take this forward it would be necessary to create a specialist development post; funding for a twelve month development post was subsequently agreed and Shruti Clayton has recently been appointed to the post. The intention is that this post would become a catalyst for change working across the existing LSCB sub-group and local partnership group structures

1.3 This report identifies eight priority areas where the LSCB could have a significant impact that would improve Safeguarding arrangements:

- Building community partnerships in order to strengthen the capacity of diverse communities to safeguard and protect local children, and to improve the community perception of statutory services with child protection responsibilities. This will be the focus for the LSCB development post.
- There is a clear and urgent need to improve the quality of the available demographic information so that there is a more accurate understanding of the needs of children from local communities, and to assess the extent to which some ethnic groups may be disproportionately represented among those children receiving statutory intervention.
- The development of a Tri-Borough system for tracking the numbers of children who may be at risk of maltreatment because of cultural beliefs or practices.
- Ensuring the work of the LSCB development post is sustainable by nominating a Borough based lead in each of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance teams and integrating safeguarding across Faith and Cultural groups as a core function for each of the Borough based partnership sub-groups.
- Leading on an inter-agency Quality Assurance framework for interpreters working with vulnerable children and families.
- Encouraging and building on local innovation with diverse communities by sharing learning and rolling out examples of best practice across the three Boroughs.

- Developing a Safeguarding training offer for supplementary schools and places of worship.
- Building the cultural competence of front-line staff and managers at every level by creating a single point of access for practice tools and by diversifying the training available to front-line practitioners.

2. Introduction

2.1 Safeguarding across Faith and Cultures was identified as a high priority requiring development by each of the three Borough based LSCBs in their concluding self audits which became the foundation of the 2012 Tri-Borough LSCB work-plan. The Tri-Borough LSCB therefore commissioned a short-life working group to review the key issues and to make recommendations for improvements to practice.

2.2 A recommendation for the LSCB to take a lead role in relation to Safeguarding children from BME backgrounds is also set out at 3.1.1 of the London LSCB strategy for Safeguarding Children from minority culture and faith (often socially excluded) families, communities and groups. This guidance is supplementary to the London Child Protection procedures and was published in 2011.

Each LSCB may want to give consideration to how an engagement strategy could be developed, drafted and implemented. This could be, for example, by setting up a Minority Ethnic Issues and Communities Sub-Group, or alternatively by identifying a 'Champion' – with responsibility for informing and implementing the LSCB's work relating to the co-ordination of services for local minority ethnic issues, groups and communities (section 3.1.1, p.g5).

3. Process

3.1 The group met on six occasions. The group consisted of representatives from a range of agencies with a good mix of managers and front-line practitioners from all three Boroughs. RBCK was the least represented and did not have a representative at every meeting. The group benefited from representation from a range of agencies although attendance was not consistent. Although the members of the group came from a wide range of backgrounds, the voices of the local community or faith organisations were not represented and it was clear that this reflected the fact that none of the three Boroughs currently have existing community networks to readily draw upon for this kind of development work. The group was a very positive experience, and a valuable opportunity for practitioners to come together to share ideas and experience and to work on a shared commitment to improving this area of practice.

The group was made up of representatives from:

Debbie Raymond
June 2013

- Children services
- Imperial Hospital Trust
- CLCH
- Standing Together
- A Somalian interpreter
- Police
- Voluntary Sector Broker (Westminster)
- LSCB trainer for Awareness of Cultural practices
- Adult Safeguarding
- Al Muntada Girls Secondary school

4. Terms of Reference

4.1 The group were asked to address a series of questions:

- Identify the groups and communities that are living within the tri-borough area. What is known about the demographics and what more needs to be established in order to fully understand the issues?
- What are the key issues facing children from diverse backgrounds?
- Review the strengths and weaknesses of current practice in relation to safeguarding and make recommendations.
- Review what tools and initiatives are already in place and could be developed within the tri-borough
- Identify patterns in relation to how local communities and groups deal with child protection issues and their understanding of safeguarding issues
- Consider how to build the capacity for greater engagement through promoting services with leaders and influencers in the local community or through partnership with voluntary agencies.

- Consider the professional understanding of community and faith groups and make recommendations in terms of training or other tools and resources that will benefit front-line practice

5. Identify the groups and communities that are living within the tri-borough area. What is known about the demographics and what more needs to be established in order to fully understand the issues?

Summary of findings:

5.1 The available demographic information provides an overview of the ethnic composition across the three Boroughs. All three Boroughs have high levels of migration and of ethnic and cultural diversity. Although the dominant ethnic group in each Borough are residents from a white U.K background, they are all hugely diverse and each Borough has it's own character and unique feel that reflects the local history of immigration and settlement related to international political events or economic migration. Practioners greatly value the opportunity to work in such a diverse environment.

