

September 2025, Waltham Forest Safeguarding Partnership response to

LCSPR “Out of Sight” - Safeguarding Children in Elective Home Education: Children M

Introduction

In 2024, under Working Together 2023, our Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, commissioned a local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR) for Children M who are a white British, large sibling group, who had been living with their parents. The household conditions were a significant cause for concern after one of the children was found alone in the street wearing only a nappy and brought back home.

Children M's situation echoes findings around neglect and perplexing presentations from another recent Waltham Forest LCSPR. Building on that learning, this review underscores the challenges within the national system of EHE, and the complexities faced by agencies in balancing children's rights, parental responsibilities, and inter-agency information sharing. Their story illustrates how EHE, combined with parental avoidance of services, can lead to children's isolation and invisibility, resulting in significant harm. The findings of this LCSPR are relevant to many other local authorities in England dealing with similar issues.

One of the children lives with a relative and the others are under the Council's care, across two foster homes. While not all living altogether, regular contact with each other helps to enable their family connection. Each child is doing remarkably well and continues to make promising progress as their day-to-day needs are consistently met.

Partnership statement and commitment to action

The Waltham Forest Safeguarding Partnership welcomes the publication of this LCSPR for Children M. We acknowledge the seriousness of the findings and accept the review's recommendations. We extend our thanks to the authors for their sensitive and thorough analysis, and to all staff who contributed to the review and continue to safeguard children daily.

The review highlights the profound impact of cumulative neglect experienced by Children M and the systemic challenges posed by Elective Home Education (EHE) under current legislation. While statutory processes were followed, they did not sufficiently safeguard Children M. We particularly recognise:

- The limited visibility of home-educated children and associated risks.
- Missed opportunities for escalation when children were not brought to appointments.
- Fragmented information sharing across agencies.
- The need for a robust “Think Family” approach that considers the needs of both children and parents.
- The importance of embedding learning from reviews to strengthen multi-agency safeguarding, especially for children with additional needs or those educated at home.

The Partnership is committed to driving systemic and cultural change, with a focus on visibility, professional curiosity, collaborative working, and continuous learning. We will:

- Share the learning widely, including through a safeguarding conference.
- Complete roll out a Quality-of-Care Toolkit (based on previous LCSPR learning)
- Strengthen safeguarding pathways, particularly around neglect and perplexing presentations.
- Maintain oversight of national legislative changes, such as the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill, and adapt local procedures accordingly.
- Continue to promote a culture of respectful uncertainty, professional curiosity, and holistic family-focused practice.

Implementation of the recommendations as detailed in the action plan below will be rigorously monitored through the Partnerships’ governance framework, with regular assurance reports to the Safeguarding Children Board. Feedback from practitioners and, where possible, families will inform and sustain meaningful change. We are determined to learn from this review and ensure that children educated at home in Waltham Forest are safe, visible, and thriving. We will build on existing work to improve responses to neglect and the needs of large sibling groups, ensuring every child receives the care and protection they deserve.

| Action plan for LCSPR Children M | | | | |
|---|---|--------------|---------------------|--|
| What needs to change? What is the objective? | How will this be achieved? | By when | Led by whom? | How will we know it's achieved and / or made a difference? |
| Strengthen communication and information sharing arrangements between agencies in relation to EHE | EHE Working Group - Convene a multi-agency working group, with representation from all relevant agencies. The group will scrutinise current pathways, enhance information sharing protocols (with due regard to GDPR and parental consent), and develop clear local criteria for assessing vulnerability and suitability of EHE. The group will report back to the WFSCP within six months, and their findings will inform revisions to the Waltham Forest EHE Policy. | March 2026 | BACME Service, LBWF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group established and actions being implemented Resources available to professionals within the Partnership Impact detailed in Scrutiny report + Refreshed EHE policy Partners report improved processes |
| Identify improvements to the Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) Service | Public Health Review of EOTAS provision - Review EOTAS service with a view to increasing and / or improving the school health offer to all EHE children and that pathways to additional support are clear and accessible. Outcome of this review (and LCSPR recommendation) to be reported back through the One Panel | January 2026 | Public Health, LBWF | Report to One Panel detailing outcome |
| Parents are better engaged and empowered in relation to EHE. Relationships between parents and | Awareness Raising Sessions - BACME Service will schedule and deliver annual sessions for EHE parents by the end of 2025, with a focus on rights, | January 2025 | BACME Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shareable resources Evaluation of the impact of delivered services |

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| professionals is strengthened | responsibilities, available support, and best practice. The Partnership will ensure that guidance and resources regarding EHE, safeguarding, and information sharing are disseminated to all frontline professionals. | | | |
| Routes for escalation are well understood by practitioners who ably apply policy to practice | Escalation Working Group A multi-agency group will examine barriers to escalation, promote a culture of healthy professional challenge. The group will report findings and actions back to the One Panel within six months. Priority will be given to aligning this work with the refreshed Escalation Policy | March 2026 | Strategic Partnerships Unit | Updated policy and planned comms to disseminate and embed |
| The Partnership's refreshed governance arrangements ensure learning from reviews is firmly embedded into practice | Governance Changes are made to the Partnerships' governance structures and ways of working. This will include improvements to the multi-agency training offer ensuring it links to strategic priorities. | | | Regular review at Partnership Board meetings ensuring lessons are learned and sustained improvements evidenced in outcomes for children. |