



Meeting: **Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 3 September 2019 at 2.00 pm**

Location: **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Gemma Duckworth (0116 3052583)**

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Membership

Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC (Chairman)

Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mrs. C. Lewis Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mrs. R. Page CC Mrs. A. Wright CC
Mr T. Parton CC

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– Notices will be on display at the meeting explaining the arrangements.**

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2019.	(Pages 5 - 16)
2. Question Time.	
3. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).	
4. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.	
5. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	



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| 6. | Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16. | | |
| 7. | Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36. | | |
| 8. | Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. | Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board | (Pages 17 - 48) |
| 9. | Early Years. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 49 - 56) |
| 10. | Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 57 - 62) |
| 11. | Leicestershire's Response to Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (Six Month Update). | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 63 - 70) |
| 12. | Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 71 - 116) |
| 13. | Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance Report. | Chief Executive and Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 117 - 128) |
| 14. | Date of next meeting. | | |

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 5 November 2019 at 2.00pm.

15. Any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent.

QUESTIONING BY MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The ability to ask good, pertinent questions lies at the heart of successful and effective scrutiny. To support members with this, a range of resources, including guides to questioning, are available via the Centre for Public Scrutiny website www.cfps.org.uk.

The following questions have been agreed by Scrutiny members as a good starting point for developing questions:-

- Who was consulted and what were they consulted on? What is the process for and quality of the consultation?
- How have the voices of local people and frontline staff been heard?
- What does success look like?
- What is the history of the service and what will be different this time?
- What happens once the money is spent?
- If the service model is changing, has the previous service model been evaluated?
- What evaluation arrangements are in place – will there be an annual review?

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Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 4 June 2019.

PRESENT

Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC
Mrs. R. Page CC

Mr T. Parton CC
Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mr. G. Welsh CC

1. Appointment of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Mrs. H. Fryer CC as the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2020 be noted.

Mrs. H. Fryer CC – in the Chair

2. Election of Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mrs. B. Seaton CC be elected Deputy Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2020.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2019 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The following questions, received under Standing Order 35, were put to the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

(A) Mrs Louise Parker Engels asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

There is little or no accountability for schools who do not follow their own or national policies including the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) code of practice. What is Leicestershire County Council doing to prevent further harm to children by supporting parents to secure timely reasonable adjustments and to prevent schools making inappropriate referrals for attendance prosecution and to child protection? With the right levels of support from the beginning and listening to parents and children that they are not fine in school, many of these children would not be needing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) as they now do.

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The Local Authority considers a range of DfE Guidance and Legislation in relation to children who have difficulty accessing school including school refusal, such as:

- SEND code of practice – Best Endeavours and Reasonable Adjustments
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children Missing Education
- Children with Medical Needs
- Preventing/responding to bullying in schools
- Admissions Codes

Leicestershire County Council shares the DfE values that all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Although the DfE consider children missing education are of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school, Leicestershire Children and Family Services (CFS) have widened the consideration of Children Missing Education as those who are also registered at a school and have failed to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission. This includes the consideration of school refusers.

Again in conjunction with the DfE Missing Education guidance, CFS agrees that effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. CFS therefore focuses and continues to align resources on intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to improve outcomes. As such, CFS provides a variety of support to schools to make every effort to assess and respond to a child's needs at the earliest opportunity through services such as:

- Inclusion Services (including Children with Medical Needs/EHE and links to Health Services);
- SENA;
- Education Effectiveness Partners;
- Secondary Educational Inclusion Partnership Surgeries;
- Oakfield Short Stay Panel;
- Specialist Teaching Services;
- Families and Wellbeing Service

Supplementary Question:

Mrs Engels asked a supplementary question, to the effect that, as there was so little accountability with schools to follow the policies listed, how were parents going to access the resources when their children needed them if they did not meet the SEND threshold or the school did not acknowledge their need?

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services replied to the effect that both children and their families could directly access a number of County Council services. Referrals, particularly for early help services, could come either directly from parents or from other agencies. An accountability framework was in place for all schools, some of which the local authority was involved in and some of which was the

responsibility of Academies. The Accountability Framework would be shared with Mrs Engels and members of the Committee.

(B) Mrs Louise Parker Engels asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

The EHCP process is currently taking too long. As many parents are having to go through appeals processes to secure reasonable adjustments and suitable provision, what can the local authority do to prevent serious harm and deterioration to the health and well being of children who are not coping with mainstream provision but being expected to attend whilst they wait for suitable provision?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

Leicestershire Children and Family Services understands that the EHCP process can appear lengthy, with it taking up to 20 weeks in response to the statutory time scale as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice, although granted the appeal process can mean that the process can be longer. Within Leicestershire, CFS is successfully completing over 97% of first time assessments within the 20 week time frame.

Across the assessment and review work that CFS carried out in 2018 only 2.5% of cases resulted in an appeal to the SEN and Disability Tribunal. Therefore 97.5% of cases successfully secured the provision they needed to be able to access effective education and support for their educational and health care requirements.

The Department has a range of services, as detailed in the reply to the above question, that work to support children and young people to support their emotional health and wellbeing.

Supplementary Question:

Mrs Engels asked a supplementary question to the effect that there were children who were being left in mainstream schools relatively unsupported whilst going through the assessment process, which could take up to 20 weeks, exclusive of the appeals process. If these children were not coping in the meantime, they were still expected to attend mainstream provision. Places such as the Oakfield Short Stay provision were not accessible to these children as they were trapped in between mainstream provision and having an EHCP. Mrs Engels queried what could be done for those children as they were coming out of school with school trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder and were likely to have more complex difficulties than if their needs had been addressed in the first place.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services replied to the effect that there were statutory timescales that the local authority had to work to, and therefore the assessment could take up to 20 weeks, following which there could be an appeal. The Director acknowledged that there were currently children waiting for an assessment and that the Department did not always get it right. The County Council was looking at how it could work to support children and young people outside of an EHCP at an earlier opportunity. This should then mean that there was support available for children that did not rely on them having an EHCP, in order to mitigate the circumstances described by Mrs Engels. This was further described in the Overview of SEND Developments report elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting (Minute 11 refers).

(C) Mrs Louise Parker Engels asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

There is no current national policy for School Refusal – Children who are unable to attend due to unmet Special educational needs, mental health or medical conditions and bullying. Would the Director of Children’s Services, the inclusion, attendance and educational psychology teams be willing to support and promote Not Fine in School guides as a county wide practice for School Refusal intervention?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The offer to promote Not Fine in School guides as a county wide practice for School Refusal intervention is very much appreciated and having looked at the Not Fine in School Website, it shows a comprehensive range of resources. Later this year CFS will be developing information web pages for schools as part of the pathway development and it would be useful if the local authority could work with Not Fine in School to help co-design this.

Supplementary Question:

Mrs Engels asked a supplementary question to identify who would be responsible overall for developing the pathway later in the year, and if, in the meantime, some of the messages developed by Not Fine in School could be circulated through the local offer and local educational psychologists, who seemed to still be of the view that where children were struggling, this was due to parenting issues. She also queried whether a working definition of ‘fine’ could be included in the local offer?

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services replied to the effect that the literature on the Not Fine in School website was a useful resource. Whilst the local authority would not be directly sending out this literature, it was keen to work with Not Fine in School and other parents and carers to develop resources. The Inclusion Service Manager would make direct contact with Mrs Engels to progress this.

5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

6. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

8. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

10. Care Placement Strategy.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an update around the work on the Care Placement Strategy 2018-2021. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion and questions, the following points were raised:

- i) One-to-one carers were specialist carers with a professional background and a specialist skill set who worked intensively with one young person at a time. Pathway carers also had a similar skill base, and worked with those young people who had a higher level of need, but not on a one-to-one basis. The Multi Intensive Systemic Team Leicestershire (MISTLE) was working with Action for Children to identify more one-to-one carers and had been involved in the recruitment and training of carers to ensure that the young person had a successful package of care. The team was currently working closely with ten young people and the Committee was pleased to hear that it was already seeing success with some young people having moved from residential care to family-based placements, supported independent living and foster care.
- ii) The intended target audience for the Care Placement Strategy had initially been all professionals working with young people. However, it was the intention that this would be an outward facing document that could be shared with families and young people. Where this was the case, time would be spent explaining the information contained within the document.
- iii) It was felt that greater clarity was required in the Strategy regarding the priorities and aspirations of the department, rather than these appearing as bold statements in the document. In particular, the statement that 'Leicestershire is the best place for all children, young people and their families' needed to be amended to reflect that it was the overarching vision of the department. Assurance was given that this would occur.
- iv) The Strategy brought together a number of different work streams that would have varying timeframes for completion. It was noted that some of the work was now commencing and any results would be expected in the next 6 – 12 months. However, the overarching ambition remained the same in terms of the outcomes for children. It was intended that, in 12 months, clear outcomes would be presented for each priority area, for example the success of MISTLE and a reduction in the number of those on the edge of care. It was agreed that it would be useful to present the Committee with details of performance against a range of measures to demonstrate the success of the Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted;

- b) That a report be provided to a future meeting on performance against the measures used to demonstrate the success of the Strategy.

11. Overview of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Developments.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an update on the development of new SEND provisions as part of the High Needs Block Development Plan and the results of the associated recent public consultation. The strategic direction for SEN and Disability Services over the next three years was also detailed, along with an update on the provision of short break services to families where a child had a disability. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were made:

- i) It was reported that the 2018/19 year end budget position for the High Needs Block was an overspend of £2.3m, which was in line with, or lower than, a number of areas throughout the country. The department had been able to use reserves and some underspend within the Dedicated Schools Grant to offset the overspend. In response to a query, it was stated that the High Needs Block Development Plan was set out as a four-to-five year programme to address the overspend. It was anticipated that there would be an increase in expenditure for the next three years before a reduction would begin to be seen in 2022/23. The projection for achieving a balanced budget would depend on a number of factors, but it was expected to be realised in the 2024/25 financial year.
- ii) A comment was made that the number of responses to the consultation appeared to be low. All Leicestershire schools had been written to, along with parents/ carers of pupils with an EHCP and associated parties, but respondents had generally been those with a specific interest in the development of a new SEND provision. In general, the department was pleased with the quality of responses and discussions with interested groups, such as the Parent Carer Forum, had continued to take place once the consultation period had ended. Assurance was given that the appropriate provision would be in place by September.
- iii) The consultation had highlighted some concerns, for example the size of classes within the specialist units. However, it was stated that class sizes would be restricted to no more than ten young people. The new SEND provision was also expected to support children and young people to access both specialist and mainstream provision.
- iv) The department had performed well in the conversion of statements of special educational need to EHCPs and was now seeking to ensure that a holistic approach was taken to casework. There had been a significant increase in the number of cases, and as a result resources within the SEN Assessment Service had been increased. It was hoped that families would be allocated a caseworker (as was already the case) and that there would be more capacity for the caseworker to have a dialogue with partners such as schools to ensure the best outcome for the child was achieved.
- v) It was acknowledged that Leicestershire was one of the lowest funded authorities in the country, and there was concern that a continued increase in

numbers of EHCPs would not be sustainable without additional funding. This could also make it more difficult to achieve a balanced budget. It was noted that there was a national recognition of the pressures around the High Needs Block; locally the High Needs Development Plan had been developed to mitigate these risks. Although financial pressures continued to increase, the service remained committed to supporting children in the best way, and this included looking at how to reduce the cost of children in SEND provision and supporting schools to intervene earlier to reduce the reliance on EHCPs.

- vi) Work had been undertaken around the provision of short break services to families where a child had a disability, and although the changes appeared to be positive, the Committee agreed that it would be useful to receive a specific report on this work at a future meeting, in particular the development of a new criteria.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That the Committee receives a report to a future meeting on the provision of short break services to families where a child has a disability.

12. Progress Report: Ofsted Recommendations as Part of the Ofsted Continuous Improvement Action Plan 2017-2020 - The Road to Excellence.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services on the progress made against the Ofsted Continuous Improvement Action Plan in responding to the Single Inspection of Children's Social Care in November 2016. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion and questions, the following comments were raised:

- i) The Committee welcomed the success in the recruitment and retention of permanent staff over the last six months. Although there were still a number of vacant posts, these were for specific roles, for example Senior Practitioners, and recruitment was currently taking place for six vacancies. There were also a number of vacancies due to staff being on maternity leave. Agency staff were still being used, in part to support the reduced workload of newly qualified social workers. Despite the recent success, lots of work still needed to take place to improve the position further, particularly within teams where there had been an issue with sickness absence rates. A report on the second phase of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy was due to be presented to the Children and Families Departmental Management Team in the coming weeks, and the Committee agreed that it would continue to monitor progress by receiving regular updates on recruitment and retention.
- ii) In response to a query, the RAG rating to monitor progress against the Ofsted recommendations was not set externally. However, it was necessary to provide to Ofsted any progress against self-assessments, and as part of this the Continuous Improvement Action Plan. It was necessary to provide evidence of how progress had been achieved; Ofsted would then provide feedback. Members were pleased to note that all but two of the actions were rated green.

- iii) In order to make it easier to understand whether progress had been made against a recommendation, a suggestion was made that an arrow could be used to show the direction in which the target should be going.
- iv) To ensure that progress was tracked, the department had a clear structure for receiving data updates from senior managers on a weekly basis. Meetings were held to consider the performance in specific areas, such as safeguarding, and a performance report was presented to the Senior Management Team on a monthly basis.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That the Committee continues to receive regular updates on the progress being made with recruitment and retention.

13. Pupils Missing Out on Education in Leicestershire.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided a summary of Leicestershire children who were missing out on education and the work taking place to support them. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) During April 2018 – March 2019, 901 children were reported as pupils missing out on education from Leicestershire schools. At 1 March 2019, 34 children were missing education (CME) – this meant that they were not registered pupils at a school and were not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. The local authority had a duty to establish the identities of these children, and was also responsible for the children who were on the roll of a school but had not attended for over 15 days. Schools were responsible for those who had not attended for less than 15 days or where court proceedings were being pursued; this figure was at 119 in Leicestershire.
- ii) An overview was given of the developments that had taken place over the last year to increase the capacity to support vulnerable learners in Leicestershire. A member commented that the developments could be combined into a more comprehensive strategy to show, for example, the setting of targets, partnership working, and challenge for other providers. It was confirmed that the work outlined in the report formed the Inclusion Strategy, an ambition of which was to set out the aims and work being undertaken to manage inclusion in schools, and it was the intention to present the work being undertaken around inclusion to the Committee at its meeting in November. A range of work had been pulled together to form an Inclusion Service, and a big part of this was partnership work. The service was already working with schools to ensure that children were remaining in education where possible. In relation to alternative provision, strong partnerships were in place, for example with the Secondary Education and Inclusion Partnerships, and a number of alternative provisions were used. Within the department, particularly for children with SEN, it was only possible to commission provision through registered schools

and the majority of providers offered provision that it was not possible for the local authority to directly commission or fund. Partnership working was encouraged with behaviour partnerships and schools to support students. In terms of the impact of work being undertaken around outcomes for children, it was intention to present this to a future meeting of the Committee.

- iii) In response to a query around managing exclusions, the local authority had an arrangement with secondary schools whereby funds were passported out to secondary schools, which were divided into secondary partnerships. This was a bespoke arrangement with the aim of avoiding permanent exclusions through targeted initiatives where possible. It was the intention to create a similar geographical arrangement in primary schools. Proactive intervention had been developed for all schools, and more recently, support for governance in schools had been put in place to ensure that governing bodies understood the possible consequences if there was a permanent exclusion. Further details would be presented in the report to the Committee at its meeting in November.
- iv) Concern was raised by a member that some children were missing education due to them being unable to travel to the school where they were on roll. However, these children were not categorised as missing education as they were on roll at a school. It was acknowledged that there were areas in Leicestershire where there were pressures with local school places, but this would need to be the subject of a separate report.
- v) There were difficulties in establishing the number of electively home educated children receiving a good education as the data was reported by schools and there were no direct legal requirements for local authorities. It was confirmed that the data was broken down by key stage; this would be shared with the Committee. Within Leicestershire, DfE guidance was followed in that informal enquiries would be made that included a request to see the child, but the parent was under no legal obligation to agree to this simply to satisfy the local authority as to the suitability of home education. However, where there was a refusal to allow a visit to the home, this would become a safeguarding issue.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That the Committee receives an update on developments within Leicestershire at its meeting on 5 November 2019.

14. Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership Plan Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which presented an update on the progress with the Children and Families Partnership Plan 2018-21. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 14' is filed with these minutes.

Assurance was given that any appropriate promotion activity would take place with partners in relation to specific developments within the action plans, for example the roll out of the Housing Protocol.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

15. Scrutiny Review Panel - Corporate Parenting.

The Committee considered a report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Review Panel which detailed the conclusions and recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review Panel investigation into corporate parenting. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 15' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the findings of the Scrutiny Review Panel be supported and referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

16. Quarter 4 2018/19 Performance Report.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Children and Family Services which presented an update of the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period January to March 2019 (Quarter 4). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 16' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) With regard to the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score which measured the emotional wellbeing of children in care, a member suggested that measuring the average score created a risk that less vulnerable young people masked the needs of the most vulnerable. However, officers confirmed that they also considered the scores on an individual basis; a score of 17-40 was considered to be cause for concern. There was currently one young person whose score was very high and who was receiving additional services as a result.
- ii) It was acknowledged that the completion rate around assessments being completed within 45 days had been on a downward trajectory; however, this was being addressed through work to improve both timeliness and quality which had been shared with the Ofsted Inspectors when they had undertaken their focused visit. It was expected that improvements would be seen over the next quarter.
- iii) The rate of re-offending by young offenders was far lower than the County Council's statistical neighbours; however, it had increased in Quarter 2. It was confirmed that this figure was per young offender and was an average across the current cohort. Due to the small number in the cohort, any change would appear to have a significant impact on the number.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

17. Dates of Future Meetings.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 3 September 2019 at 2.00pm.

Future meetings of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at 2.00pm on the following dates:

5 November 2019

21 January 2020

3 March 2020

2 June 2020

1 September 2020

3 November 2020.

2.00 – 4.25pm
04 June 2019

CHAIRMAN

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
3 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
BOARD (LRLSCB) ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE LRLSCB

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Committee on the draft Annual Report 2018/19 for the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LRLSCB). Any comments or proposed additions and amendments will be addressed in the final report before it is published.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The LRLSCB is a statutory body established by Section 13 of the Children Act 2004. It currently operates under statutory guidance issued in Working Together 2015. The main purpose of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) is to ensure effective, co-ordinated multi-agency arrangements for the safeguarding of children and young people.
3. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, LSCBs are due to cease and local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will be established in line with statutory guidance issued in Working Together 2018. The Leicestershire and Rutland LSCB will cease on 25th September 2019. Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, which were published on 28 June 2019, will be managed through a new partnership – the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership.
4. It is a statutory requirement, as set out in Working Together 2015, that the Independent Chair of the LSCB publishes an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. Working Together 2015 states that:

'The Chair must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing board'.

In Leicestershire and Rutland the annual report has traditionally also been presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee given the shared roles in scrutinising and challenging provision.

5. Working Together also states that the annual report should 'provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It

should identify areas of weakness, the cause of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action'. The report should include lessons learned from reviews undertaken within the reporting period.

6. The Business Plan of the LRLSCB for the period that this annual report relates to was considered by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 June 2018.

Background

7. The LSCB shares some operational arrangements with the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB) and some partnership structures with the Leicester City LSCB.
8. The Annual Report provides a full assessment of performance with regard to safeguarding children, in line with the requirements in Working Together 2015. It is, necessarily, a detailed report, but has been reduced in length compared to previous years. As such the key messages are included in the Independent Chair's foreword and two-page summary at the start of the report.
9. The key purpose of the Annual Report is to assess the impact of the work undertaken in 2018/19 on service quality and on safeguarding outcomes for children and young people in Leicestershire and Rutland. Specifically it evaluates performance against the priorities that were set out in the LSCBs Business Plan 2018/19 and against other statutory functions that the LSCB must undertake.
10. The full version of the Annual Report 2018/19 is attached as Appendix A and includes:
 - (i) A foreword from the Independent Chair;
 - (ii) An overview of the Board's governance and accountability arrangements and local context;
 - (iii) Two separate outlines of safeguarding children performance, activity and outcomes for Leicestershire and Rutland;
 - (iv) Analysis of performance against the key priorities in the 2018/19 Business Plan;
 - (v) An overview of the Board's work on engagement, assurance, learning and development and training.

Key Messages

11. The key messages from the LRLSCB, specifically in relation to Leicestershire, are:
 - a) Workers and agencies work well together to safeguard children in Leicestershire.
 - b) Further work is required regarding the understanding of thresholds for safeguarding across the partnership.
 - c) The impact of key service changes such as the children and family wellbeing service should be reviewed.
 - d) Young people are directly influencing the work of the LSCB, and hearing and responding to the voice and lived experience of children is improving in safeguarding.

- e) More and better referrals could be made to agencies who provide specialist support to families, such as those relating to substance misuse and sexual abuse.
- f) The consistency of practice within agencies across a range of areas of work still requires improvement. This includes quality of assessment, recording, and management oversight of staff.
- g) The Safeguarding Children Partnership led by three statutory partners - the local authorities, the clinical commissioning groups for the area and the police - will take forward multi-agency work to safeguarding children.

Proposals/Options

- 12. The Committee is asked to consider the Annual Report and to make any comments or proposed additions or amendments to the report that will be addressed prior to the final version of the Annual Report being published.

Consultation

- 13. The Annual Report includes a summary of the consultation and engagement work the LSCB has carried out with children and young people and with practitioners.
- 14. All members of the Board and their Executive have had opportunities to contribute to and comment on earlier drafts of the Annual Report.

Resource Implications

- 15. There are no resource implications arising from this report, as this is a retrospective report. The LRLSCB operates within a budget to which partner agencies contribute.
- 16. Leicestershire County Council contributes £84,276 to the costs of the LRLSCB and Safeguarding Children Partnership, 35% of the total budget of £243,419 in 2019/20. In addition it contributes £53,590 to the costs of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB), 52% of the total budget of £102,152 in 2019/20, and hosts the Safeguarding Boards' Business Office.
- 17. Following anticipated funding reductions and agreement with Board partners the Board budget for 2019/20 no longer includes funding for Serious Case Reviews (or Safeguarding Adults Reviews for the SAB). These are to be funded through the reserves of the Safeguarding Boards. The reserves are sufficient to cover current reviews underway. The Board has agreed that any additional costs would be covered proportionally by safeguarding partners.
- 18. The budget requirement for the new partnership is being considered by safeguarding partners in developing the new multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children and parallel consideration of Safeguarding Adults Board support arrangements.
- 19. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Timetable for Decisions

20. The Annual Report will be presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 September 2019, the Cabinet on 13 September 2019 and the Health and Wellbeing Board on 26 September 2019. Any comments will be considered by the addressed prior to the final report being published by the end of September.

Background Papers

Report to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 4th June 2018.

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

21. None.

Relevant Impact Assessments:

Equality and Human Rights Implications

22. Safeguarding children, young people and adults concerns individuals who are likely to be disadvantaged in a number of ways. Information on differing needs of and impacts on different groups of individuals with regard to safeguarding is considered as part of the process to develop the Board's Business Plan. Specific impacts on or views of different groups is also considered in the work of the LRLSCB and LRSAB Safeguarding Effectiveness Group (SEG) in assessing performance and effectiveness with regard to safeguarding.

Crime and Disorder Implications

23. There is a close connection between the work of the LRLSCB and that of community safety partnerships in Leicestershire. For example the LSCB works closely with community safety partnerships to scrutinise and challenge performance in community safety issues that affect the safeguarding and well-being of individuals and groups, for example domestic abuse and Prevent. The LSCB also supports community safety partnerships in carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews and acting on their recommendations.

Environmental Implications

24. The published LRLSCB Annual Report will primarily be made available on-line in electronic form, rather than paper. There are no other environmental implications.

Partnership Working and associated issues

25. Safeguarding is dependent on the effective work of the partnership as set out in national regulation, Working Together 2015, published by the Department for Education.
26. The Children and Social Work Act sets out the cessation of LSCBs and the establishment of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Working Together 2018 governs the new arrangements, with supplementary guidance governing the transition to these arrangements. New arrangements are required to be in place by

the end of September 2019. Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements will commence in Leicestershire from 29 September 2019.

Appendices

Appendix A - Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children's Board 2018/19.

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LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND
LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
BOARD (LRLSCB)

Annual Report

2018/19

Document Status

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Leicestershire & Rutland LSCB and SAB

Independent Chair: Simon Westwood

Foreword



I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children (LRLSCB) 2018/19.

The key purpose of the report is to assess the impact of the work we have undertaken in 2018/19 on safeguarding outcomes for children, and young people in Leicestershire and Rutland. Though the report is joint for the two areas it provides distinct findings about practice and performance in both Leicestershire and Rutland.

The Board has worked over many years to promote the safety and welfare of children and will hand this work over to the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership in September 2019. This partnership is led by the County Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Police for the local area and will continue to work for children & young people in Leicestershire and Rutland to be safe, well and achieve their full potential.

We can never eliminate risk entirely. We need to be as confident as we can be that every child and vulnerable adult, are supported to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. The Board is assured that, whilst there are areas for improvement, agencies are working well together to safeguard adults and children in Leicestershire and Rutland.

This report outlines how we have come to this conclusion including:

- Considering how people and organisations listen and respond to what children are saying
- Assessing data and information regarding safeguarding children
- Auditing frontline practice of agencies working together to safeguarding children and address child exploitation.
- Carrying out Serious Case Reviews to identify where children have suffered significant harm to continuously improve how we work together.

The Board has developed and improved procedures for agencies working together, provided training through its partners to improve safeguarding children and has fed into the development of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership that will replace the Board from September 2019.

The input of our Young People's Advisory Panel has been an important addition to the LSCB this year. The young people on the panel have provided their views on key concerns for young people and have challenged and scrutinised developing services. This is essential to support the Board to retain its focus on children and young people.

I hope that this Annual Report will help to keep you informed and assured that agencies in Leicestershire and Rutland are committed to continuous improvement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SP Westwood', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Simon Westwood, Independent Chair

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Board Background

The LRLSCB serves the counties of **Leicestershire** and **Rutland**. It is a statutory body established in compliance with the Children Act 2004 (Section 13) and The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area. The work of the LSCB is governed by 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' statutory guidance.

Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 LSCBs will cease by September 2019 and local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will be established. In Leicestershire & Rutland the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership will be established in place of the LRLSCB by the 29th September 2019.

The Board is made up of organisations in the public sector with lay members, voluntary sector representation and led by an Independent Chair. The membership and structure of the board can be found on the Board's website www.lrsb.org.uk.

The LRLSCB works closely with Leicester City Safeguarding Children's Board (LCLSCB) on several areas of work to support effective working across the two areas. The LRLSCB and the LCLSCB have a Joint Executive Group that oversees joint areas of business for the two Boards.

The LSCB is funded through financial contributions from its partner agencies. In addition, in-kind contributions from partners are essential for the Board to operate effectively. In-kind contributions include training resource for the inter-agency programme, chairing and participating in the work of the Board and its subgroups and Leicestershire County Council hosting the Safeguarding Boards Business Office. The income and expenditure of the Board is set out on Page 24 of this report.

The LRLSCB is led by an Independent Chair. The independence of the Chair of the LSCB is a requirement of Working Together 2015. The Independent Chair provides independent scrutiny and challenge and better enables each organisation to be held to account for its safeguarding performance.

Priorities set by the LRLSCB for development and assurance in 2018/19 were that:

- The Board positively influences the development of new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- The impact of multiple risk factors on children is recognised, understood and responded to across agencies
- The pathways for access to services for safeguarding children are robust and effective
- Children at risk of exploitation (including Child Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking, Missing and Gangs) are effectively safeguarded
- The approach to safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is improved

















Safeguarding Children in Leicestershire

From its scrutiny, assurance and learning work the LSCB assesses that whilst there are some areas for improvement, organisations are working well together in Leicestershire to safeguard children.

Safeguarding children snapshot for Leicestershire:

140,307 children and young people aged under-18 live in Leicestershire¹ (20% of the population).

12% of children and young people aged 0-17 are from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background, slightly above the general population of Leicestershire (11.1%).

-  **22,690** contacts to First Response (Children's services) in Leicestershire
-  **4,612** referrals to Early Help services
-  **5,095** referrals to Children's social care
-  **25%** of referrals to CSC were re-referrals
-  **2,866** Children in Need at the end of March 2019
-  **388** Children on Child Protection plans at the end of March 2019
-  **291** Child protection plans during the year where Neglect is a factor – **58%** of all new plans.
-  **76** Child Protection plans were for children who had previously been on a plan - **15%** of all new plans.
-  **315** referrals regarding Child Sexual Exploitation
-  **739** children reported missing
-  **58%** of missing episodes were followed by a return interview
-  **584** Children in Elective Home Education (EHE) at the end of March 2019
-  **78%** of children in EHE during the year received their statutory visits
-  **585** Children in Care
-  **3** notifications regarding Private Fostering arrangements
-  **4,279** referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

While there were more contacts to Children's Services in 2018/19 than the previous year, referrals into Social Care, and the number of children on child protection plans has reduced. Fewer referrals are repeat referrals and there were 53 fewer child

¹ ONS mid-year population estimates 2018

protection plans for children who have previously been on a plan. Neglect is recognised as a factor in larger number of cases than previously.

The strong application of thresholds has supported the maintained reduction in re-referral rates and repeat child protection plans has continued to reduce following a focused piece of work to understand and impact on the repeat plan figures of previous years.

Following work in the previous year an Ofsted focussed visit in October 2018 identified that Leicestershire's 'First Response' service now has a stable workforce, staff feel supported and valued, good practice is celebrated and shared, and morale is high. It noted that staff value the learning culture that has been created, however further work is required regarding understanding of thresholds across the partnership.

Leicestershire County Council carried out a large-scale review of their Early Help service in 2018/19, which resulted in the launch of a new Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) on 1st April 2019. This service merges Children Centres, Supporting Leicestershire Families (the local response to the national Troubled families programme), Youth Offending Services and Early Help Triage and Assessment Services into one integrated service delivered through locality-based multi-skilled teams. The impact and outcomes for service users linked to this new approach will be monitored during 2019/20.

There was a significant increase in the number of referrals regarding Child Sexual Exploitation. There was also a significant increase in children going missing and a smaller proportion of these missing episodes had a return interview. The Board will receive a report regarding this at its final meeting in July 2019.

The number of children in Elective Home Education continued to rise for another year, but the proportion of children who have had a home visit has remained stable. The Board will receive a report regarding Children Missing Education and approaches in place to support good outcomes for these children at its final meeting in July 2019.

The number of Children in Care has continued to increase in line with the national trend.

Increasing numbers of older children are attending their child protection conferences, due to the support of a children's rights officer. Leicestershire have a Strong Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC) group regularly participating in work to ensure their voice is heard and represented in key service developments. These have supported young people to be involved in Foster Care recruitment and training, the recruitment to key posts in the Children and Families service, mapping for care leaver offer and the development and design of Leicestershire's "Promise" to children in care and care leavers.

Leicestershire County Council have put in place a Practice framework for all front-line staff who work with families. This sets out the expectations about practice in

Leicestershire to support consistent and effective practice across services for Children.

Further awareness across agencies and public was carried out regarding private fostering, however numbers of notifications of private fostering arrangements remained low.

Safeguarding Children in Rutland

From its scrutiny, assurance and learning work the LSCB assesses that whilst there are some areas for improvement, organisations are working well together in Rutland to safeguard children.

