

Statement from the chair of Newham's Local Safeguarding Children Board

We extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Chris. He was a much loved young boy whose life was cut tragically short.

This review was commissioned to understand the circumstances leading up to Chris's death and all the organisations that supported or worked with him have contributed to this report. We welcome the comprehensive review, which provides invaluable learning for all our partner agencies in their ongoing work with children who are at risk of criminal exploitation.

It is clear from the review that partners did not have the awareness or understanding needed to safeguard Chris, and we recognise that not enough was done to truly understand the complexity and level of risk in his life. Across a range of local agencies, a lot of information was known about Chris, including his inherent vulnerability, his ongoing contact with police, including in relation to some very serious incidents, and the fears he and his family clearly and repeatedly expressed about safety. If pieced together, this would have identified the significant and escalating risk this child faced, and enabled partners to work in a focused and coordinated way to safeguard Chris and support his family. Sadly, we failed to build this holistic picture of Chris's situation, and while he and his family were supported by a range of agencies, their help was not as effective as it could and should have been.

Work has already begun across the partnership to make sure that practitioners truly listen to the concerns that children like Chris and their families raise, and provide effective and coherent support. Actions include providing training across the partnership on gangs and criminal exploitation, strengthening management oversight and providing reflective supervision in complex cases, and improving information sharing across agencies, all essential for reducing risk to Newham children. We will strive to ensure that all of the recommendations in this report are implemented fully through a detailed multi agency action plan.

Newham children are exposed to an unacceptable level of risk as a consequence of the very high levels of youth violence in the borough. In this context, all partners need to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of gangs and how they work to exploit and groom children when working to safeguard our young people.