5.2 Information from the 2011 census

Ethnicity	LBHF	RBKC	WCC
White	68.1%	70.6%	61.7%
Mixed	5.5%	5.7%	5.2%
Asian	9.1%	10%	14.5%
Black Caribbean/African	11.8%	6.5%	7.5%
Other	5.5%	7.2%	11.1%
B.M.E total	31.9%	29.4%	38.3%

5.3 Perspectives from each area

LBHF

- There are significant populations from Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Western and Eastern Europe, Somalia, Caribbean countries, the Philippines, Iraq and Iran.
- The most common minority language spoken is Arabic.
- English is spoken as an additional language by 47% of the boroughs state school children.
- LBHF has a very settled white British Population as well as many White Irish families.
- Practitioners in the group noted specific difficulties in engaging families from Somalia, Iraqi, Portuguese and Roma families.

RBKC

- The second most common language spoken in RBKC after English is Arabic. The majority of Arabic speakers are from Iraq, Lebanon or Morocco.
- Families from B.M.E backgrounds are concentrated in the North of the Borough, where the proportion of residents from a BME background is twice that found in the rest of the Borough.
- There are communities of people from all Europe and the rest of the world, but notably the U.S.A, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Eritrea and Sudan, in addition to a settled African Caribbean population.

WCC

- An extremely diverse Borough – over 182 nationalities recorded as living in the Borough with much transition as people arrive looking for housing or work.
- WCC has a significant Middle Eastern and Arabic speaking population. The extent of this is masked within the demographic statistics as people may be categorised within the “other” section because their origin was not reflected in other categories.
- WCC has a well established Chinese community but they are rarely referred to Children Services.
- Practice experience high-lighted Kurdish, Moroccan, Somalian, Bangladeshi and Eastern European groups as having established communities that were a priority area for community engagement.

Borough	No of residents from an ethnic group other than white British	No of households where no people have English as a main language	No residents born outside the UK	% of CIN, CP and LAC cases where the ethnicity of the child is other than white British	% of children in state school where the ethnic origin is other than white British	Dominant Religious Groups in the local population
LBHF	31.9%	14.5%	43%	68% CIN 68% CP 65% LAC	76%	54.1% Christian 23.8% No religion 10% Muslim
RBCK	29.4%	20.9%	52%	62% CIN 61% CP 74% LAC	76%	54.2% Christian 20.6% No religion 10% Muslim
WCC	38.3%	22.4%	53%	68% CIN 85% CP 74% LAC	86%	44.6% Christian 20.3% No religion 18.3%

						Muslim
--	--	--	--	--	--	--------

5.4 When taken as a combined group, children from Black, Asian and other minority or ethnic backgrounds may be over-represented in the numbers of children receiving Child in Need, Child Protection and Looked After Services when compared with their white-counterparts. The extent of this is difficult to interpret on face value because in order to assess the true significance three variables need to be taken into account:

- Families from B.M.E backgrounds tend to have more young children than their white - counterparts (meaning a comparison against the background population is not reliable).
- Families from B.M.E backgrounds are more likely to be living in socio-economically deprived circumstances (meaning that the high figures of B.M.E children shown to attend state schools in each Borough is not a reliable comparison as a disproportionately high number of the children in independent education are likely to be white).
- When broken down in to more detailed ethnic groupings the numbers in some cases of Children in Need, Child protection and are extremely small, making it difficult to interpret the statistical significance.

5.5 What is clear is that given that the majority of children and young people assessed as requiring support or protection services are from a B.M.E backgrounds, improving services to these children should remain a strategic priority. It is also a priority to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the available data so that groups requiring targeted support can be identified, and the impact of support strategies can be monitored. For example, practice knowledge identifies that children from Kurdish families may have poorer outcomes at school and be over-represented in the Child Protection system, but it is not possible to identify this from the available data. A detailed breakdown of the ethnicity of children who are receiving Child in Need/Child Protection/LAC services is included at Appendix 1.

5.6 Although the demographic information gives an overview of the different groups living within each Borough, much less is known about the community functioning of those groups, the degree of community cohesion or inter-racial tensions that may exist. Practitioners tend to relate to individuals and families rather than communities, and so do not necessarily build up knowledge about this.

5.7 The group considered there is a need to undertake a sustained piece of development work to promote community engagement across the three Boroughs. This engagement could be used to enhance the functioning of the LSCB sub-groups and Borough based partnership groups to ensure that a wider range of perspectives are contributing to the development of safeguarding services. In addition, this engagement offers the potential to decrease the negative perception of statutory services so that over time communities may be more likely to seek or accept early offers of help from Children's services.

Recommendations to improve practice:

- **The LSCB should recommend that the Policy and Performance team undertakes a project to improve and refine the available data set for understanding the ethnic composition of the local child population, building on information already available across the Tri-Borough and including data from early intervention and third sector partners. This could map the way that different groups move through the system from early help onward to analyse trends and identify priority groups.**
- **The Short-life working group made an early recommendation to the LSCB that additional resources were required in order to develop and implement an effective community and engagement strategy. A twelve month development post was created and Shruti Clayton has been appointed to the post (part-time). The plan is to recruit a job-share partner who will focus on engaging children and young people from diverse backgrounds in communicating Safeguarding messages within local communities and provide consultation on the development of services to support other young people. The focus for both of these posts will be to develop a community engagement strategy that builds on existing networks to create sustainable partnerships with local communities.**

6. What are the key issues facing children from diverse backgrounds?

Summary of Key findings

6.1 Children from Black, Asian and other ethnic or minority backgrounds experience an interplay of socio-economic and cultural factors which may increase their overall vulnerability. At the heart of this is the impact of socio-economic deprivation and the adverse life chances correlated with poverty. In some families social problems are

compounded by a level of isolation from the wider local community, or a need to mask problems in order to avoid social stigma within a close knit community. Some cultural beliefs and practices also create dynamics that increase the likelihood of child maltreatment occurring.