Safeguarding children snapshot for Rutland:

- ▼ **7,807** children and young people aged under-18 live in Rutland² (20% of the population).
- ▼ **5.7%** of the population of Rutland are from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background.
- ▼ **1,411** contacts to Children's services in Rutland
- ▲ **360** referrals to Children's social care
- ↔ **26%** of referrals to CSC were re-referrals
- ▼ **223** Children in Need at the end of March 2018
- ▲ **22** Children on Child Protection plans at the end of March 2019
- ▲ **24** Child protection plans during the year where Neglect was a factor – **48%** of all new plans.
- ▲ **26** Child Protection plans were for children who had previously been on a plan - **48%** of all new plans.
- ▼ Average caseloads of **16.3** cases per worker
- ↔ **12** referrals regarding Child Sexual Exploitation
- ▼ **14** children reported missing
- ▼ **50%** of return interviews completed
- ▲ **1** Private Fostering referral
- ▲ **13** children in Elective Home Education (EHE) at the end of March 2018
- ▼ **71%** of children in EHE during the year had a statutory visit
- ▲ **33** Children in Care
- ▲ **197** referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- ▲ **45** referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) regarding individuals in positions of trust

² ONS mid-year population estimates 2018

While there were fewer contacts to Children's Services in 2018/19 than the previous year, referrals into Social Care and the number of children on child protection plans has increased after reducing last year. A similar proportion of referrals were repeat referrals however there has been an increase in the number of children on child protection plans who have previously been on a plan. This relates to a few families and some children were on plans in other areas before moving to Rutland.

Rutland County Council continue to monitor decision making regarding child protection plan processes and conduct thematic auditing and moderation to further review this area.

Rutland County Council report that partner engagement in Early Help and their 'Team around the Family' approach is good and professionals have greater confidence to refer into the service or to seek advice and guidance.

Neglect was a factor in a larger number of child protection plans than the previous year.

There have been fewer reports of children going missing but a smaller proportion of these missing episodes had a return interview carried out with the child. This is affected by the small number of children who go missing, a few of which have declined their return interviews, and for some a return interview was not identified as appropriate. In all cases missing episodes were discussed with the children by professionals working with them to support their safety in the future.

There were more children in Elective Home Education during the year than previous year. Over two thirds received a visit from the monitoring service, the remainder declined a visit.

Rutland County Council are looking to review processes and practice to ensure children out of education and children missing their education are known and safe and children with disability are safeguarded.

The number of Children Looked After has increased slightly. Qualified advocates are provided to give children a voice. Thirty-two children received Independent Advocacy support during the year and feedback from young people is positive, with 89% of recipients rating the service as good to excellent.

In March 2019 Rutland County Council had a focussed visit from Ofsted which looked at the children's services 'front door'. The visit found that children are safe and protected in Rutland and partners understand thresholds and act to safeguard children and provide an appropriate and timely response. It also identified some areas for improvement including quality and consistency of assessments and plans and impact on outcomes for children from audits and supervision and management oversight. The LSCB will monitor areas for improvement and hand this over to the new Partnership in September.

More referrals have been made to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Rutland County Council are progressing work on the CAMHS discharge pathway through ongoing engagement in the CAMHS Improvement Group

Safeguarding Children in Leicestershire and Rutland

Our partners provide assurance regarding safeguarding practice and development throughout the year to our Safeguarding Effectiveness Group; key points and developments are included in relevant sections of this report.

During 2018-19 a number of LSCB partners including Leicestershire Police, the National Probation Service (NPS), Rutland County Council, the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and CAF/CASS had external inspections that identified positive practice with regard to safeguarding children. Inspections of the CCGs and Rutland County Council also identified areas for improvement with regard to safeguarding. The LSCB will monitor areas for improvement and hand this over to the new Partnership in September.

There was a reduction in the number of Serious Further Offences committed by offenders supervised by the NPS in Leicestershire.

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust have seen an increase in internal safeguarding children enquiries following the creation of a new single point of access for children requiring urgent care service. This suggests a greater awareness of staff to recognise and respond to potential safeguarding concerns.

The CCGs have refreshed the Children's Safeguarding Quality Makers GP Self-assessment tool. This tool outlines to GP practices what safeguarding processes and procedures are required to be in place to ensure that GP can recognise and respond to child safeguarding concerns.

A Multi-Agency Partnership Performance Meeting has been set up as a forum for partners to share issues and concerns relating to child safeguarding processes and procedures to find solutions.

An increase in the number of children to being taken directly to A&E for sexual abuse medicals instead of being taken to the children's specialist referral centre was identified. The Partnership Performance Meeting group were able to respond quickly and provide information to partners to resolve this with children being appropriately seen and medically examined in a more appropriate and child-focused environment.

In a response to an LSCB survey of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in a previous year the Voluntary and Community Sector reference group of the LSCB communicated key messages to the sector. These messages were focussed on the importance of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, LADO obligations and preventing violent extremism, identified in the survey as apparent gaps in knowledge and practice in the sector.

The Board commissioned the NSPCC to carry out a review of safeguarding in Leisure Centres in Leicestershire & Rutland. The report found no immediate safeguarding concerns but identified some areas for development to be considered across Leisure Centres to support best practice. District Councils and Leisure Providers are working in response to the recommendations and will report back on developments to the new Safeguarding Children Partnership in 2020.

Business Development Plan Priorities

Progress on the Boards priorities is outlined below

LSCB Priority 1 – Influencing transition to new effective multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements for Leicestershire and Rutland

We led work with the safeguarding partners to develop and implement a transition plan for the new arrangements, that includes a children and young people advisory group and an education advisory group.

The Board kept apprised of the developments of the new arrangements and supported these with input from the Independent Chair. The Board's Young People's Advisory Group is part of the new arrangements and a method for engaging with schools is in development.

The new arrangements for the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership will be published in June 2019 and implemented in September 2019.

LSCB Priority 2 – The impact of multiple risk factors on children is recognised, understood and responded to across agencies

We researched and provided guidance to practitioners regarding lack of parental engagement and disguised compliance. We also shared learning from the safeguarding findings of the Child Death Overview Panel reviews of multiple risk factors regarding suicide and infant mortality and review practice, information sharing and service provision with regard to domestic abuse.

We published guidance on disguised compliance on our website and in Safeguarding Matters and carried out a case file audit of cases where domestic abuse was a factor.

Rutland County Council's Emotional Health and Well Being Officer facilitated training on suicide awareness and self-harm for 28 practitioners across agencies locally, with positive feedback.

We will continue to follow up reports on the effectiveness of information sharing and support services in domestic abuse cases where safeguarding children is a concern, following changes in partnership governance of domestic abuse activity in the area.

LSCB Priority 3 – Ensure the pathways for access to services for safeguarding children are robust and effective

We researched good practice and reviewed our local thresholds document to ensure it is compatible with Working Together 2018, clear to practitioners across agencies and that it considers learning from work on multiple risk factors and children with disabilities. We were unable to complete the final version by the end of the year, as further consultation was required in order to agree a joint approach with Leicester LSCB.

The revised Thresholds will be completed in order to commence at the same time as the new Safeguarding Arrangements in September 2019.

LSCB Priority 4 – Children at risk of exploitation are effectively safeguarded

We reviewed how information from Missing Children Return Interviews is analysed and used to support improvements to services and gain assurance that work on Child Sexual Exploitation is safeguarding and improving outcomes for children.

We sought assurance that children missing education are known and safeguarded and monitored the emergence of referrals regarding gangs and Child Criminal Exploitation.

We carried out case file audits regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Children going Missing and fed the findings into the delivery groups for those areas of work. Action by the local CSE hub in response to the CSE audit findings was reported to the Board in January 2019. Analysis of returns interviews a response to the Missing audit and work with Children Missing Education was reported to the Board at its final meeting in July 2019.

Leicestershire Police in partnership with forces in the country launched the 'Brecks last game' film and educational resource. This highlights the danger of online grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation and particularly raises awareness that there is risk to boys as well as girls.

In Leicestershire there was a 32% increase in the number of children going missing (179 more) but missing episodes were at the same level as the previous year (2 fewer).

In Rutland there was a 33% reduction in the number of children going missing (7 fewer) and a 20% reduction in the number of missing episodes (5 fewer) compared to the previous year.

Leicestershire County Council alongside Leicestershire police were selected to contribute to "The First Step" report completed by The Children's Society. The research was commissioned by the Home Office to assist in developing the national picture of Return Interview provision and identify good practice. It was recognised that there was a good shared understanding between police, the Return Interviewers and Children's social care.

Over a fifth of children who go missing in Leicestershire & Rutland are placed here in the care of other local authorities. In many cases Leicestershire and Rutland Councils and partners have not been notified of the placement of these children locally, which hinders initial risk management and affects planning to manage future risks.

We supported the production and launch of a Looked After Children guidance pack (LAC Pack) for local residential providers. The pack contains statutory guidance, a directory of local resources and a notification form. It has been welcomed by local care providers to support them in safeguarding children in their care.

Partnership strategic and tactical structures for CSE have been revised to incorporate all forms of exploitation such as criminal exploitation and 'County Lines' and not solely sexual exploitation to better reflect the emerging risks. Partners including the Local Authorities and Police have reviewed their internal structures and approaches to better support a response to broader exploitation.

Learning from operations in Rutland have been used to develop exploitation as a priority area for children's services, including introducing a dedicated exploitation social worker to join up local intelligence and training and connect to the CSE Hub resulting in an improved response to vulnerable children.

Leicestershire Police have revised their triage process for CSE to streamline and increase

the efficiency and effectiveness of the process in ensuring that vulnerable children are identified, assessed and supported effectively and perpetrators are also identified and managed effectively.

LSCB Priority 5 – Improve the approach to safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We responded to the organisational assessment and audits carried out by the LSCB in 2017-18 by reviewing and updating safeguarding thresholds and procedures for children with disabilities and developing awareness raising material to promote good safeguarding of children with disabilities.

We ran two practitioner spotlight events bringing 144 practitioners together over the two events. The events disseminated the learning from the audits and focused on the assessment of children using experiential learning to help participants develop their understanding and practice. Further training needs for practitioners were requested as part of these events and a follow up evaluation is underway to gauge impact on practice following the events.

We will finalise procedures and address further identified training needs in 2019 and in the work of the new partnership.

Operation of the Board

Engagement and Participation

Partner Engagement and Attendance

The Board met four times during 2018/19. Leicestershire and Rutland County Councils, the Police and the West Leicestershire and East Leicestershire & Rutland Clinical Commissioning Groups were represented at all ordinary Board meetings during the year.

Attendance by other members at Board meetings remain good across most other partners, with some exceptions. Schools were only represented at two of the meetings, and normally this was only partial representation of the sector. The National Probation Service and CAF/CASS did not attend any Board meetings this year, however it is recognised they have a regional role covering many boards and have written to explain the challenges for them attending.

Attendance at subgroups of the Board is good across agencies and all partners have engaged in the work of the Board such as reviews and audits.

The membership of the Board can be found on the Boards website www.lrsb.org.uk. The role of all agencies in the new partnerships will be set out in the safeguarding arrangements. Engagement with schools and education more broadly will be developed in the new arrangements.

Voluntary Sector Engagement and Participation

The Board has a Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Reference Group that provides a link to a broad range of voluntary sector groups to communicate key messages from the Board to the voluntary and community sector and to feed in the views and challenges of the sector into the Board.

The group identified concerns regarding homelessness and children and started to scope the scale of this to report in 2019.

Fewer VCS agencies engaged through the reference group during the year. With less involvement from the local infrastructure agency the group felt their reach into the sector reduced. Work is underway to ensure sustainable engagement in the new partnership arrangements.

Participation and the Voice of children

The Board has developed its approach to engaging children and young people in its work.

The Safeguarding Board's Young Peoples Advisory Group is up and running incorporating young people from Leicestershire and Rutland. The Young People's Advisory Group led sessions at two LSCB meetings during the year. At the first session the young people presented two of their priorities relating to safeguarding

(domestic abuse and mental health) and worked with Board Members to identify action that could be taken to respond to these.

The Young People's Advisory Group also led LSCB scrutiny of the Future in Mind programmes work on developing Mental Health Services for children and young people and worked with Board Members to put together a plan to improve the response to this.

During the year young people from the Advisory Group worked with Words over Weapons knife crime project to raise awareness of knife crime with their peers.

The Advisory Group will continue to ensure the voice of children and young people is very visible in the work of the new Safeguarding Children Arrangements.

The LSCB has received reports on the voice of children and families and how agencies are recording and responding to these through its Safeguarding Effectiveness Group. These show that agencies across the partnership are listening to and responding to the voice of children to support safeguarding and broader service delivery. Multi-agency audits through the year showed a clear improvement in agencies hearing and responding to the voice of children.

The CCGs have provided additional funding for LSCB training materials to support commissioned services to evidence hearing and responding to the voice of children.

Assurance – Challenges and Quality Assurance

Challenge Log

The Board keeps a challenge log to monitor challenges raised by the Board and the outcomes of the challenges. During the year the following challenges were raised by the Board with safeguarding partners regarding the following topics:

- LSCB Multi-agency audits continue to identify recurring issues with regard to plans, supervision, assessments and recording with no apparent progress on improving in these key areas.

Following these challenges:

- Agencies were asked to report to the Board on their action to address these areas. This was reported to the LSCB at its final meeting in July 2019.
- The Board, with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Board reviewed its audit approach to ensure the process is identifying the most important areas for improvement with regard to multi-agency safeguarding. This identified that the process could have a greater focus on the multi-agency elements of safeguarding. This will be incorporated in the LSCBs multi-agency audits in 2019 and the approach taken by the new Safeguarding Children Partnership.

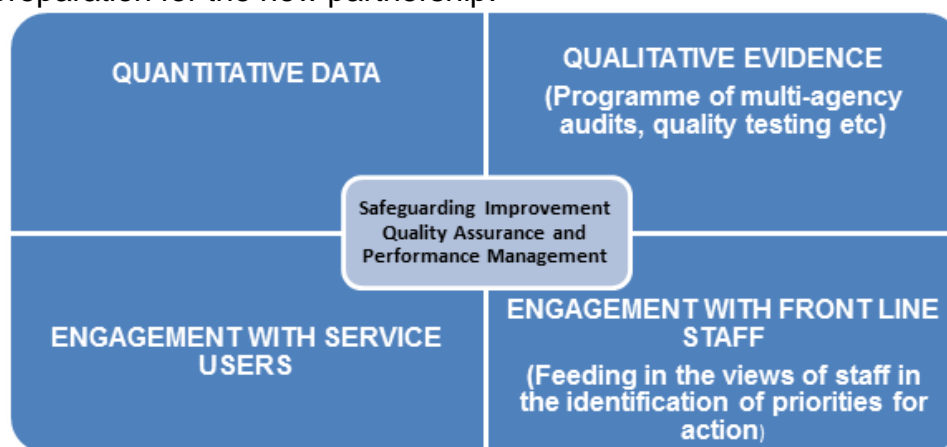
Work to address concerns from the previous year regarding agency attendance at Initial Child Protection Conferences started, but was delayed due to changes in staff. This has remained a concern and work recommenced at the end of the year to be concluded in 2019.

Quality Assurance and Performance Management Framework

The Board operates a four quadrant Quality Assurance and Performance Management Framework as outlined below. This is overseen by the Boards Safeguarding Effectiveness Group (SEG) shared with the SAB. The outcomes of and findings from this performance framework are incorporated in the relevant sections within the report.

The detailed elements of this are reviewed each year to ensure this provides assurance regarding core safeguarding business as well as business plan priorities and other emerging issues.

The overall model will also be reviewed and engagement elements of the framework, both with staff and service users require some further development in the coming year in preparation for the new partnership.



Audits

In 2017-18 the LSCB revised its approach to 'Section 11' audits on agencies' compliance with their duties within Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to a peer-review based approach every two years. In 2019 the LSCB requested updates on progress against improvement plans from the process in 2017/18 to be incorporated in the Annual Report...

In addition to its 'Section 11' assurance process the Board continued its approach to multi-agency auditing. During the year four safeguarding multi-agency case file audits were carried out focussing on the following priorities:

- Children affected by Domestic Abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Sexual Abuse in the Family
- Missing Children

The audit themes were identified based upon findings from reviews, emerging issues and follow up to previous Board work.

The audit process follows a Multi-Agency Case File Audit approach. All relevant agencies audit their practice and involvement in a set number of identified cases. Each case and the findings of each individual agency's audit of that case are

reviewed in a multi-agency meeting to discuss practice and identify further single-agency and multi-agency learning. Findings are considered in the context of learning from previous audits.

