

7 Minute Briefing:

Thematic Review - Children at risk of Serious Youth Violence and Extra Familial Harm

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Introduction and Background

The report is a thematic analysis of multi-agency safeguarding practice in Islington, focusing on black and dual heritage children at risk of Serious Youth Violence and Extra Familial Harm. It examines the question "Is there more that can be done to identify and intervene early to prevent children's involvement in Serious Youth Violence and prevent their vulnerability to other extra-familial safeguarding risks?", exploring experiences common to an audit of five children deemed to be at most high risk of being affected by Serious Youth Violence and Extra Familial Harm in the borough.

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Key Findings

- **Structural Challenges:** Poverty, poor housing, and parental mental health issues significantly impact families.
- **Early Intervention:** Effective early intervention is multi-faceted in Islington, involving evidence-based, trauma-informed practices.
- **Child-Centred Practice:** Successful interventions focus on the child's experience, building trust and relationships.
- **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** Effective safeguarding involves coordinated efforts across agencies, with clear communication and shared goals.

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Good Practice Examples

- **Bright Starts and Bright Futures:** Use of the Outcome Star to help families identify and achieve desired changes.
- **Trauma-Informed Schools:** Schools using the iTIPS model to support children with trauma and additional needs.
- **Youth Work:** Universal youth centres providing trusted adults and activities to engage children and prevent Serious Youth Violence.

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Challenges and Barriers

- **Acceptance of Help:** Families may struggle to accept offers of help due to mistrust, cultural differences, or previous negative experiences.
- **Online Risks:** Social media and online content can exacerbate risks, with children exposed to violence and negative influences.
- **Disproportionality and Racism:** Structural and systemic racism impacts children's experiences and trust in services.

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Recommendations

- **Enhance Multi-Agency Collaboration:** Promote participation of housing workers and ensure consistent trauma-informed approaches across agencies.
- **Improve Early Help:** Develop proactive information-sharing projects and ensure accessible mental health support for children.
- **Address Online Risks:** Embed online safety in assessments and interventions, alongside the provision of training for practitioners.
- **Combat Racism and Disproportionality:** Ensure robust complaints and escalation processes for incidents of racism and discriminatory practices.

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Conclusion

The report highlights the strengths and challenges in Islington's safeguarding system, emphasising the importance of early intervention, child-centred practice, and multi-agency collaboration. It calls for continued efforts to address structural challenges, improve acceptance of help, and mitigate the impact of racism and online risks.

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Next Steps

- **Implementation of Recommendations:** The ISCP will work with partners to implement the recommendations, focusing on enhancing early intervention, multi-agency collaboration, and addressing systemic issues.
- **Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and strategies to ensure continuous improvement in safeguarding practices.