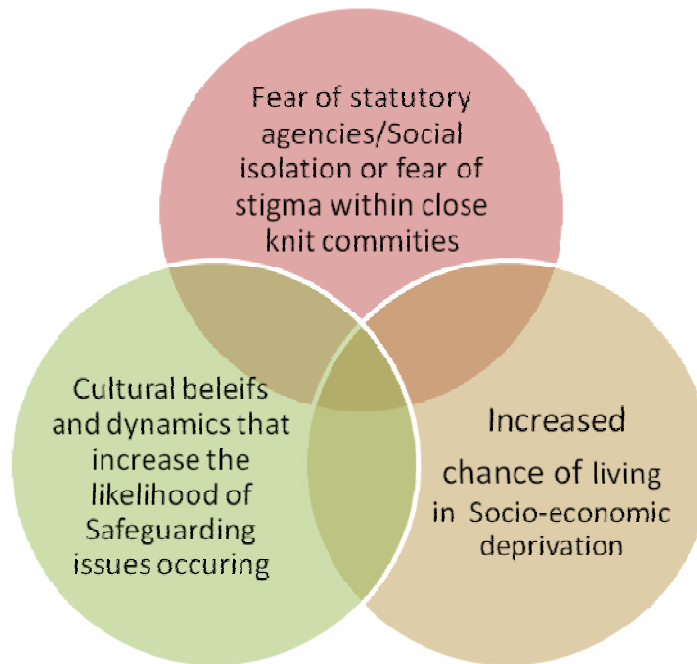


Diagram illustrating the interplay between factors increasing vulnerability for children from BME backgrounds

6.2 Key Themes identified to be facing children from diverse backgrounds in the Tri-Borough area

- An excessive use of physical punishment reflecting traditional cultural parenting methods and a lack of awareness of UK law in relation to physical chastisement.
- Cultural expectations that a family contain their own problems, but in a context where they may be socially isolated or feel they need to keep problems hidden from their own support networks.
- A conflict between the language and concepts which surround child protection practice and traditional cultural values that mean families are easily alienated by statutory intervention. This aspect was heavily emphasised by the Somali interpreter in the group.

- Inter-generational conflict between adolescents and their family, reflecting a clash between traditional and modern value systems.
- Complications around legal status, access to benefits and housing, no-recourse to public funds for vulnerable women and children.
- Issues for disabled children in relation to access to medical treatment and an increased risk of maltreatment due to beliefs in spirit possession for this group.
- Patriarchal control and violence, meaning that in some cases excluding an abusive partner from a home is not an effective strategy as control continues to be held by another male relative or even the son that a mother is trying to parent.
- Very disrupted schooling for some young people, often reflecting unstable housing situations.
- Larger sibling groups meaning a complex range of sometimes competing needs to consider presenting challenges for professionals.
- Increased likelihood of exposure to traumatic incidents or conflicts overseas leading to psychiatric, psychological and emotional problems within the family.
- Gang involvement for the adolescent group.

6.3 Lessons from serious case reviews and case reviews: The group reviewed a sample of four recent case reviews and serious case reviews in order to learn from practice. In all of these cases the children were from families that were not born in the U.K. Three common themes emerged which were all inter-linked:

- **Barriers to Early Help:** the family accessed services in crises that signalled their level of need, but were ambivalent about asking for or accepting offers of more sustained support. The family may have taken a view that the responsibility for resolving problems should remain within the family network, when in fact they were isolated within their own community because of a fear or social stigma or because of a history of inter-racial conflict.
- **Fear of statutory services:** The family were not confident navigating UK public services, fearing a punitive response or as a result of their experiences or knowledge of systems in their home country

- **Language Barriers and access to interpreting services:** A real fear among families that information would be leaked to their own community, worsening their situation by leading to social stigma or creating additional risks. For example in the case of child EG, a serious case review in Westminster, the mother refused an interpreter for fear that it would lead to her violent ex-partner discovering her whereabouts.

6.4 A recurrent feature of the cases involving interpreters was that some agencies were using interpreters with the family and other agencies were not. Discussion among practitioners revealed that practice is extremely variable and that there is little guidance or training available for the front-line as to what constitutes good practice when working with interpreters. Given that good communication is such a fundamental part of assessing the needs of vulnerable children. The group considered this to be a priority area, and one where the LSCB could appropriately take a lead role. Consultation with community groups would also be valuable to understand how practitioners can best assist families that are anxious about using interpreters, perhaps by devising a confidentiality contract jointly with the family and the interpreter which makes the professional boundaries and expectations more explicit from the outset.