All four audits were carried out in conjunction with Leicester Safeguarding Children Board. Each audit considered five cases from Leicestershire and two cases from Rutland, except for the Child Sexual Abuse in the Family audit. No appropriate cases were identified in Rutland to audit under this theme.

Overall the audits showed an improvement through the year and compared to previous years with regard to hearing and responding to the voice and lived experience of children. They also highlighted some examples of good persistent work to engage with children and families.

Whilst audits showed some improvement in information sharing between agencies with cases of good information sharing with a clear impact on safeguarding children, they also identified recurring gaps in information sharing between Local Authorities and health agencies.

The audits identified that referrals to agencies who provide specialist support (e.g. for substance misuse, domestic abuse or sexual violence) were not always being made when these might support improved outcomes for children and families. When referrals for support are being made information on specific risks such as domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and missing episodes is not always being shared.

Following the CSE audit further assurance was requested from and provided by Rutland County Council with regard to their approach to working with cases involving CSE.

As outlined in the challenge log the following areas were identified as recurring issues in cases during the year and from previous years:

- Supervision of frontline staff was not always robust
- Case recording was not of good quality.
- Multi-agency plans were often not specific and measurable
- Multi-agency assessments varied in quality

Agencies were asked to report the action they were taking to ensure they were improving their practice and contribution to multi-agency working in these areas.

Work is underway to improve communication with and involvement of GPs in safeguarding. Through the Safeguarding Matters newsletter and inter-agency training the Board is reminding practitioners to consider how appropriate referrals for support can support safeguarding of children.

The audit findings were also communicated to the domestic abuse and child exploitation operations groups as appropriate to act upon specific findings relating to their areas of work.

A multi-agency audit plan for 2019 has been set in conjunction with the Leicester City LSCB for the coming year linked to the Board's priorities and national Joint Targeted Area Inspection themes.

Learning and Improvement

Serious Case Reviews and other Learning Reviews

Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are described within *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* and are statutory reviews undertaken by Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) for cases where abuse or neglect is known or suspected and either:

- A child dies; or
- A child is seriously harmed and there are concerns as to the way in which the authority, their Board partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child.

The LSCB has a well-used referral process into its Safeguarding Case Review Subgroup that considers whether cases meet SCR criteria or may otherwise be appropriate and beneficial to review to support learning and improvement across the partnership. Decisions regarding cases to review and appropriate types of review are supported by the Learning and Improvement Framework, shared with between the two LSCBs and two SABs across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.

The Board completed two SCRs in line with Working Together 2015 guidance during the year.

Four further SCRs were underway at the end of the year.

The LSCB took the opportunity to gain learning regarding multi-agency safeguarding practice from six cases that did not meet the criteria for a SCR. The LSCB utilised alternative review methods including Appreciative Enquiry learning events.

Learning from reviews

The following arose in the learning and recommendations from all reviews:

- Denied/concealed pregnancies present a high risk to the babies, particularly at the time of birth, and have statistically significant worse outcomes
- The categories of harm for children in situations of parental domestic abuse need to be carefully considered to ensure all risk factors are considered
- The importance and specific purpose of parts of the child protection process are not always well understood by professionals not regularly involved in child protection processes
- The Board needs greater assurance that Child Protection plans are both SMART and robustly implemented
- All professionals should be supported in considering the impact on them of working with people who present as aggressive / challenging behaviour
- Information sharing with and involvement of health professionals in multi-agency safeguarding processes could be improved
- A continued focus on the lived experience of children with staff is required to support ongoing effective safeguarding

The influence of this learning can be seen in the work of the Board in its priorities, Training and Development of Procedures this year and in priorities and will inform the work of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The Safeguarding Case Review Subgroup monitors a master action plan containing recommendations and actions arising from all reviews.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

The LSCB and SAB manage the process for carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) on behalf of and commissioned by the Community Safety Partnerships in Leicestershire and Rutland. This is managed through the joint Children and Adults section of the Boards' SCR Subgroup. Three DHRs were underway at the end of the year.

Development Work and Disseminating Learning

The LSCB produces a quarterly newsletter in conjunction with the Safeguarding Adults Board, called Safeguarding Matters. This is used to disseminate key messages including from reviews and audits across the partnership and to front-line practitioners.

Learning has also been shared through Learning Events and the Trainers Network and single agency internal processes.

Leicestershire County Council hold annual practice summits including learning from multi-agency reviews.

Clinical Commissioning Groups have disseminated learning from reviews to GPs through quarterly GP forums with an average of 40 GP practices represented at each one by their GP Safeguarding Lead.

These forums aim to foster effective professional relationships between GPs and the multi-agency partnership through direct discussions about safeguarding children issues. They enable GPs to build on their knowledge base and basic safeguarding children training to effectively safeguard the children in their registered practice population.

LLR GPs have been able to engaged in discussing over 30 safeguarding topics including those messages from Child Serious Case Reviews which have required changes to be made in GP practice.

The forums have received positive reviews and feedback by the GPs including that GPs have a much clearer idea of how to manage safeguarding issues in GP practice settings

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The CDOP is a key part of the LSCB's Learning and Improvement Framework since it reviews all child deaths in the Local Authority areas and identifies any modifiable factors, for example, in the family environment, parenting capacity or service provision and considers what action could be taken locally, regionally and nationally to address these.

The local CDOP, shared with Leicester City, reviewed all child deaths in the area and identified learning from these.

The CDOP review of deaths caused by suicide or self-harm in 2017/18 was followed up with events to disseminate the learning to practitioners.

The following learning was also identified in 2017/18:

- Over the years CDOP have noted a number of occasions where the information on organ donation is missing or where there isn't a clear explanation of whether organ donation was discussed with parents.
- CDOP reviewed a number of deaths resulting from knife crime and noted increased national attention and prevalence on this issue.

These two areas were followed up by partners through a case audit and a review respectively, which were finalised in 2018/19.

The local CDOP produces its own annual report, which will be published in the Autumn of 2019 and will summarise its work and learning from reviews in 2018/19.

Co-ordination of and Procedures for Safeguarding Children

The Board shares its multi-agency procedures with the Leicester City LSCB. Throughout the year the Board has reviewed and revised Multi-Agency Procedures in line with developments in local practice, practitioner feedback, learning from reviews and audits and changes to national guidelines including Working Together 2018.

The procedures are available through the Leicester and Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Boards' website and <http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/>.

In addition to review of a number of procedures the Board developed new safeguarding procedures regarding:

- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Children from Abroad, including Victims of Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Exploitation
- Management of Marks of Concern in Pre-Mobile Babies and Non-Independently Mobile Children

The Boards also completed work on a single Multi-Agency Referral Form for all agencies to use to refer into children services front door for any of the Local Authorities in the area. The form was launched in April 2019 with training sessions to

support effective referrals planned through 2019/20. Some agencies, such as LPT have incorporated this into their systems to support good referrals.

Changes to procedures have been communicated through bulletins, the LSCB and SAB's Safeguarding Matters newsletter and through training events encouraging use by practitioners.

Access to the LLR LSCB multi-agency safeguarding procedures has increased. Google Analytical data shows that there has been an increase of 12% in users and of 10% in sessions in 2018-2019 compared to the previous year.

The suite of procedures are being reviewed in line with the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and this along with a transfer of procedures to a new platform is to be completed by September 2019.

Review of the current functions of the LLR LSCB Procedures and Development Group to ensure full alignment with the new Multiagency Safeguarding Arrangement's vision and operational model

Training and Development

The LSCBs Multi-Agency Training Programme is shared with Leicester LSCB and co-ordinated and delivered through the shared Multi-Agency Training Group (MATG).

The group has representatives from all key partner agencies and the training has been delivered through these partners offering their resources, in terms of time, space or finance. This allows a comprehensive programme to be offered which is aligned to the priorities of the business plans of the LSCBs across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR), and any areas of development arising from national and local Serious Case Reviews.

Due to a change in delivery the Multi-Agency Training Programme was suspended for the first quarter of 2018/19 and then began to build to a more comprehensive offer in quarters three and four and more opportunities for learning are being created. The change in website for advertising the programme was initially a barrier, however, there has been a lot of work and networking around ensuring that staff in the children's workforce in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland all know to go to the LSCB websites.

In the last quarter of 2018-19 the Board adopted a Charging policy, which requires some agencies would have to pay according to their status role and contribution to the training programme. The proceeds will be used to further meet any learning needs of the children's workforce across LLR.

The LSCB also facilitates a local trainer's network which supports development of local safeguarding trainers through development sessions and networking.

In total 28 courses were delivered across 9 safeguarding themes, with 1,059 participants in training from across agencies, promoting networking and partnership working.

Training linked to the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland LSCB key priorities included:

- Disabled Children
- Neglect
- Children's Mental Health
- Trilogy of Risk/Multiple Risk Factors
- Child Sexual Abuse

In addition, the LSCB was able to support the dissemination of learning that is delivered across LLR to a multi-agency audience from United Against Violence and Abuse (UAVA), Turning Point, and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

The Board linked with the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Adults boards to deliver a Safeguarding Conference incorporating the following cross-cutting themes:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- The importance of participation and the voice of the child
- Coercive Control
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

This was a successful event with 103 participants across the partnership agencies from adult's and children's services, and across LLR. The evaluations showed that staff from all areas had found the information given was interesting and relevant.

With the change in the co-ordination and delivery of the programme, the evaluation process is in its infancy however from two large-scale events on "Safeguarding Disabled Children: Focus on Assessment", it has been possible to gain some insight into the impact of the learning. Of 139 participants across the two events, following the events:

- 88% rated their knowledge as a 4 or 5 (with 5 being high level and 1 being low level)
- 85% rated their skills as a 4 or 5 and,
- 82% rated their confidence as a 4 or 5.

In addition, following the large-scale event on child sexual exploitation 96% of attendees felt that the benefit of meeting colleagues/exchanging information in a local context was a positive or extremely positive element of the training.

Further evaluation of the data from the training events is required to assess the benefits and impact of the Multi-Agency Training Programme to date. There is a plan to evaluate courses three months after delivery, however this has not been commenced. The courses are popular, and the uptake demonstrates a need for and value of such training.

A new Learning Management System is being sourced to help to manage and analyse the training data.

Partners have provided assurance that they are providing up to date training to staff to improve safeguarding awareness and address specific areas of need. Specific areas covered by agencies include Prevent in University Hospitals of Leicester and input regarding the 'one front door' approach in the National Probation Service locally. Leicestershire County Council overhauled the learning offer for social workers in April 2018 with all training explicitly linked to their Knowledge and Skills statements and an annual review and refresh to ensure new areas are incorporated.

Leicestershire & Rutland SAB and LSCB Finance 2018-19

	£
SAB Contributions	
Leicestershire County Council	52,798
Rutland County Council	8,240
Leicestershire Police	7,970
Clinical Commissioning Groups (West Leicestershire and East Leicestershire & Rutland)	15,930
University Hospitals of Leicestershire NHS Trust	7,970
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust	7,970
Total SAB Income	100,878
LSCB Contributions	
Leicestershire County Council	83,061
Rutland County Council	52,250
Leicestershire Police	43,940
Clinical Commissioning Groups (West Leicestershire and East Leicestershire & Rutland)	55,760
Cafcass	550
National Probation Service	1,348
Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland Community Rehabilitation Company (Reducing Re-offending Partnership)	3,000
Total LSCB Income	239,909
Total Income (LSCB & SAB)	340,787
	£
SAB and LSCB Operating Expenditure	
Staffing	210,469
Independent Chairing	25,867
Support Services	30,500
Operating Costs	12,935
Case Reviews (SAB)	15,505
Case Reviews (LSCB)	13,461
Young Peoples Advisory Group (LSCB)	1,736
Training Co-ordination and Provision (LSCB)	39,600
Total SAB & LSCB Operating Expenditure	350,073
Deficit	£9,286
LSCB & SAB Reserve account at end of year	£41,760

Business Plan Priorities 2019

The LSCB will continue work on the priorities identified for 2018-19 until it ceases to operate by the end of September 2019:

Development Priority	Summary
1. Partnership Transition	Influence the development of new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
2. Multiple Risk Factors	The impact of multiple risk factors on children is recognised, understood and responded to across agencies
3. Safeguarding Children – Access to Services	Ensure the pathways for access to services for safeguarding children are robust and effective
4. Child Exploitation - (Child Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking, Missing and Gangs)	Children at risk of exploitation are effectively safeguarded
5. Safeguarding Children with Disabilities	Improve the approach to safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Action plans have been reviewed and extended to September 2019 for each of these priorities.

The LSCB will contribute to the Safeguarding Adults Board priority of Safeguarding in Transitions which is exploring how support for children affected by abuse provided before and as they move from children to adult services contributes to preventing Safeguarding need in their adult life.



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 3 SEPTEMBER 2019

EARLY YEARS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work taking place across the County to support children in their early years, including the department's work in the Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service. The report summarises the progress made by the Service in delivering its statutory and non-statutory functions.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The legislation that governs the work of the Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service is the Childcare Act 2016.
3. A report was presented to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Free Early Education Entitlement on 5 June 2017.

Background

4. The vision, set out in the Children and Families Department Plan, is that Leicestershire is the best place for children, young people and their families.
5. A key priority in the Children and Families Partnership Plan is that every child gets the best start in life and the department is committed to providing support to ensure that young children's health, development and learning are the best they can be. In Leicestershire it is the aim that young children are emotionally resilient and able to reach their potential when they start school. The Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service works directly with children and families, but also with early years providers and schools. The work seeks to ensure all children can thrive taking a targeted approach in deploying resources to ensure that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children are prioritised.
6. In 2018, the Early Years Inclusion and Childcare service was restructured. The review of the service was necessary to ensure that going forward the service was fit for purpose and that there is sufficient high-quality childcare that meets the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Early Years Provision

7. The Local Authority has a duty to secure sufficient high-quality childcare provision which supports parents back into work or study (this includes out of school and holiday provision for 0-14 years (18 years SEND)).
8. The Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service delivers and commissions support to those providers that are judged to be less than good by Ofsted and provides advice and guidance to all providers in the county. Currently in Leicestershire 95% of all childcare providers have a rating from Ofsted of good or outstanding.
9. In Leicestershire the market is dominated by private, voluntary and independent providers. This means that the role of the Early Years Inclusion and Childcare service is critical in positively influencing and shaping the market providers and securing improved outcomes for pre-school children.
10. The service monitors the opening and closure of provision on a monthly basis to ensure the sector has sufficient childcare places. This alerts the service to any gaps in provision across the county. As part of the monitoring process, quality or sustainability is taken into account including type of provision and diversity. The table below indicates the last financial year's (31 March 2018 – 1 April 2019) opening and closing of provision in the county:-

	Open	Closed
Private Voluntary Independent	4	7
Full day care	2	4
Out of School	0	1

11. Full day care provision has been closed during this period due to inadequate judgements by Ofsted and quality issues, whereas private voluntary and independent pre-schools in rural areas have closed due to sustainability issues and low numbers of children attending the provision.
12. The introduction of the new Ofsted inspection framework could have an impact on the quality of provision as providers come to terms with the new framework. However, the service is providing free training in September for providers to attend and has been distributing regular newsletters to prepare them. If there is a dip in good or outstanding provision this could have an impact on those providers who are able to offer two-year-old provision. The improvement advisors are visiting all providers at least four times a year and it is hoped that this will help to support and maintain the quality of provision.

Free Early Education Entitlement

13. The Local Authority has a responsibility to administer and monitor the take up of the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) for eligible two year old children. In Leicestershire 72% of eligible children are funded (this includes children who are out of county that are educated in Leicestershire provision) which is above the national average of 68%. 96% of two year olds in Leicestershire access good and outstanding provision. Take up of free early education available to all three and four year olds is at 98%. 93% access good and outstanding provision in Leicestershire; 25% outstanding and 68% good.
14. The Childcare Act 2016 introduced a new statutory requirement for the local authority. From September 2017 there had to be available an additional 15 hours per week of free childcare for eligible working parents of three and four year olds; this essentially doubled the universal entitlement. The 15 hour entitlement for the most disadvantaged two year olds remains in place. The new policy envisaged a significant, positive impact on families, helping to give children the best start in life, and making childcare more affordable for parents so that they can take up work or work additional hours.
15. In June 2019, 96.2% parents accessed the extended entitlement and validated codes, an increase from the previous term (90%). In addition to this, 24.3% of parents have chosen to take an additional five hours which represents a very slight increase on last year, and 43.6% of parents have chosen to take an additional 12.5-15 hours which is also an increase. 23% of two year olds who were in receipt of free childcare who turned three went on to take up 30 hours of childcare.

