

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Safeguarding

Police and Crime Committee

Introduction

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. As defined by the Department for Education, it includes: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes.¹

The Met identifies child abuse as all situations of ill treatment of children, including physical and emotional abuse, infanticide and child homicide. It investigates all such offences through the Sexual Offences, Exploitation and Child Abuse command (SOECA). In 2012/13 the Met received 18,576 allegations and investigated 8,814 crimes (compared with 12,759 allegations and 8,577 crimes investigated in 2008/09).²

Purpose of the investigation

The Police and Crime Committee has agreed to investigate in detail the Met's approach to safeguarding following high profile cases and reviews, such as The Munro Review of Child Protection (2011).³ It will examine the structural changes that have taken place in the Met, including the establishment of SOECA in June 2013, and assess the early findings from the

roll out of MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hubs) in London. The investigation will also look at specific examples of abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic violence and child sexual exploitation. The Committee intends to provide an independent assessment of how well the Met's approach is working and highlight any areas where improvements need to be made.

The Met has undergone a number of changes since 2008 and this investigation will look at whether there is enough resource dedicated to safeguarding in London.

The investigation's terms of reference are:

- To examine the Met's approach to safeguarding and how they engage with key partners.
- To assess the level of Met resources available to tackle child abuse.
- To evaluate MOPAC's strategic oversight.
- To establish what more the Met and MOPAC could do to ensure their approach fully supports children at risk and reflects best practice.

[Introduction](#)

[Purpose of the investigation](#)

[Background](#)

[How the Committee will conduct the investigation](#)

[Further information](#)

[About the Committee](#)

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Safeguarding

Police and Crime Committee

Background

The duty of the police

Children are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually and how they need to work together. *Working Together to Safeguard Children*⁴ outlines the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It sets a clear framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services and states that ‘the police and crime commissioner must hold the chief constable to account for the exercise of the latter’s duties in relation to safeguarding under sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.’⁵ The guidance recognises that the police are ‘well placed to identify early when a child’s welfare is at risk’ and that they have a responsibility to share information with other agencies where it is necessary to protect children.

The crucial role the police play in the identification and protection of children at risk has been highlighted in high profile reviews such as Lord Laming’s report on child protection (2009)⁶ and the Munro Review of Child Protection (2011).⁷

Lord Laming’s report questioned the ‘adequacy of the resources devoted to police child protection teams, the specialist training of these staff, the vacancy rates, the status of this work and the quality of service provided.’ It recommended regular review of all points of referral where there is concern about a child’s safety and that the police should be fully engaged in group meetings, reviews and casework decisions and understand the referral process.

The Munro Review commended the Met’s Child Risk Assessment Matrix (CRAM) and suggested the establishment of MASH. It recommended that police are fully engaged in the safeguarding inspection framework and that the framework fully examines the contribution of the police on the frontline. The review also recommended that the statutory requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Board’s to produce and publish an annual report for the Children’s Trust Board is transferred to the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

MASH

The inability of safeguarding partners to share information effectively has been highlighted in many public enquires and serious case reviews. MASH is a pan-London programme to improve the way that local safeguarding partnerships deal with child protection referrals. MASH brings together a range of

[Introduction](#)

[Purpose of the investigation](#)

[Background](#)

[How the Committee will conduct the investigation](#)

[Further information](#)

[About the Committee](#)

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Safeguarding

Police and Crime Committee

partners into a single multi-agency safeguarding hub to share information quickly and efficiently. Harrow and Haringey were the first boroughs to establish a MASH and every borough in London is expected to implement MASH by the end of the 2013/14 year.

How the Committee will conduct the investigation

Key questions the Committee will seek to answer

Progress and structure:

- What changes have the Met made on safeguarding following recent high profile cases and reviews?
- How have the recommendations from these reviews been implemented?
- How has the establishment of SOECA improved the Met's response to safeguarding?

Performance:

- How have allegations and reported crimes changed over the past five years? What are the reasons for the changes

- How are the Met performing – what is the sanction detection rate and headline performance across London?

Working together:

- How effective is the Met in working with key agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children?
- What are the early findings from the roll out of MASH in London?
- How effective is learning across London from borough serious case reviews?

The role of the Mayor and MOPAC:

- How does MOPAC hold the Met to account on safeguarding?
- How is MOPAC taking forward the work of the Metropolitan Police Authority on safeguarding and child protection?
- What is MOPAC doing to ensure that there is a coordinated multi-agency response to tackling child abuse in London?

[Introduction](#)

[Purpose of the investigation](#)

[Background](#)

[How the Committee will conduct the investigation](#)

[Further information](#)

[About the Committee](#)

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Safeguarding

Police and Crime Committee

Public meetings

The Committee will invite a range of witnesses to examine and assess safeguarding issues in London and the progress made by the Met in addressing these. Witnesses are likely to include:

- Metropolitan Police
- Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
- Office of the Children's Commissioner
- Children's charities
- London Safeguarding Children Board
- Local Safeguarding Children Board representatives
- Representatives from projects working to safeguard children
- NHS England, London region safeguarding lead
- Department for Education

Call for evidence

The Committee will also issue a targeted call for written evidence.

Statistical analysis

The Committee will make use of publically available Met data to analyse the prevalence of child abuse and child sexual exploitation in London. It will also analyse available data on the Met's safeguarding resources, including staffing and funding.

Site visit

The Committee will seek an opportunity for a site visit to understand how the Met engages with local agencies and contributes to safeguarding across London.

Literature review

The Committee will review existing research on safeguarding. This will include consideration of the recommendations made in high profile reports such as: the Laming review of child protection (2009); The Munro Review of Child Protection (2011); and the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (2013). It will look at the Met's strategies and operating procedures on safeguarding (for example, the Pan-London CSE Operating Protocol) and will draw upon the research by the University of Greenwich assessing the early impact of MASH in London. The Committee will also make use of the work produced by the London Safeguarding Children Board.

[Introduction](#)

[Purpose of the investigation](#)

[Background](#)

[How the Committee will conduct the investigation](#)

[Further information](#)

[About the Committee](#)

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Safeguarding

Police and Crime Committee

Further information

Please contact janette.roker@london.gov.uk for further information.

About the Committee

The Police and Crime Committee examines the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and reviews the Police and Crime Plan for London. The Committee can also investigate anything which it considers to be of importance to policing and crime reduction in Greater London and make recommendations for improvements.

For further information about the Committee and its work go to <http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/assembly>

End notes

¹ Department for Education (March 2013) [Working together to safeguard children](#)

² For a more detailed breakdown see [MQ 51/2013](#) (page 21)

³ Department of Education (2011) [The Munro Review of Child Protection](#)

⁴ Department for Education (March 2013) [Working together to safeguard children](#)

⁵ Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on the police, including police and crime commissioners and MOPAC in London, to ensure that they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In addition, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the Mayor to hold the Met to account in relation to safeguarding children (as detailed in the Children Act 2004).

⁶ Lord Laming (2009) [The Protection of Children in England: A progress Report](#)

⁷ Department of Education (2011) [The Munro Review of Child Protection](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Purpose of the investigation](#)

[Background](#)

[How the Committee will conduct the investigation](#)

[Further information](#)

[About the Committee](#)