Recommendations to improve practice:

- **The case review group sub-group should annually review the ethnicity of children coming through the panel to analyse whether the cases presented to it indicate any patterns which suggest there is a need to target support to particular groups in the community. This should include an analysis of whether the family were born in the U.K. or overseas and what the significance this aspect of the case had to the outcome.**
- **The LSCB should initiate a project to create a Quality Assurance framework for interpreters who are being used to assess the needs of vulnerable children. This should include guidance on the principles of good practice, and consideration of the training needs of practitioners and the interpreters.**

7. Child Protection concerns affecting children from minority backgrounds

7.1 There are five areas of child maltreatment that predominately affect children from Black, Asian, minority or ethnic backgrounds that should all be considered as a priority

for the Safeguarding Board, as well as the issues of private fostering and domestic violence. This report will only consider two of those areas in depth, but all of them are considered to be of equal importance.

- So-called Honour Based Violence
- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Accusations of Spirit Possession and Witchcraft
- Trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, domestic servitude, or for trafficking into crime

7.2 It was not possible for the group to contrast the prevalence of these cases across the Tri-Borough because data is not routinely gathered at the present time. Only Westminster had some form of system in place to track the number of cases occurring which involves Child Protection Chairs entering a specialised case note under each category of suspected maltreatment, as well as information gathered through the Chair's checklist at the end of a case conference. It will be important to develop a Tri-Borough System that tracks the number of cases that are reported so that a more effective understanding of the local needs is developed and so that the effectiveness of any preventative strategies can be monitored.

7.3 The group shared practice examples of child protection cases in relation to the five areas of child maltreatment, with the exception of Female Genital Mutilation. A check with the Child Abuse Investigation Team confirmed that there had not been any criminal investigations across the Tri-Borough in relation to F.G.M. It is likely that there are multiple factors making the likelihood of detection low given the sexual aspect of this form of abuse and the fact that it will happen to many girls when they are under five years old. The group considered that of the five areas of child maltreatment that F.G.M was an area that had received the least attention in terms of developing inter-agency awareness.

7.4 The group had the benefit of a presentation of information from the African Women's Health Centre in Acton which was helpful in understanding the prevalence of FGM. The Clinic performs a medical procedure called de-infibulation which enables women to have intercourse and give birth. An evaluation of their services between 2008-2012 found that

- During this period of the 136 women that were deinfibulated, 12 were from Hammersmith and Fulham, 2 from RBKC, and 1 came from Westminster. Not all

women stated their address. Many more women accessed telephone advice but did not travel to the clinic for the procedure.

- The primary reason for women seeking the procedure was due to menstrual pain. Women may also seek the procedure shortly after they become married, because of childbirth or health complications.
- The vast majority of women they see are Somalian. Small numbers were originally from Djibouti, Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia.
- The distributional ages of women attending the clinic demonstrates that the largest numbers of women who access services are between the ages of 25 to 29 years old. Like many sexually related forms of child abuse, the victim may not feel able to seek help until adulthood.
- The peak age for girls to suffer FGM according to what is known from those presenting at the clinic is between 4-6 years old, with some FGM happening much younger, and also at older ages. Some women were unsure when it happened to them.

7.5 Child Abuse linked to beliefs in Witchcraft and Spirit Possession: This area of Safeguarding was considered by the group to be a priority in relation to engaging with local Faith and Community leaders. Only Westminster was able to report on the known prevalence of cases of this area of safeguarding. There are currently six known cases where this is a concern, involving children of Muslim or Christian faith from Bangladeshi, Middle Eastern and African backgrounds.

7.6 Although the number of children known to be abused because of beliefs in spirits and witchcraft is small, it can create great suffering for the victim and their siblings. Westminster has participated in an independent cross-Borough learning review in relation to this area of safe-guarding because of links to a family connected to the murder of Kristy Bamu. This work will review the practice of the Borough against the 2012 National Action plan that was called for by Tim Loughton following Kristy's death. The review will make recommendations for improving practice in this area that will be taken forward to the Case Review sub-group.

7.7 A belief in Djinn was the feature of a Westminster serious case review in 2005 when an infant of Bangladeshi background was murdered by her father as a result of drug -induced mental health problems, where a preoccupation with bad spirits became a feature. Similarly in Hackney in 2011 a Bangladeshi mother murdered her four year old during a psychotic breakdown because she believed this act would protect her family from bad spirits. Westminster has commissioned an audit of practice by a subject expert of cases where this has been a feature which will take place in July 2013.

7.8 Research suggests that children become more vulnerable to this form of abuse when there are changes in family circumstances, where there is a weak or no attachment between the carer and child, and where the family or community are seeking a reason to explain misfortune. Disabled and special needs children are particularly at risk as are those who are already perceived to have problematic behaviour. A feature of some of the most serious cases occurs when the cultural belief combines with mental illness or a psychotic breakdown in the carer, highlighting the particular need for close working with adult services.

7.9 Private Fostering: Private fostering disproportionately affects children from minority backgrounds who may have been sent to the UK because they are from a country where there is conflict, where there is a culture of caring for the children within the extended network, or where there is a priority placed on a UK education.

7.10 Domestic Violence: MARAC plays a key role in recognising BME safe-guarding issues because they are often heavily associated with male violence. It is noted that the number of referrals involving Honour Related Violence (HRV) and Forced Marriage (FM) has risen in Westminster following its inception in 2008, suggesting increased levels of awareness across agencies. To date, 66.5% of all MARAC referrals have involved families from a B.M.E background, highlighting the vulnerability of this group. MARAC will be extending its remit to include Forced Marriage and Honour related Violence in 2013.