Early Years Funding

16. The Local Authority's allocated funding is provided through the Early Years Block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The funding is based on the January census data completed by providers immediately preceding the financial year and adjusted by the census from the following year. Leicestershire is one of the 48 authorities receiving the lowest rate of funding per pupil for free early education entitlement.
17. The sector continues to face significant financial pressures, as pension contributions and minimum wages impact on the small businesses. The free early education entitlement has not been reviewed since 2017 and the introduction of the extended entitlement has made some providers unsustainable.

Early Years Workforce Development

18. Ensuring that the workforce remains highly qualified remains a key focus for the local authority. Currently 59% of two, three and four year olds are supported by graduate practitioners compared to 52% nationally. However, the introduction of the extended entitlement has made it more difficult for smaller providers to access training, due to backfilling staff and maintaining ratios. There is also a concern relating to the maintenance of a highly skilled workforce as staff move from the sector.

19. In response to this challenge, e-learning materials have been developed to enable providers to access materials in their own time or to support staff meetings. The service has developed a training plan to streamline and prioritise the training that practitioners should attend.
20. In 2017 the government released a report entitled 'Unlocking Talent Fulfilling Potential'. This focuses on the need to improve social mobility and for early years this is through reducing the word gap. The Service is involved with different initiatives to support children's language development. Using funding from Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership the service is working with Syston Teaching Education Partnership teaching school to deliver a language-based programme. Schools and their feeder preschools are working together to support school readiness. Leicestershire County Council has also been invited to be one of the 53 local authorities to receive training to support 15 providers with their language provision.
21. As part of the new training available the service is working closely with the Education Psychology service to offer an emotional literacy support assistant programme for the early years, due to be rolled out in October. In house training packages are being developed for providers to receive at their own setting and will be available from September.

School Readiness

22. As part of the department's partnership plan and priority of ensuring that young children get the best start in life, the service has been instrumental in developing a shared school readiness definition across a range of partners, including health education and social care. Leaflets have been developed for parents giving them practical ideas to get their child ready for school.
23. These were distributed through Leicestershire Partnership Trust in October 2018 to all parents whose children were due to start school in September 2019. Using the lessons learned, the service has contributed to the development of the 1001 critical days leaflets to be used with parents and partners to share key messages about the importance of talking, playing, cuddling, relaxing and responding with very young children.
24. A two-day conference was held for schools, pre-schools and childminders to attend where 140 practitioners learnt more about how to support children to be school ready. A school readiness web-based toolkit will be launched in September for schools, pre-schools and childminders.
25. A pathway of further support for young children between health, the Early years inclusion and childcare service, and children, family and well-being service is being developed for those children who have been identified at risk of delay at the two year development check.

Early Years SEND

26. This year there has been a significant rise in the number of referrals made to the Early years SEND advisors

Early Years SEND Referral Panel

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Referrals	296	321	379	536

27. This had led to a review of the process and a reallocation of caseload. The service has continued to reflect upon its offer and to work closely with children and family partnerships to ensure children's needs are being met prior to starting school.
28. To better respond to potential SEND issues the service has developed a graduated approach to build capacity in the sector. An early identification graduated approach booklet has been written and shared with providers, which has been welcomed to support their staff, use for training and also as a tool to share with parents.
29. A daily duty desk is available for advice and guidance for practitioners, and providers can access drop in surgeries where a range of professionals are able to give advice.
30. Inclusion funding is used to support children with additional and emerging needs to access their local provision. During the coming months the service will consult with providers about how to utilise future funding to support children. The service will work with finance and the communication service to ensure that the sector is well informed of the proposals.
31. In May, five inclusion practitioners were employed to support children of non-statutory school age who are at risk of exclusion. These practitioners support the child in their placement, modelling good practice for the school or setting. When a setting or school have a child that is at risk, a senior/team manager will discuss reasonable adjustments to determine if there is anything that can be done to support the child within the setting. The next level of support involves the inclusion practitioner working intensively with the setting and the child to model strategies. If breakdown of placement is still a concern, then there is the option of a dual or assessment place at Menphys specialist nursery, with the view to getting the child back into mainstream school with an Education Health and Care Plan or into specialist provision if appropriate.
32. During May to July the team supported 10 children in total in an intensive capacity within the school/setting that they are in. One of the children went from a 10-day fixed exclusion to be supported to increase his hours. By the end of the term, he was in for the entire school period avoiding any further exclusions.
33. Due to the significant increase in the number of children with SEND referred to the Early Years panel requesting specialist teaching support, and responding to feedback from headteachers, parents and providers, the early years autism

team will broaden its remit. This will allow the service to better support those children who have not yet got a diagnosis but have an identified need relating to social communication and sensory processing.

34. In November 2018 the service held its first SEND conference for 90 professionals which was well received. The conference in 2019 will support young children's social communication. 21 practitioners were trained to be level 4 Special Educational Needs co-ordinators for their provision and at least five have fed back that they would like to take their qualification further. Practitioners have reflected on their provision, ways of working with parents and the inclusive environment they provide. The service is looking to retrain a further cohort to support the sector and train the workforce. Targeted training for the downs syndrome pathway and social communication has also been delivered to support transition to school.

Outcomes

35. At the end of the Foundation stage, an assessment for all children completing their reception year is completed. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The main purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of individual children at the end of the EYFS.
36. EYFS profile data is used to:
- inform parents about their child's development against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and the characteristics of their learning;
 - support a smooth transition to key stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers; and
 - help year 1 teachers plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.
37. In addition, the EYFS profile provides an accurate national data set relating to levels of child development at the end of the EYFS. The DfE uses this to monitor changes in levels of children's development and their readiness for the next phase of their education both nationally and locally. Leicestershire's EYFSP continues to rise year on year. This year for the first time Leicestershire learners are above national average for children who receive a good level of development (GLD) by the time they leave the foundation stage. 72.1% received a good level of development against a provisional national average of 71.8%.
38. Those children who are in receipt of free school meals underachieve compared with their peers. 593 children have been identified in Leicestershire as being in receipt of the free school meal. 44.8% of these children gain a good level of development.
39. It is apparent that not all children who are entitled to free school meals and the pupil premium that it attracts are accessing their entitlement. This can be seen

by the numbers of children accessing similar entitlements in the early years. In Spring 2019 there were 1240 two-year olds claiming their free education entitlement and 737 three and four year olds accessing their early years pupil premium. This was an increase of 100 from the previous year due to a targeted piece of work to ensure all providers in disadvantaged areas were working with parents to claim for eligible children to support improved outcomes for children.

40. Therefore, in order to try and ensure an increased access to children entitled to free school meals and the pupil premium, the service continues to work with Leicestershire traded services to support parents with accessing a portal to increase the uptake of free school meals when their child starts school. The Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service will also work closely with the school education effectiveness partners to raise the profile with headteachers to ensure children starting school access their entitlement and schools use the funding accordingly on their youngest children.

Conclusions.

41. Children's outcomes, in their early years continue to improve by the end of the foundation stage (first year in school). Although children's attainment is measured at the end of the reception year, account is also taken of the pre-school experiences children have had.
42. Children continue to access high quality provision in Leicestershire as evidenced by the high percentage of good and outstanding providers.
43. Excellent local relationships combined with strong communication with the sector has helped to continue to deliver the extended entitlement in Leicestershire. Local providers have demonstrated considerable willingness and flexibility in responding to this significant challenge.
44. Leicestershire has a growing range of delivery models including opportunities for developing a blended offer for parents where they cannot access 30 hours in one provision.
45. Pro-active and tailored communications with key internal and external partners have successfully promoted the school readiness materials.
46. The service is in a better position to support the sector with early identification of children with emerging and additional needs and put in programmes of support for these children.

Background papers

Child Care Act 2016: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/5/enacted>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

47. There are no equality or human rights implications arising from this report.
Where service changes are made EHRI Assessments are undertaken.

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 3 SEPTEMBER 2019

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work undertaken by the department to tackle the challenges around the recruitment and retention of social workers and the current position.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The development of a dedicated Recruitment and Retention Strategy was reported to the Children's Social Care Panel on 28 June 2018 and 26 February 2019.
3. A report was presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 November 2018 providing an update on recruitment and retention. It was agreed that further updates would be provided to the Committee.

Background

4. The challenge to recruit and retain a stable social worker workforce is experienced across the UK. In July 2019, MPs launched an inquiry that will investigate workforce pressures faced by children's social workers and explore their ability to perform their roles.
5. Whilst Children and Family Services in Leicestershire enjoyed stability for a relatively long period, this has now changed with more significant levels of churn experienced across teams. The department recognised the significant and sustained pressures on teams resulting from agency staff turnover, high levels of sickness and maternity leave as well as the complexity of cases. As a result, additional temporary capacity has been approved through DMT in 2018/19 to seek to address this (20 wte agency workers).
6. Working in children's services is extremely challenging. The nature of the work is increasingly complex and is focused on the most vulnerable children who have experienced significant trauma from their earliest years. Daily working in

situations of abuse and risk, witnessing high levels of distress and trauma, takes its toll on individuals. The risk of 'burn out' is real and some workers choose agency work to vary their experience and provide the flexibility to take regular breaks. Research indicates that the average career span of a children's social worker is seven years (Reforming Social Work 2013¹).

7. There is persistent difficulty in recruiting more experienced social workers meaning that the department must rely on recruiting newly qualified social workers. Whilst this successful recruitment is positive, these workers are required to undertake an Assessment and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) which involves a reduced caseload and greater level of support and supervision. Currently, the department has six agency workers providing additional support for ASYE workers.
8. The market for social workers is exceptionally competitive, with strong competition from neighbouring authorities and local agencies. In comparison, Leicestershire salaries are below those of neighbouring authorities and this is contributing to the difficulties in the recruitment of the necessary number and grade of staff. At end of June 2019, the department had the following vacancies:
 - 15 x Social worker
 - 6.5 x Senior Practitioner
 - 3.5 x Team Manager

Developing a Dedicated Strategy

9. A dedicated strategy was developed as a short/medium term response to the significant recruitment and retention challenges within Children's Social Care and has remained a dynamic and responsive tool steering this work. The department is in the second year of the strategy and has made good progress over the past year, with actions largely delivered. These have positively impacted with some reductions in turnover and vacancy rates.
10. In June 2019 new goals and additional actions for year two of the strategy were approved by DMT. These are intended to further consolidate progress and provide a focus more specifically on the emotional impact of the work experienced by workers.
11. The implementation plan for the strategy has a total of 24 actions identified. Of these, 20 have been completed and 4 are partially completed. The following points summarise some of the main work completed in the last year:
 - The introduction of a market premia for key roles in social work has seen a positive impact in terms of attracting candidates. This action has taken Leicestershire to the market median.

¹ Reforming Social Work. Policy Exchange 2013

- The department has adopted a 'grow your own' approach to widen the routes into social work. Three Frontline students will qualify in September 2019, with a further five in September 2020. There are six social work apprentices deployed who will finish a three-year qualification programme in summer 2022. This means there will be a steady number of qualified workers coming through to fill vacancies.
- The refreshed ASYE programme ensures that newly qualified social workers receive a strong support offer in their first year in practice. Success is seen in the high retention rates of Level 2 workers remaining in Leicestershire.
- New policy and guidance documents are helping to strengthen the development of high-quality supervision across social work practice. The emphasis on reflection and analysis is a response to staff feedback.
- An annual programme of leadership training for new and aspiring managers is underway, giving a strong emphasis on the expectations of leaders in Leicestershire. This programme will help the department to better 'talent spot' and develop future managers – critical for succession planning.
- Minimum monthly protected learning is now a requirement for both managers and teams, giving a focus on active learning and continuous professional development. This has been part of the efforts to create a safe learning culture which both Ofsted and peer reviewers complimented.
- The new career pathway, alongside a refreshed learning offer, ensures that workers are fully aware of the knowledge and skills statements and the professional capabilities framework. As a result, the ASYE workers and Level 2 social workers will all be better prepared for future national accreditation and demonstrating their fitness to practice.
- There has been a streamlined coordination of recruitment processes with dedicated business support.

Assessing Impact

12. Assessing impact is complex with so many inter-dependencies. However, from the 2017/18 baseline, three data measures are being used to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy. The table below shows the progress made:

Measure	Baseline (2017)	December 2018	March 2019	June 2019
Turnover rate ²	19.6% (38.8)	13.3% (31.3)	13.3% (31.3)	13.3% (31.3)
Vacancy rate ³	18.5% (50.2)	9.8% (23.5)	4.6% (13.5)	9.6% (25)
Agency rate ⁴	18.7% (49)	17.5% (48.5)	14.2% (41)	16.9% (53)

13. Data in relation to vacancies shows some improvements from the baseline. However, the figures show a fluctuating picture. Whilst the table above shows a recent significant rise in both vacancy and agency numbers, the majority of this is due to the additional permanent posts recently agreed by DMT (two team managers (part time) and seven social workers). These posts will be built into future budgets to ensure the department is meeting its statutory requirements. Without this additionality there would be a small percentage rise (1.6%) showing as a result of slowed recruitment success. The department operates a rolling recruitment process which is centrally managed.
14. In summary, as of June 2019 there are 15wte social work vacancies remaining with 6.5wte senior practitioner vacancies and 3.5wte team manager vacancies. (This is inclusive of the additional capacity referenced above).
15. Pressures remain on teams (resulting from agency turnover, sickness and maternity leave as well as the complexity of cases). Despite the permanent appointments made over the last six months, the number of agency workers in the department remains high. At end of June there were 53 agency workers, broken down as follows:

Rationale	Number
Covering vacancies	17.5
Covering maternity	6
Covering long term sickness	1.5
Awaiting transfer to permanent roles	2
ASYE support	6
Additional capacity	20
Total	53

16. The additional capacity (20) is a temporary arrangement in areas where there is increased demand or high absence. Plans are underway to find permanent solutions and reduce the dependency on agency workers including, for example, a review of capacity and demand. This work is led by the

² This is currently an annual figure provided in September each year. Number of leavers divided by HCPC registered social workers (number updated 2x annually).

³ Vacancy number divided by total HCPC registered social workers

⁴ Number of agency workers divided by total current social worker workforce

transformation unit working closely with the business in order to better anticipate future resourcing needs.

Resource Implications

17. Following the 2016 Ofsted inspection, £500,000 was allocated as part of the growth money into the department to support recruitment and retention issues. This has enabled the payment of a market premia for key roles for two years but has been fully absorbed by these costs.
18. The pressure on the social care staffing budget persists due to the high level of agency workers still required to manage business demands. Whilst the budget for 2019/20 does provide £250,000 for agency spend, the current spend significantly exceeds this. It is anticipated that whilst the use of agency staff will remain stable in 2019/20, the need for agency staff will reduce once permanent posts are recruited. Work to reduce budgetary pressure is ongoing. For example, robust contract management to ensure costs are controlled is delivering results over time as a result of adherence to the corporate Mstar contract with Reed.

Conclusion

19. The difficulties currently being experienced in social work recruitment and retention are a national issue. The new dedicated strategy recognises that good social workers are critical to success in achieving departmental aspirations. The department needs to ensure that there is a high calibre of staff to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and their families.
20. Despite the proactive measures taken to date, this remains a significant challenge for the department. The instability generated by using agency workers continues to pose significant obstacles in consistently maintaining caseloads at reasonable levels both in child protection and children in care teams.
21. Most of the successful recruitment has been in newly qualified social workers. There is persistent difficulty in recruiting more experienced social workers. Maintaining a balance between newly qualified and experienced social workers is essential to ensure an appropriate level of knowledge and expertise, enable manageable caseloads and the ability for new cases to be allocated, at the same time as ensuring newly qualified workers feel supported and confident that their future is with Leicestershire County Council.
22. As of June 2019, there are 53 agency social workers deployed across all teams and 25 vacant posts in social work and management roles. The costs of this, combined with the increased turnover experienced by the department, are significant in financial terms but also in time and effort of managers (with repeated recruitment, induction, training).