Recommendations to improve practice:

- **Kate Singleton and Debbie Raymond should work with the Tri-Borough policy and performance team to urgently develop an effective way to track numbers of cases involving culturally related child maltreatment, and lead on integrating this within front-line practice.**
- **Each Borough should nominate an existing Child Protection Adviser to lead on Safeguarding in relation to Culture and Faith related child maltreatment, who will specialise in this area, develop expertise, and champion awareness raising in their Borough. This group will link in with and the work of the Tri-Borough development post to provide a sustainable network in the longer term.**
- **The LSCB should devise and implement a written strategy as to how it will communicate and engage inter-agency and community awareness of the five child protection areas affecting children from BME backgrounds**

and private fostering in order to promote early recognition and referrals. This should be devised in conjunction with partner agencies and with consultation with voluntary sector specialists in the field, and community groups.

8. Review the strengths and weaknesses of current practice in relation to safeguarding and make recommendations.

8.1 Summary of findings:

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCB Awareness of cultural practices training is held quarterly and is good quality, but the take up has been low • Children Centres were identified as working well in offering early help and through partnerships with Health and community links • Standing Together has undertaken good work: they are working with Imperial midwives to get to hard to reach groups and link with Somalia groups, Asylum groups and Daughters of Eve (FGM) • A number of local initiatives were identified such as the Kurdish family project in North Westminster. A working group in relation to FGM in H&F • Role of VAWG and MARAC in relation to So called Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage • The Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities approach to parenting work available through locality teams • The Strengthening Families approach to case conferences that places greater emphasis on family engagement and involvement • Westminster have commissioned a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Awareness training did not cover Spirit possession/witchcraft – this has since been updated • Social workers, Police and Mental Health professionals require training that moves beyond awareness to include detailed risk assessment – specialist training in Spirit possession/witchcraft has since been commissioned for September 2013 • Lack of tracking and recording of Children Services cases meant it was not possible to compare data on the prevalence of culturally related child maltreatment • Weak analysis of the interplay between Culture and Faith and vulnerability in social work assessments • Lack of cultural awareness in front-line staff • Weak links with religious organisations or knowledge of local faith leaders • Lack of knowledge of Faith and supplementary schools in LBHF and WCC • Different approach to using

<p>subject expert to audit practice in relation to cases where there have been allegations of Spirit possession or witchcraft.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westminster have commissioned a coach specialising in BME and ethnicity issues to work with CP chairs as a group to improve the consideration given to the impact of culture in case conferences, and is also developing a cultural conversation tool. 	<p>interpreters between agencies so that in the same family there is inconsistency across the network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community stigma surrounding the role of Children Services, Mental Health and Police • Each agency holds information on the wellbeing of children from B.M.E backgrounds. It is a complex task to bring this together to give a holistic overview
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common purpose with the Tri-Borough Equalities working group • Having a diverse and international workforce with skills and experience to draw on – this could be developed into a more systematic framework for drawing on the knowledge of our own staff • The local delivery of front-line services across the Tri-Borough means that it is possible to build up local links with Faith and Cultural groups • Building on Learning from local initiatives such as the Marlborough Pilot in Westminster Duty and Assessment team or the Kurdish Families project in North Westminster. • Third sector organisations already have a wealth of local links and experience that we can use. Organisations such as Al-Aman, Kama Nirvana, IKWRO are all providing resources locally that benefit practice and provide on-line information and their knowledge could be used to devise a community 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of funding restrictions to the Voluntary sector • A lack of Child protection awareness in some voluntary organisations meaning that engagement may not translate into increased child safety • An overwhelming amount of information and potential practice tools in different places making it difficult for practitioners • The challenge is to make any initiatives sustainable given the complex and changing networks that can characterise community groups and staff turnover • The LSCB community development post is only for 12 months, and this may not be long enough and her time is split over three Boroughs.

<p>engagement strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking in with the B.M.E Health forum to share information and identify common objectives • Common purpose with the Prevent agenda in relation to identifying Madrassahs • Computer software that can analyse ethnic background by family surname • A wealth of tools and resources available through the London LSCB and other organisations that could be co-ordinated into a tool kit • E-Learning or team based coaching as a way to make practice learning more flexible • A clear interest across the agencies to work together to improve outcomes for children affected by faith and Culturally related issues • Supporting staff from B.M.E backgrounds may have benefits for service users, for example two members of the BME leadership group in Westminster are working on innovative plans to improve local links to cultural groups • Links with Project Ocean (Police led project to map supplementary schools across London) • Project planned with Home-start Westminster to priorities families going through the CP process that are new to the UK • LSCB website • Development of a cultural conversation tool in Westminster. 	
---	--

8.2 There are many excellent examples of good practice across the Tri-Borough, but these are not well known about and the short-life working group itself was a valuable opportunity to share information in this regard. The LSCB could play an important lead role in helping the three Boroughs to share knowledge and build on the learning from pilot projects. In addition, by paying attention to this and celebrating the impact of local innovation there is the potential for the LSCB to act as a catalyst for new ideas and developments.