23. Whilst some financial provision has been made for the on-going use of agency staff, budget pressures for 2019/20 are likely to persist in this area and continue to create considerable budgetary pressure.

Background papers

24. None.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

25. None.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

26. Teams within the department work with children and young people from across the demographic profile of the County. Direct, face-to-face work with those children and their families is often because of concerns or potential risk. Many of these children and young people live in families which are marginalised, and more likely to experience discrimination or disadvantage in their lives. The strategic approach adopted to tackle the current issues in social work recruitment and retention is part of ensuring that children and young people remain at the centre of practice, that their voice is prioritised and that the additional factors affecting and complicating their lives are addressed fully.

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 3 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**LEICESTERSHIRE'S RESPONSE TO TACKLING CHILD SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION (SIX MONTH UPDATE)**

**REPORT OF THE
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of the work and progress of the Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing and Trafficked Hub.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) remains a strategic priority for Leicestershire. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) CSE, Missing and Trafficking Strategy and subsequent action plan was launched in 2013, and is driven by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) CSE, Missing and Trafficking Operations Group, which continues to build on established strengths to ensure an effective multi-agency response in respect of government recommendations "to combat the national threat of CSE and respond to the local prominence of incidents of CSE and Missing children and young people."
3. The Operations Group reports to the Vulnerability Executive Board, a sub group of the Strategic Partnership Board. Members of the Operations Group are at Assistant Director, Head of Service and Strategic levels. Members of the Executive Board are at Director and Deputy Chief Constable Level.

Background

4. Leicestershire County Council Social Care staff became co-located with Leicestershire Police in September 2014. A number of safeguarding functions had already been brought together within the Police to consolidate its response to CSE and Missing Children. Due to the subsequent growth of the multi-agency team it relocated to South Wigston Police Station, which also houses the Child Abuse Investigation Unit.
5. Leicestershire County Council Social Care staff are represented within the unit replicating the enhanced response to CSE and Missing for cases of Domestic Abuse. This approach provides an environment that encourages collaborative

information sharing and combined risk assessment, resulting in live time activity currently led jointly by Social Care and the Police.

6. Work to tackle CSE across LLR continues and is supported by specific posts as follows:
 - The CSE Police Analyst continues to interrogate and analyse the combined partnership data to assist strategic leads targeting resources and tactically responding to the prevention of CSE. The analyst also supports the development of intelligence on live investigations through the mapping of associations and locations and the profiling of victims and perpetrators of CSE.
 - The specialist CSE nurse maintains an electronic flagging system on children's health records for those at high risk of CSE. This helps to raise awareness around referrals and provide consultation with health and social care colleagues. It also identifies and refers children to support and recovery services.
 - In April 2019, a Social Worker already located at the Hub became seconded to the post of Missing & Safeguarding Coordinator. This LLR post is funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and is situated within the Missing from Home Police Team. The Coordinator's role is to establish professional links with Children's Homes and other providers to strengthen their response to supporting children who are vulnerable to all forms of child exploitation. Partnership guidance has been developed with Leicestershire Police to advise of the providers' responsibility to notify the local authority of children coming into their care. It also provides guidance for the completion of referrals and reporting missing children.
7. The multi-agency approach to understanding and responding to children who are at risk of CSE and those who go missing from home, care or education continues to investigate, prevent and respond to the circumstances that cause children to be exploited and be exposed to abusive situations. This critical area of safeguarding needs specialist knowledge and partnership collaboration to support a child and their family from the first disclosure and through the investigation, judicial process and recovery.

Performance and Activity: Quarter 4 2018/19

8. A range of data is collected on behalf of the multi-agency CSE team on a quarterly basis and analysed by Leicestershire County Council's Business Intelligence Service. The themes covered are CSE referrals, the profiling of both victims and perpetrators of CSE, and the identification and monitoring of the response to children who are missing from Home.
9. The service has been successful in the prevention, identification and pursuit of perpetrators of CSE. The number of adults/peers identified varies significantly on a quarterly basis, but over the last two years, a total of 181 perpetrators

have been identified across LLR. As might be expected, a proportion of the risky people identified by Leicestershire services were resident in Leicester city and vice versa. This is particularly relevant for criminal exploitation.

10. Leicestershire County and Leicester City, supported by the police analyst, are completing joint mapping association charts to identify association, premises and opportunities to disrupt the activity of children on the periphery of being associated with criminal activity. The gender profile over the past two years was 90% male, 7% female and 3% unknown gender(online). The main age profiles of offenders over the past two years across LLR was 45% aged 19-25, with a further 22% aged 25-39 across the three authorities. This pattern was similar in Leicester City and Leicestershire, both over the longer term and during quarter 4.
11. There has been a continued increase in the number of referrals during quarter 4, which suggests that the awareness raising and consultation around criminal exploitation and county lines activity is effective. The current number of referrals this quarter is 93, and the main age groups are 15-16 year olds followed by 13-14 year olds. This continues the long-term pattern. Whilst most referrals are for females, the long-term balance varies across the sub-region, with many more males referred in Leicestershire (30%) compared to Leicester City (19%). This is likely to be because of strong communication in the county between the CSE Team and the Youth Offending Team. Social Care remains the largest source of referrals, although over the last year, Leicestershire has received a consistently high proportion of referrals from the Youth Offending Service and Education.
12. There has been an increase in the number of CSE Risk Assessment Tools (RATs) that have been received, primarily due to the link that professionals are making with Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). 18 CSE RAT's were received alongside the Gang Association Tool (GAT).
13. In terms of the model of CSE, "online" activity remains the largest category followed by the "party model" (an environment such as a flat, park or recruiting ground, for children to socialise and have access to alcohol, drugs and tobacco. Sexualised behaviour between peers, or children and adults, is normalised; psychologically the child may believe they are consenting to abuse due to physical/emotional conditioning).
14. In quarter 4, 12 cases have been linked to the 'group model'. The 'group model' relates to a network of children linked by vulnerability, social activity, use of premises, are prevalent in respect of "Cuckooing" (taking over the premises of vulnerable adults for criminal purposes) or association to perpetrators. The identified group may not necessarily know each other but may be visiting the same properties. The mapping of friendships and associations (off and online) assist in the profiling of actual or potential victims susceptible to Child Exploitation. It also assists in the identification of children who unwittingly may be introducing their peers to all forms of CCE. The number may indicate low levels of facilitation and introduction by children already involved in visiting 'hot spots' such as particular flats, recruiting areas or premises.

15. Missing status refers to any child referral for Missing/CSE where they have been missing from home or care, out of their local authority area or education. Over the past three years, the numbers of reported missing episodes across LLR each quarter were broadly stable (an average per quarter of 297 in 2016/17 and 274 in 2017/18) until the end of 2017/18 when the average increased to 590 per quarter, representing an increase of 40%. This can partly be attributed to developments within the partnership reporting system and continuing to raise awareness around reporting missing children.
16. The number of missing episodes in Leicestershire attributed to non-Looked After Children (LAC) has followed a downward trend from 261 (133 individuals) in quarter 1 to 128 (92 individuals) in quarter 4. The number of episodes attributed to LAC was 85 during quarter 4 and has remained stable throughout the year.
17. The total number of children missing in quarter 4 was 43, the lowest result this year. The number of missing children (including episodes) in terms of Leicestershire children placed out of area has shown an upward trend.
18. Leicestershire has 41 independent care homes. For out of area (OOA) children there have been 100 episodes in quarter 4 – 78 episodes for 13 boys and 22 episodes for 12 girls. These children are supported by five different local authorities. The figures this year remain relatively stable. The OOA children may have safeguarding flags for CSE, CCE and involvement in county lines activity or may be susceptible to going missing from their home authority. The County Council's CSE team sit in on strategy discussions for these children and offer a local consultation alongside Leicestershire Police. On rare occasions the CSE team may offer a return interview completed by the duty CSE social worker. This is to try and influence the placing authority's information sharing and care planning whilst the child is in Leicestershire. The CSE Team, alongside the Missing from Home Team in the Police, and supported by the Safeguarding and Missing Coordinator, continues to contact other placing authorities to ensure they provide the full picture of the young person's experience and to identify risks and gaps that have made them vulnerable to significant harm outside their family experience.
19. In respect of the children who are repeatedly missing who are the responsibility of Leicestershire, consideration is always given to who is best placed to complete the return interview. This provides the opportunity to capture any information to devise safety and disruption plans for any future missing episodes.
20. The CSE hub continues to promote the "Looked After Children" pack for all providers. The pack offers a local directory of professional contacts, advice on the completion of referrals and statutory guidance and legislation. It also includes the expectation from Leicestershire of full compliance in the notification of the arrival of children in the area.

21. The Listening Support Service is a bespoke offer for the completion of independent return interviews for young people in the County who have been missing from home or care. The service operates from locality teams with return interviews being completed by Youth Workers. In addition, the Youth Workers also offer additional 1-2-1 sessions to address any concerns associated with risk taking activity and informal awareness raising. The facilitation of family meetings is often key to supporting the young person's issues relating to their missing episodes.

Developments

22. Leicestershire continues to embed CSE Champions across the workforce and strives to continuously improve its response whilst recognising that practitioners need to be trained consistently to identify and respond to Child Exploitation. The team works collaboratively with The Warning Zone, an interactive environment focussing on online grooming, radicalisation, criminal exploitation, knife crime and environmental hazards. It is estimated that during the last academic year 244 primary schools visited The Warning Zone, which equates to 10,250 children from across LLR.
23. Work is currently being undertaken on the development of a unique zone on Criminal Exploitation. This will include key safeguarding messages around CCE and emotional wellbeing and the introduction of age appropriate films and resources on CCE and county lines.
24. Leicestershire County Council has a second Service Manager in the First Response team, with a portfolio that includes the operational responsibility for CSE and Missing and a successful Domestic Abuse pilot co-located within the hub. The post also has line management responsibility for the Out of Hours Service.
25. A family victim centred approach will be developed, along with a pathway to services, to respond to any reported cases of CCE. This will ensure that there is a consistent approach to any child who has been exposed to significant harm through any form of CCE being viewed as a child in need of safeguarding first and foremost, rather than a victim or a suspect involved in a crime.
26. Leicestershire County Council, alongside Leicestershire Police, was selected to contribute to "The First Step" report, completed by the Children's Society and commissioned by the Home Office and Police. This research was commissioned to develop a national picture of return interview provision and identify good practice. It was recognised that there was a good shared understanding amongst the Police, Children's Social Care and the return interviewer's coordination through the partnership hub.
27. Key leads from the Vulnerabilities Operational Group had proposed that OPCC funding for CSE could be utilised to support a strategic response to Child Criminal Exploitation across LLR. This proposal was successful and a Detective Inspector, who has experience of working within the hub, is now collating data to inform a partnership action and delivery plan. The LLR Vulnerability

Operational Group will continue to develop operational pathways for the promotion of protection, prevention, provision, and partnership alliance and opportunities to pursue perpetrators of CCE.

Learning and Priorities

28. Criminal exploitation is now a priority for the CSE hub. Criminal activity, county lines, groups and gangs are becoming a significant feature, particularly for the children who are regularly missing. County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in the importing and exporting of illegal drugs in the UK. The county line refers to a dedicated mobile telephone number to order drugs and direct distribution. The exploitation of children and vulnerable adults to move, store and, circulate drugs is its mainstay. The term county lines is also used to describe situations where young people may be internally trafficked for the purposes of criminal exploitation. It is believed that children are being used as runners, cutting and bagging drugs, collecting debts and cuckooing premises. Young children are regarded as “clean skins” as they often haven’t come to the attention of the courts, receive lesser sentences and are easier to groom, isolate and manipulate and encourage into debt bondage.
29. There are currently five confirmed county lines which are either active or have been active within the last six months. County lines work in both directions, with drugs coming into and leaving the County, and there are confirmed links to Leicester City, West Midlands, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and London.
30. The indicators and vulnerabilities in respect of criminal exploitation are not dissimilar to identifying the signs of CSE, for example, missing from home, arrested in possession of drugs, carrying a weapon, unexplained injuries, additional phones, found in a cuckooed address, family conflict and not in education.
31. Leicestershire Police commenced Operation Lionheart in April 2019. The coordinated activity was conducted in conjunction with social care partners, facilitated by weekly briefings. The vulnerable children and adults identified during the enforcement were reviewed daily and full details shared with partners. This identified young people linked to drugs either through the geographical area or by associations. For example, one of the urban street gangs, the “LE11”, have been running and dealing for two separate lines, both originating from London and operational in the Charnwood area. It is unknown how they were originally groomed and recruited, however those identified are deemed vulnerable young people who were involved in some criminal activity prior to links to county line activity.
32. Leicestershire is formulating a Child Criminal Exploitation Framework to ensure a coordinated response to identifying risk and offering safety and support to those already at risk of harm. This legislative framework, alongside the CCE Regional Standards, will assist in identifying local supply and demand in relation to the drug dealing business model, promoting a regional overview to promote collaboration, and strengthening the County’s multi agency early

intervention strategies to steer children away from county lines, gangs and knife crime.

33. Safeguarding children is paramount and the primary question is whether the child is in danger, not whether they are a victim or a suspect in a crime. It is recognised that sharing intelligence with the police and partners may have consequences for the child and their families. Contextual safeguarding will be used to work with families and identify the vulnerable cohort for targeted prevention work. Work will take place with the Police to balance safeguarding and enforcement. This will be resource intensive in the coordination of partners to provide early intervention and time to develop trusted relationships to assist children in developing exit opportunities, or for criminal activity to reduce.

Conclusions

34. Leicestershire Children and Family Services has worked well with partners to raise the profile and tackle Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing, with the exploitation of children now being seen through a broader lense. CSE is now regarded in the wider context of child exploitation, which encompasses criminal exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery and sexual violence and abuse.
35. In recognition of the ongoing threat to children and vulnerable adults the success of the co-located multi agency CSE Team is evolving under the leadership of the Vulnerability Executive Group into the CCE Team. In addition, the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Team is now aligned alongside the CSE Team.

Background Papers

None

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

36. None

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

37. The CSE Hub is committed to equality and ensuring the human rights of all users and, in delivering the service, adheres to the Equality and Human Rights Act. The Hub receives quality and up to date data which is analysed to determine any areas that are underrepresented and may need a stronger focus.

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 3 SEPTEMBER 2019**

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer with regard to children in care and those subject to child protection planning. The report evaluates the extent to which Leicestershire County Council has fulfilled its responsibilities to these children for the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) has a statutory role to ensure effective and improved care planning for children and young people, securing better outcomes, with their wishes and feelings being central and given full and due consideration. (IRO Handbook March 2010).
3. This Annual Report is a requirement of 'The IRO Handbook - Statutory guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers and Local Authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review of looked after children' (March 2010). The content and format follows the prescription set out in the guidance. The report will be available for scrutiny by the Corporate Parenting Board, be accessible as a public document and will be communicated to Leicestershire's children in care in a child and young person friendly version.
4. In relation to children subject to child protection planning, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 was the governing statutory guidance for this period of reporting.

Background

5. The appointment of an IRO is a legal requirement under S118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, their role being to protect children's interests throughout the care planning process, ensure their voice is heard and challenge the local authority where needed in order to achieve the best outcomes.

6. The IRO Service in Leicestershire is hosted within the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit (SIU), part of Children's Social Care (CSC), which sits within the Children and Family Services (CFS). Whilst part of CSC, it remains independent of the line management of resources for children in care and the operational social work teams.
7. The role of the IRO is essential to the quality assurance and effectiveness of the looked after experience of children and young people, not just on an individual basis but collectively too, with IROs having a key part to play in monitoring the performance of the local authority as a Corporate Parent; drawing out themes for improvement and development and helping to drive forward change. In Leicestershire, IROs take the same quality assurance approach for children subject to child protection conferences and child protection plans as for children in care.
8. The effectiveness of the role has rightly been subject to scrutiny since its inception and the legal framework and statutory guidance was revised in 2010 to support a strengthened position. This is set out in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (amended 2015) and the IRO Handbook 2010.
9. The report is an opportunity to pinpoint areas of good practice and those in need of development and improvement, providing information that can contribute to the strategic and continuous improvement plans of the local authority. It highlights emerging themes and trends, and details areas of work which the service has prioritised during the year.