8.3 The group identified a widespread need to improve the focus on understanding race, culture, religion and language as a core part of the front-line task of assessing family circumstances. Current practice is believed to be very variable, with some group members commenting that under the pressure of completing assessments there is not time to explore this aspect of family functioning.

8.4 Take up of LSCB training in relation to Faith and Culture has been low. As well as good quality training, it is helpful to think about practice learning so that engaging with Culture and Faith issues is seen as a day- to- day thought process and not a specialist issue. Team based coaching or reflection was high-lighted as a good option as it helps practitioners to begin to develop a common language that they feel more confident in using. A pilot project between the Marlborough Family Service and Westminster Duty and Assessment team was highlighted as an example of excellence in this regard.

Good Practice Example

Pilot project for working across Faith and Cultures between Marlborough Cultural Therapy centre and Westminster Duty and Assessment team

This team based training ran over 5 sessions and has been successful in raising the confidence of the team in thinking and talking about culture with service users, with colleagues and in supervision. The training focused on a range of concepts that were common to working with families from diverse backgrounds. The training had a positive impact on team dynamics as participants got to know each other, came to appreciate the depth and importance of their own cultural background and recognized the quality and diversity of resources in the team. The team also began to develop a common language that gave them more confidence in discussing these issues as a group at team meetings.

Recommendations to improve practice:

- The LSCB should encourage and celebrate innovation by hosting an event to show case examples of good practice, and invite members of community groups to participate. This could be planned in conjunction with the Tri-Borough Equality and Diversity group.
9. Review what can tools and initiatives are already in place and could be developed within the tri-borough

Summary of findings:

9.1 Examples of good practice identified within the Tri-Borough:

- The supplementary schools partnership in RBKC
- The work of the African Women's Centre for women from across London that have suffered F.G.M
- The pilot project on Faith and Culture in Westminster Duty and Assessment team which is developing innovative
- The Kurdish families project in North Westminster which is developing innovative approaches to working with families such as mentoring.
- The Community Engagement in Problem Solving to protect children and Strengthen Families pilot being set up by Salwa Ahmed in Westminster.
- Access to Voluntary sector services offering culturally appropriate services such as Al Aman, Al Hasania, Karma Nirvana, Forward, IKWRO
- Joint working between Standing Together and Daughters of Eve
- A working group in relation to FGM has now been established in LBHF
- The Tri-Borough Family coaches are recruiting coaches from diverse backgrounds to support families and have specifically recruited coaches from a Middle Eastern and Somalian background.
- The Tri-Borough prevent team will be offering direct support to schools from September 2013
- Case examples of staff being used across cases to support the cultural understanding of the case
- The B.M.E leadership group in Westminster has illustrated how supporting staff from B.M.E backgrounds can bring benefits for families; two members of the group are currently working on improving local community links on their own initiative.
- RBKC has a community engagement team that supports community initiatives.

Recommendations to improve practice

- The new development post should build on the work of this report by identifying examples of good practice that are having a positive impact and rolling these approaches out across the Tri-Borough.
- A protocol could be developed to formalise a structure whereby the cultural and religious knowledge of our own staff group can be used as a resource to benefit work with families.
- There are a wide range of procedures, protocols and tools available that should be more effectively stream lined and sign-posted for front-line practitioners.
- The LSCB could use the 12 month development post to commission an innovative piece of direct work with young people, recruiting the skills and experience of young people to understand how we can most effectively communicate key safeguarding messages to other young people who may be in need of help, or are the next generation of parents.

10. Identify patterns in relation to how local communities and groups deal with child protection issues and their understanding of safeguarding issues

10.1 Summary of findings: Minority ethnic groups, communities and faith groups need greater awareness and education about UK children's legislation, the role and responsibilities of local statutory services and their powers and duties (e.g. to provide support) towards children and their families. Families from overseas are more likely to perceive statutory services as powerful and punitive, which may prevent them from asking for or accepting early help, leading to worse outcomes overall.

10.2 Some groups were highlighted as having particular difficulty in accepting child protection services because of a clash between the language and priorities of the family and those of the statutory agency. These were:

- Kurdish families
- Bangladeshi families
- Congolese families
- Somalian families
- Moroccan families

10.3 The interpreter in the group reflected how sometimes the first impression counts greatly, and how parents can be alienated by a process driven approach to social work. He also described how families would appeal to him for understanding as he came from a similar ethnic background, because of a gap in understanding that emerged between the family and the practitioner to the case.

10.4 Supplementary schools: In addition to the family setting there is also the issue of supplementary schools and places of worship where children may spend significant periods of time after school or at weekends. The experience is very positive for most young people, enhancing their academic development and cultural identity. Supplementary schools are not regulated in the same way as conventional schools, and the staff are often unpaid volunteers. There is a need to engage with these settings from a safeguarding perspective to try to convey key messages to the staff group, with the longer term objective of increasing the take up of the existing LSCB multiagency training.

Recommendations to improve practice:

- **The LSCB should develop a training offer to local supplementary schools and places of worship to increase awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities, as part of an overall strategy to increase community partnership, and with a view to increasing the take up of existing multi-agency LSCB training.**

11. Consider how to build the capacity for greater engagement through promoting services with leaders and influencers in the local community or through partnership with voluntary agencies.

11.1 Summary of findings: The group considered that in order to promote community capacity for engagement, there had to be a systemic approach that operated at a number of levels. In the past there have been efforts to engage with community members but these networks are complex and momentum is lost when people change. For trust to flourish there needs to be a two - way exchange where professionals begin to better understand communities and faith groups, reducing incidents of stereotyping and increasing professionals confidence to challenge cultural and faith-related practices which give rise to safeguarding children concerns.

11.2 Early benchmarking with neighbouring Boroughs established that those LSCBs that have been really successful in engaging community and faith groups on safeguarding issues have dedicated outreach staff allocated to the task. There has

been significantly more project based work and resources allocated to community engagement in Boroughs such as Brent, Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham.

11.3 There are different options to approaching the improvement of community engagement. One option is the Community participation model that seeks to recruit members of local faith and community groups to form a panel that can then advise LSCB sub-groups from a community perspective. In Tower Hamlets they have African and Muslim family workers, who provide an interface between families and statutory services as well as providing training to workers and supplementary schools. In Merton a group of young people were recruited and trained in key areas of safeguarding to deliver messages around subjects such as Domestic Violence to other young people. Part of the role for the LSCB development post will be to network with these Boroughs and to further assess examples of good practice and whether there is learning and approaches that could be rolled out across the Tri-Borough.

Recommendations to improve practice:

- **That the LSCB development worker should undertake further benchmarking with Boroughs across London to assess the effectiveness of different approaches to community engagement and their relevance and application to the Tri-Borough area and to develop a network with professionals in similar posts.**
- **The LSCB could consider inviting a representative from a local community group to sit on the LSCB or consider how community opinion can be integrated throughout the sub-groups so that a more diverse perspective is weaved into the fabric of all discussions and planning for the needs of local children.**

12. Consider the professional understanding of community and faith groups and make recommendations in terms of training or other tools and resources that will benefit front-line practice

12.1 Summary of findings: The awareness of cultural practices training available through the LSCB is extremely high quality but take up has been low. The training did not include an awareness of Spirit Possession and Witchcraft but that has now been updated following this review.

12.2 Social work practitioners have highlighted their need for training that goes beyond the awareness raising level to equip them with risk assessment skills in culturally related areas, and this will also apply to Police and Mental Health workers. The focus should move from awareness to competence and to ensure that managers are assessing the ability of staff to apply what they have learned at training in order to ensure that it has impact.

12.3 Front-line workers relate to individual families rather than communities, and therefore do not necessarily build up a wider understanding of local community and faith groups. They would benefit from bite-size chunks of information that promote a wider perspective on the local community, as well as political and historical events that may impact on the emotional, psychological and financial well-being of families. Not only are families coming from areas where it is helpful to understand this history, but their day to day functioning may be heavily influenced by global events and the need to send money and other forms of support to relatives overseas in a way that is quite different to that of British born families.

12.4 There are a range of existing tools and practice guidance that are available for use such as the London Safeguarding Trafficked Children Toolkit, the London Procedure and Resource pack for Safeguarding children abused through Female Genital Mutilation, the Faith and Culture Safeguarding Checklist (Appendix 2). Other useful tools and resources are available through specialist voluntary agencies. Rather than developing new resources, the priority is to bring this range of tools together in a central point, or to sign-post them through a range of “What to do if” style of fact sheets that can be easily updated and regularly distributed throughout agencies.

12.5 When considering training it is important to integrate key messages throughout all training and supervision so that considering the race, language, faith and culture of children and their families becomes a comfortable and familiar part of everything that we do. The Pan London Safeguarding Children from Minority Ethnic Culture and Faith Project ran for 18 mths from 2010 – 2011 and identified six core competencies for effective Safeguarding practice that should be integrated as a central message for all Safeguarding training.

1. Understanding normal child development
2. Listening to Children and taking what they say seriously
3. Knowing how to undertake a really good holistic assessment
4. Cultural Competence – being self-aware enough not to alienate the child or family and avoids being blinded or prejudiced by faith or cultural practices
5. Knowing, learning about or seeking advice on the particular culture and/or faith by which the child and family lives their daily life
6. Knowing what services are available locally to provide relevant cultural and faith related input to prevention, support and rehabilitation services for the child.

Recommendations

- The LSCB should recommend that all members require the attendance of their staff at the Awareness of Cultural Practices course, and that this area of knowledge is addressed within their annual appraisal. The overall approach should be to move from awareness raising to a core area of competence.
- The content of the LCSB training has now been updated to include awareness of children affected by accusations of Spirit Possession and Witchcraft.
- Specialist training should be offered annually to assist social work practitioners with risk assessment in relation to the key culture related safeguarding concerns. This would also be beneficial for mental health staff and the Police. Specialist training in relation to Spirit Possession and Witchcraft has now been commissioned for Children's Services to take place in September 2013.
- The importance of gathering an understanding of the impact of the family's ethnic background as part of the social history is a key message that should be weaved throughout all existing training.
- Create a range of "What to do if you are concerned about....." style fact sheets that can be distributed across agencies and kept up to date with key messages, links to guidance and tools as well as who to contact.
- Training should develop e-learning tools that assist practitioners in understanding the global socio-political and economic context that families are living in local communities.
- Team based coaching or action learning sets are an effective way to develop a common language that develops practitioner confidence in discussing and considering faith and culture.
- The lead for safeguarding in Education should convene an annual workshop for designated leads with a focus on Safeguarding across faith and culture.