Resource Implications

10. None.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

11. None.

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

12. These are addressed throughout the report as the aim is to improve standards and outcomes for all children and young people in care, including disabled children, young children and those from minority and harder to reach groups. The IRO Service has a diverse compliment of staff with good representation across gender, age, sexual orientation as well as ethnicity.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer 2017/18

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**LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES**

Safeguarding & Performance Unit

**Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service Annual Report
2018 -2019**



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Introduction

The Annual Report for the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) sets out the current performance for the service in 2018-2019 and identifies our priorities for the forthcoming year. The service provision of the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit is driven by our vision and mission and is underpinned by the shared values of the Children and Family Services.

OUR VISION Leicestershire is the best place for all children, young people and their families

This means that we will describe the outcomes we want to achieve for children, young people and their families and identify measures that can tell us how well we are achieving against them. We will aim to be the best performing local authority in the country against these measures, and where we are not yet there we will set stretching targets for annual improvement.

OUR MISSION

Children and young people in Leicestershire are safe and living in families where they can achieve their potential and have their health, wellbeing and life chances improved within thriving communities.

The IRO Service in Leicestershire sits within the Safeguarding & Improvement Unit (SIU). Whilst the service sits within the Children and Family Services (CFS) and is part of the management structure of Children's Social Care (CSC), it remains independent of the line management of resources for children in care and the operational social work teams.

IROs have responsibility for both child protection and children in care functions, through their role in child protection conferences and processes, harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) work with children and young people and Looked After Reviews and care planning. All IROs have a combination of Child Protection cases and Looked After Children. Throughout this report both the conference chair and looked after review chair will be referred to as Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

The quality assurance role of IROs is critical to the development and improvement of the intervention that we provide to children and families and the impact that we have on the outcomes for children. IROs have key duties that scrutinise and support the quality, safety and effectiveness of safeguarding practice and policy, care planning and permanence. IROs are central to identifying and sharing good practice and checking the quality of provision across the areas of Child Protection and Looked After Children.

IROs have a statutory role to quality assure the care planning and review process for each child in care and to ensure that his/her current wishes and feelings are central and given full consideration. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 extended the IROs responsibilities from monitoring the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to a child's review to monitoring the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to a child's case. Through these changes the IRO has an effective, independent and holistic oversight of the child's case and ensures that the child's interests are protected throughout the care planning process.

This oversight provides opportunity for independent challenge in decisions identified as not being in the best interests of the child or where drift or delay has an impact on outcomes. An effective IRO service will drive forward improved outcomes for children and young people and will ensure that his/her current wishes and feelings are given full consideration.

To be successful, the role must be valued by senior managers and operate within a supportive service culture and environment. It is not the responsibility of the IRO to manage the case, supervise the social worker or devise the care plan.

In Leicestershire, as the IROs also undertake the Conference Chair role, the expectation is that the IRO will apply the same quality assurance approach for children subject to child protection conferences and child protection plans. IROs chair child protection conferences and have oversight of child protection plans and the progress of such and challenge when performance and practice concerns are identified.

This report outlines the contribution made by the IRO Service in Leicestershire, to the quality assurance and improvement of services for children and young people in the care of the County Council and those subject to child protection conferences and plans during the year April 2018 to March 2019. It is an evaluative report considering how effectively the Safeguarding Unit has fulfilled the responsibilities of its role and the impact that this has had on children and families of Leicestershire. It is an opportunity to pinpoint areas of good practice and those in need of development and improvement. It highlights emerging themes and trends, providing information that contributes to the strategic and continuous improvement plans of the local authority. The performance measures used to measure success are both qualitative and quantitative data from all areas of quality assurance undertaken throughout children's services

For the purpose of this report, the term LAC (Looked After Child) will be used for statutory related references to children looked after by the local authority for example LAC Reviews, and all other references will refer to Children in Care (CiC).

Context

The legal framework and statutory guidance for the IRO role for children in care is set out in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (amended 2015) and the IRO Handbook 2010.

The Handbook requires an Annual Report to be written and is prescriptive as to content and format (which this report follows) and the expectation that the report is made available for scrutiny by the Corporate Parenting Board, as well as accessible as a public document.

The appointment of an IRO is a legal requirement under S118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, their role being to protect children's interests throughout the care planning process, ensure their voice is heard and challenge the local authority where needed in order to achieve best outcomes.

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) research 'The Role of the Independent Reviewing Officers in England' (March 2014) provides a wealth of information and findings regarding the efficacy of IRO services. The foreword written by Mr Justice Peter Jackson; makes the following comment:

'The Independent Reviewing Officer must be the visible embodiment of our commitment to meet our legal obligations to this special group of children. The health and effectiveness of the IRO service is a direct reflection of whether we are meeting that commitment, or whether we are failing'.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 is the statutory guidance that governs the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures for IRO role for children subject to child protection conference/plan/processes, to work within.

IRO Service

Safeguarding and Improvement Unit

1x FTE Service Manager

2x FTE Safeguarding Managers

13.06 FTE IRO

There are significant benefits of the IRO service being located within Children's Social Care with clear guidelines to practice which support the effectiveness of their maintained independence. The position allows IROs to have a good understanding of the context in which the Local Authority operates and understands the changing demands and pressures in the Department, including the impact of recruitment and retention.

IROs are able to build constructive working relationships with social work teams which are vital to their quality assurance role in enabling the oversight of the strengths and needs of the department. This in turn enables contributions to improvement activity which have a direct impact on improved outcomes for children and families.

There have been a number of positive changes within the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit during 2018-19 with permanent appointments to the two Safeguarding Manager positions and appointment to four permanent IRO roles. In addition to these staff changes there have been continuing pressures, with the Safeguarding administration team having experienced a number of ongoing difficulties with staffing levels. The Safeguarding administration team is imperative to ensuring that the IRO service effectively meets its statutory duty. The difficulties have been addressed through additional staffing being put into the team.

Within the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit a weighting process is applied to analyse caseloads. This process takes into account the two different roles of the IROs; chairing Child Protection Conferences and Review of Arrangements and identifies each LAC case as 1.5 cases and CP cases as 1.

The IRO handbook guidelines refer to caseloads for IROs (only referring to the role with Looked After Children) as 50-70 cases. The application of the weighting process makes this 75-105 cases. Over 2019-18 caseloads have continued to be higher than these recommended guidelines with the average caseload being 110 (with weighting process applied). In order to address this two additional IROs have been agreed, which will support maintaining a case load in line with the IRO handbook. While active recruitment takes place agency IROs have been in place. The increasing numbers of children in care and children subject to a child protection plan will continue to have an impact on the assessment of capacity. This will need to be assessed and analysed moving forward.

Collectively, the IRO service has many years of social work and management experience, professional expertise and knowledge across a number of areas which brings great benefit in their role of working with children and families as well as an ability to offer consultation to the wider department. This includes but is not confined to:

- HSB (Harmful Sexual Behaviours)
- Domestic Abuse Champion
- Neglect
- Children with disabilities and complex care needs
- Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty (DoLs)
- Youth Offending
- Therapeutic social work
- Fostering, Adoption and Permanency
- Mental Health
- PREVENT & MAPPA
- Modern Slavery.
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

During 2018-19 the IRO service has continued to utilise the bespoke training in Signs of Safety which has been provided as a part of the England Innovations Project (EIP2). This training supports the quality assurance role of the IROs and the progress of embedding Signs of Safety throughout all areas of the work within CFS.

These additional training opportunities are continuing into 2019-20 as the department continues to embed the Signs of Safety methodology into its culture and practice.

IROs continue to be enthusiastic in their role as practice leads and regularly attend and contribute to the 'Practice Lead' development sessions. IROs are at the forefront of developing and deepening Signs of Safety practice with the implementation of their quality assurance role and therefore it is critical that their Signs of Safety knowledge and skills remain comprehensive.

IROs play a significant role in the development and delivery of high-quality interventions to children in care and in need of protection. The IRO Service in Leicestershire remains committed to this responsibility. This commitment is supported by the implementation of a service specific Learning Audit Framework (2018-2019) which highlights areas of need and provides a framework of observation, peer audit and audit analysis to inform learning and drive forward best practice.

Importance of the voice and views of our children

Advocacy

Advocacy provision in Leicestershire is provided in house through our Children's Rights Officers (CRO) based in the Corporate Parenting Team. The aim of the Children's Rights Service (CRS) is to provide advocacy to empower children and young people; supporting them and ensuring that their voices are heard in decision making. Children and young people may be given additional support of a CRO to attend their Review of Arrangement meetings (ROAs), child protection conferences (CPCs) & other meetings about them so their voices can be clearly heard. IROs routinely check that children and young people know about advocacy and how it can support them in having a real say in decisions affecting their lives.

E aged 17

I couldn't of asked for a better IRO , She always looks out for me , Makes me laugh , Takes me for coffee ☺, Always polite.
Very chatty and giggling all the time. So Thank u for all of the support u have helped me and my dad build a good relationship up again

Coz not everyone listens to what the kid wants. The CRO knows what's best for the child". K, 15

My IRO let me think about my religion. They gave me time to think it through and make my own decision S,11

What's working Well/ What are we worried about against our 2017/18 priorities

Overall Performance

	2017-18	2018-19
Timeliness of ROA	99.4% (8/1350)	98.9% (15/1388)
Participation in ROA	92.3% (1,038)	86.5% (1,049)
Social Worker Assessment 24 hours before review	51.1%	76%
Repeat child protection plans	19%	15.2%
Multiple Categories (child protection plans)	7% (41)	10% (51)
Review child protection conference timeliness	97.1%	97.3%
Initial child protection timeliness	95.1%	91.5%
Social Work reports to child protection conference within LSCB timescales	69%	75%

Strengths – What is Working Well?

Average performance for the year in relation to timeliness of Looked After Children (LAC) Review of Arrangements remains high at 98.9%, as is the case for timeliness of Review Child Protection Conferences (97.3%) and Initial Child Protection Conferences (91.5%). It is recognised that this is a slight drop from 2017-2018 but remains high and well in line with statistical and national data. Service Managers have oversight of all cases that are going to be out of timescale to ensure robust decision making and learning is shared.

Repeat planning continues to maintain at a low figure. 2018/19 ended at 15.2% of child protection plans being a repeat plan in comparison to our statistical neighbours (21.8%) and England average of 20.2%. There has been work within the IRO service to support robust assessments and ensure SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) step down plans are in place for the ending of CP plans. In addition, the IROs complete an analysis tool for all incoming repeat plans to enable learning moving forward.

The use of multiple categories of risk in child protection planning has seen a slight increase in 2018/19 from 2017/18 from 41 to 51. Despite this increase, in comparison to 2016/17 when it was 109 and had been raised as an area for improvement, the current figure continues to be a maintained reduction. The IROs have continued to ensure reflection and analysis for those cases where a multiple category is identified as appropriate.

The development of the process to respond to children who display Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB) has continued to make headway. An HSB process has been developed on mosaic which has enabled initial assessment of HSB to be more visible and also aided a more consistent and monitored approach. There has been

training of 4 IROs in AIMS 2 (an assessment model for young people who have displayed sexually harmful behaviour) to enable broader provision of meetings and the meetings have been developed to offer a review process in line with that used for child protection. This ensures a robust review process for children and families to receive the right level of support until enough safety or change has been evidenced. There is future development for 2019/20 to build upon the strengthened response to HSB.

The 2 additional IRO posts created from the 2017/18 review have been successfully recruited to with experienced and suitably qualified practitioners. Additional staffing has also been agreed for 2019-20, which highlights the continued support of senior management for the important role of IROs in both child protection and for our looked after children population.

During the reporting period the IROs have had a programme of audit work within the Safeguarding Unit to support the critical role in supporting quality assurance and improvement. There has been additional quality assurance work undertaken outside this programme following the identification of themes and responding hypotheses. The impact of this work is that the unit knows itself well and areas of improvement can be identified both within the unit and for the wider service and action taken to respond in a timely way.

Challenges – What are we worried about?

The performance of participation of children within their Review of Arrangements remains a key area of development. The number of children (over age 4) participating in their reviews has increased from 1,038 (2017-18) to 1,049 (2018-19). Due to the increase in our looked after population the percentage shows a slight reduction from 92.3% to 86.5%. Although this baseline figure remains positive we are aspiring to improve.

There continues to be concern in relation to the timeliness of reports to LAC reviews and Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)/Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC) being shared with families and IROs.

As a result of the performance within the previous year IROs were directed to complete Quality Assurance alerts if reports had not been received within timescales prior to meetings taking place. This has shown an improvement in reports being received prior to LAC reviews increasing from 51.1% (2017-18) to 76% in 2018-19. There has been a similar improvement with reports received prior to CP conference from 69% to 75%. For the remaining, the reports were tabled on the day of the meeting. This a key area of performance being driven within Children and Family Services and whilst this is positive to see, it remains a key area of improvement work.

IRO challenge on behalf of children is more robust. However, whilst we have made significant progress in evidencing the tracking and footprint of IROs within LAC cases, there continues to be work needed in this being replicated with CP cases so that this demonstrates a visible and timely impact on case planning.

There has been positive progress made in minimising the delay in minutes being produced after meetings. There is robust practice in child protection conferences of all participants leaving the conference with the 'mapping' of the meeting and the 'next steps'. Also, IROs consistently provide the actions of the LAC review within 5 days of the review.

Nevertheless, it is recognised that there is further work required to support all IROs completing LAC records in a consistently timely way. Managers are proactively supporting those staff who continue to show delays in recording being completed in supervision and through the allocation of protected administration time for IROs. The critical need for timeliness in the distribution of records of Reviews is fully recognised and understood by the management team within the Safeguarding Unit.

Positive progress has been built in, in relation to the Quality Assurance (QA) Alert process. This has led to an increased number of positive alerts to support our learning from good practice. The overall impact of the QA process needs more analysis and a more systematic tracking of responses to ensure impact. This will be a focus of work in 2019/2020. IROs have not always escalated concerns when a response is not satisfactory or remains outstanding. This lack of focus can mean the impact of the process is reduced. Work is taking place to ensure that the process is systematically implemented beyond the first QA and themes for positive and negative QAs are more effectively analysed and utilised in development work throughout CFS.

Areas for Improvement – What needs to happen

Participation of young people: We aim to develop a broad range of methods, including tools, to support the participation of children in their Review of Arrangements. This includes consideration of the use of technology to support inclusion. This work is being led through the Corporate Parenting Board, 'you said, we did' activity. This includes the development of a task and finish group of young people and IROs to create an expectations statement for inclusion, to re-launch the views workbook to ensure voice is captured before the review and to develop a feedback to ensure this supports further development and improvement. The measurement of our success will be drawn through the participation performance data, feedback from young people and accountability through the Corporate Parenting Board.

QA alert process: A priority is to continue work to develop the Quality Assurance Alert process as a Mosaic step. This will allow better ability to track the alerts to completion and ensure that the process is timely and effective. This will also allow better performance data to be captured and build the alert process into the learning cycle more systematically. Until this process is in place, there needs to be more effective management oversight of the QA process with QAs being discussed in supervision and feeding into the pre-challenge tracker. Initial work to embed this approach is in place.

Recording and distribution of records: The lack of consistent progress with ensuring timely recording distribution of records needs to be addressed and improvement sustained. To achieve this, managers will have robust oversight of

timely recording and caseload analysis within the team and if necessary ensure that senior managers are aware of pressure points during the year. A new process has been introduced so that Actions from Review of Arrangements records are uploaded to Mosaic within 5 days. In addition, IROs are also uploading their own records and it is planned that we will measure performance and provide reports on both areas in 2019/20. This will give a more accurate picture of both IRO and administration team improvements.