Appendix 1: Breakdown by Ethnicity of Children in Need/Child Protection/Looked After Children

Ethnic Group	Ethnicity	Ethnicity Code	LBHF			RBKC			WCC		
			CIN	LAC	CP	CIN	LAC	CP	CIN	LAC	CP
Asian	Asian/AsianBritish-Bangladeshi	ABAN	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	5%	11%
Asian	Asian/AsianBritish-Indian	AIND	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	Asian/AsianBritish-Other	AOTH	4%	1%	0%	2%	3%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Asian	Asian/AsianBritish-Pakistani	APKN	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	5%	1%	0%	0%
Black	Black/Black British-African	BAFR	13%	9%	17%	15%	14%	15%	9%	14%	10%
Black	Black/Black British-Caribbean	BCRB	9%	14%	13%	8%	11%	9%	6%	9%	1%
Black	Black/Black British-Other	BOTH	5%	6%	8%	3%	6%	0%	3%	2%	5%
Other	Chinese	CHNE	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Mixed	Mixed-Other	MOTH	7%	9%	20%	8%	13%	10%	9%	12%	22%
Mixed	Mixed-White and Asian	MWAS	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%
Mixed	Mixed-White+Black African	MWBA	2%	0%	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%	5%	1%
Mixed	Mixed-White+Black Caribbean	MWBC	8%	13%	6%	5%	12%	8%	5%	11%	8%
Other	Information Not Yet Obtained	NOBT	1%	2%	5%	7%	1%	2%	10%	1%	3%
Other	Any Other Ethnic Group	OOTH	18%	9%	2%	14%	11%	9%	23%	14%	27%
White	White-British	WBRI	22%	25%	25%	17%	14%	16%	15%	16%	9%
White	White-Irish	WIRI	2%	3%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
White	Traveller of Irish Heritage	WIRT	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%
White	White-Other	WOTH	6%	6%	3%	11%	10%	11%	7%	8%	4%
White	Gypsy/Roma	WROM	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	Refused	REFU	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%
		BME	68%	65%	68%	62%	74%	61%	68%	74%	85%

Appendix 2: Faith and Culture Safeguarding Children Checklist

BME families often live with circumstances which reduce or completely obstruct their ability, with or without a professional safeguarding support plan, to do the things they need to do to keep their children safe.

Ask yourself the following questions:

If this parent...

- 1. Cannot speak, read or write English**, will s/he be able to e.g. get a job, arrange suitable childcare, register with a GP, pursue a legitimate asylum claim, understand the law etc?
- 2. Fears that the 'State' is authoritarian**, will s/he be able to register with a GP, engage with the local children's centre, talk to the school about their child's progress/difficulties, call social services or the police if necessary e.g. for help with domestic violence?
- 3. Lacks strong social networks**, will s/he be able to cope with the stresses of child rearing and the tensions and emergencies of everyday living?
- 4. Lives in temporary housing**, e.g. B&B, will s/he be unsettled, moving at [irregular] intervals to new and unfamiliar areas, not able to begin building a supportive social network, needing constantly to engage with a new GP, children's centre, school etc?
- 5. Is living below the poverty line**, will s/he have the added burden of not being able to buy enough food and clothing, keep warm enough, travel as needed or give things to their child as they would like, to add to the stresses of child rearing and the tensions and emergencies of everyday living?
- 6. Has a child who is of a different appearance and culture to them**, e.g. a single mother whose child has inherited their father's appearance (and as a young person chooses their father's culture), will the mother's skills and the child's identity and self-esteem be sufficiently resilient?
- 7. Is living in a close-knit community in London**, will s/he be too scared or ashamed to engage with statutory and other services for herself e.g. domestic violence, sexual abuse/rape, repudiating female genital mutilation or spirit possession, or for her child e.g. honour based violence or sexual promiscuity?
- 8. Has a perspective on parenting practices underpinned by culture or faith which are not in line with UK law and cultural norms**, will s/he put their child at risk of harm through e.g. leaving young children at home alone, exercising robust physical punishment, forcing a child into marriage etc?
- 9. Recognises his/her faith or community leader as all powerful**, will s/he put their child at risk of harm rather than questioning the leader?
- 10. Puts a very high value on preserving family honour**, will s/he put their child at risk of harm rather than 'exposing the family to shame' in their community?

and, if this young person...

- 11. Is compromised in relation to his/her community**, through being 'westernised' e.g. sexually active (incl. teenage motherhood), having a girl/boyfriend not from the same community; or by having a stigmatising experience e.g. sexual abuse, mental ill health or a disability, will s/he be able to seek help to keep safe from the community or statutory and other services?
- 12. Has strong allegiance to a group or gang**, e.g. radicalised, will this stop him/her from seeking help from the community or statutory and other services, to stay safe?