Social work reports to conference: IROs to continue to support and drive forward the improvements in the timeliness of social work reports prior to LAC reviews and CP conferences.

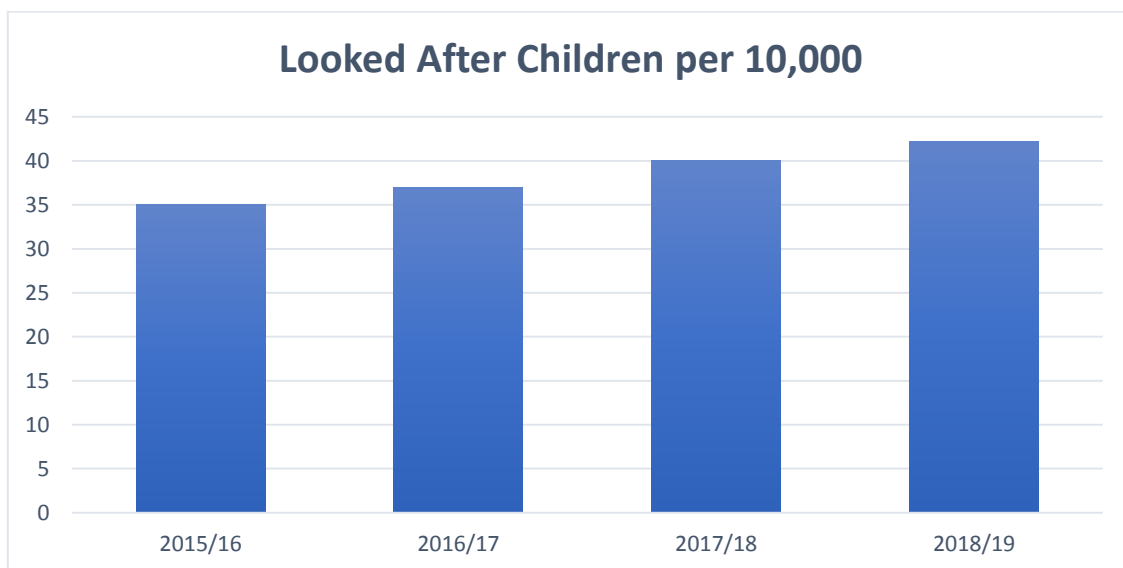
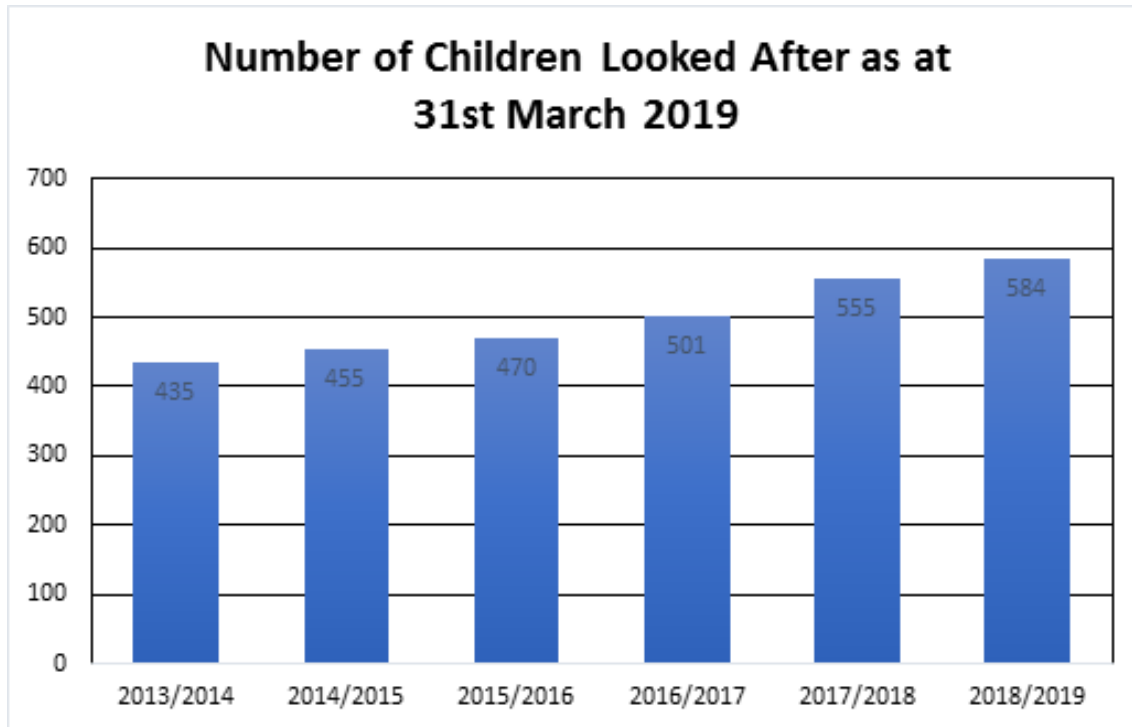
IRO role in improvement to continue to produce an analysis to Safeguarding and Improvement Unit (SIU) Team Managers in cases of repeat CP plans. This analysis, in addition to the quarterly audit, will be used to develop practice and inform learning.

Independent Reviewing Officer - Children in Care Services

Children in Care - Review of Arrangements

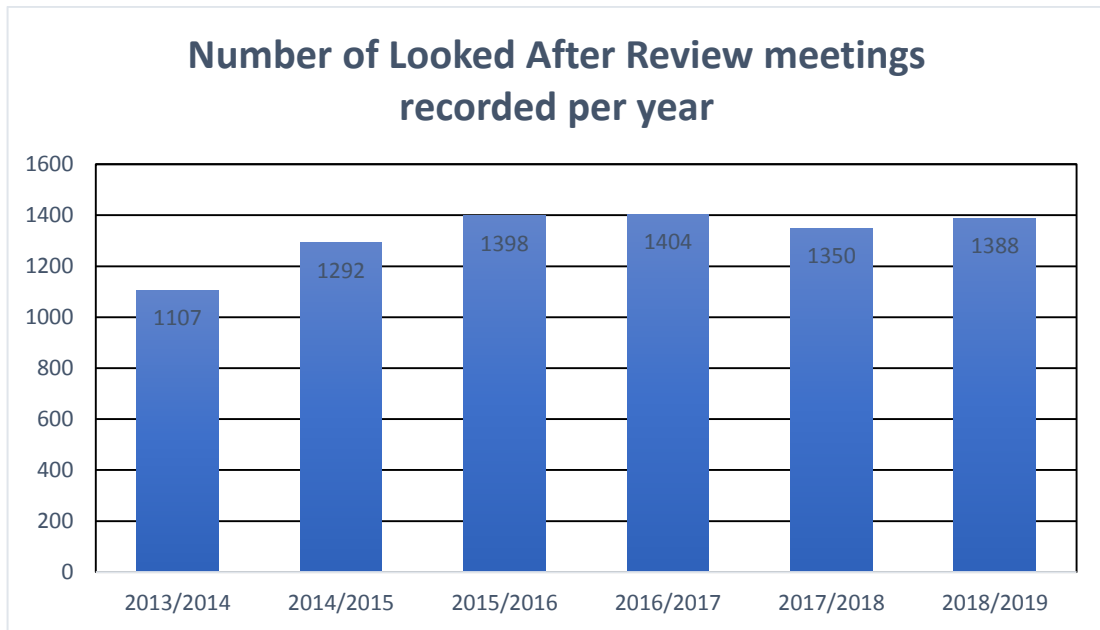
As can be seen from the tables below, the children in care population in Leicestershire has increased further over 2018-19, in keeping with a steady year on year increase over the last 6 years. Whilst recognising that the number of looked after children in Leicestershire continues to be increasing and drawing closer to the statistical neighbour's average, it continues to remain lower currently.

Leicestershire had 42.2 looked after children per 10,000 at the end of 2018/19, an increase from 40 per 10,000 at the end of 2017/18. The statistical neighbour average for 2017/18 was 52.5, the East Midlands average was 57 per 10,000 and the average for England was 64 per 10,000. Although the statistical neighbour's data has not yet been made available for 31st March 2019 it is reasonable to assume that Leicestershire continues to have one of the lower levels of children in care nationally.

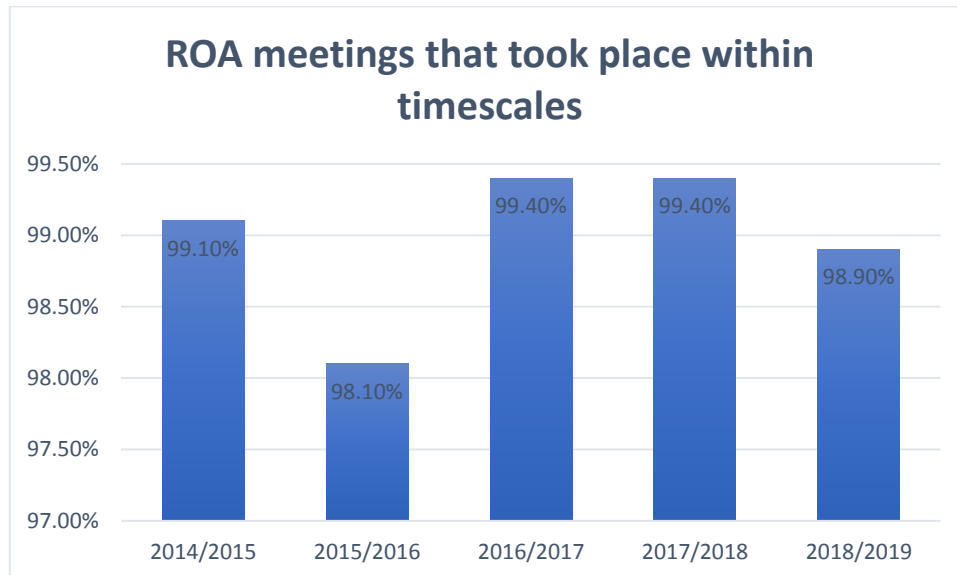


The activity generated from this increase is reflected in the number of review meetings held for children between 1st April 2018 and the end of March 2019 which totalled 1388, this is an increase of 38 meetings from the total of 1350 held between 1st April 2017 and the end of March 2018 (NB this is meetings held, not individual children's meetings, for example a sibling group of 3, whose meeting was held together would count as one meeting). It is noted that the number of review meetings was higher in both 2015/16 and 2016/17 despite there being less children in care at this time. In addition to the statutory reviews, IROs can also arrange additional meetings for a number of reasons including to review a case earlier due to concerns about drift and delay or because there has been a change in the child's care plan. A meeting is required following change of placement. The lower number of reviews

could be an indication that there has been less concern to require an early review or less unplanned change to children's care plans over the last two years.



Performance in relation to timeliness of ROA meetings remains very high as is reflected in the table below.



Although performance is slightly down on the previous year, 98.9 % of meetings held in timescale can still be regarded as strong performance. From a total of 1388 meetings which took place during this time period, 15 were out of time scale. This compares with 8 out of timescales in the previous year from a total of 1350 meetings.

The Safeguarding Unit keep an 'out of date log' to record the reason for each case which does not take place in time. One case was late as it had originally been put back to enable the young person to complete their exams before their review took

place but unfortunately due to the change of date professionals did not receive the invitations to the re-scheduled meeting. On six other occasions the lateness was linked to either staff error or staff sickness. The Safeguarding Unit managers and IROs are mindful of the importance of ROAs being undertaken within timescales not only due to statutory requirements but also due to the impact of the family and the child, as it is their meeting and any delay could be seen as the local authority underestimating the importance of their views and concerns about their plan.

As with the previous year the most common reason that 28 Day views did not take place on time was because the Looked After Children business support team were not notified of a child becoming looked after in a timely manner. Of the eight cases referred to the Safeguarding Unit late, one case was an Adoption Reviews whereby the child's status changed from looked after in a foster placement to being placed for adoption following an ADM decision. The relevant Social Worker was on leave and no one else contacted the Safeguarding Unit to notify them of the change.

On each of the seven occasions where there was no notification of a child becoming looked after it would appear to be an oversight on behalf of the social worker, a number of who did not understand the process and the need to make contact with the Safeguarding Unit. To address this the Safeguarding Unit has now requested a step to be placed onto mosaic which will identify when a child has become looked after. This can automatically be picked up by the business support team, who will then forward to management for allocation to an IRO in good time for the review to take place. The issues have also been raised with the Team managers and service managers to ensure robust understanding and implementation of processes.

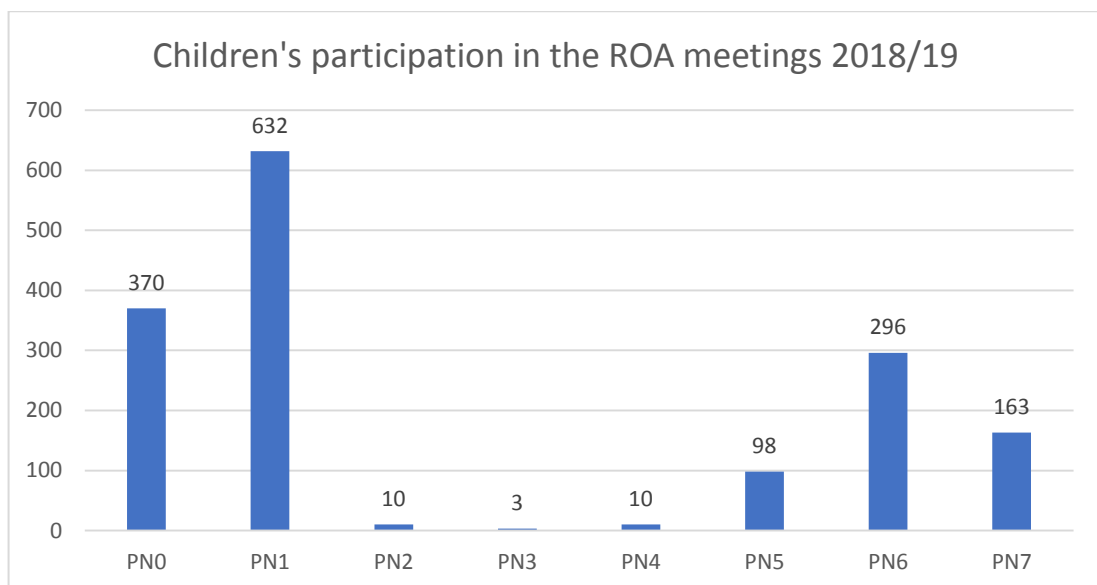
Participation

The child and young person's voice, their views and wishes are essential to the care planning. IROs continue to strive towards obtaining this and ensuring children and young people actively participate in the review process. Not all children will want to attend a meeting; therefore, IROs are creative in the ways in which they can support the child in participating, working closely alongside Social Workers and Carers. The IRO service is looking at ways in which this practice can be further developed, including being more creative with Signs of Safety within the review process and promoting active participation.

Participation is defined across 7 different indicators:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Children under the age of 4	351	381	363	363	370
Children who attend their reviews and speak for themselves	495	522	550	554	632
Those who attend but communicate via an advocate	14	10	13	4	10
Those who attend and convey their views non-verbally	4	7	3	2	3
Those who attend but don't contribute	16	15	4	11	10
Children who do not attend but brief someone to speak on their behalf	97	74	70	52	98
Do not attend but communicate their views by another method	250	295	399	415	296
Those who do not attend/convey their views in any other way	75	100	50	87	163

The participation figures for this period are shown in the following table, and the overall percentage represents those children and young people aged 4 and over who communicated their views in some way, for their review.



Children's Participation in ROAs 2014/15 to 2018/19

The number of children (over age 4) participating in their reviews has increased from 1,038 (2017-18) to 1,049 (2018-19). Due to the increase in our looked after population the percentage shows a slight reduction from 92.3% to 86.5%. Although this baseline figure remains positive we are aspiring to improve it. It is positive to see

that the percentage of children that attended their reviews has continued to increase, from 49% in 2017/18 to 52% in 2018/19.

There has been work undertaken through the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council to look at broadening how children can participate and how they can have clear expectations of how they want their meeting to be run. It is anticipated that this drive will support an improvement in this figure and also improve the experience of our children in relation to their meeting.

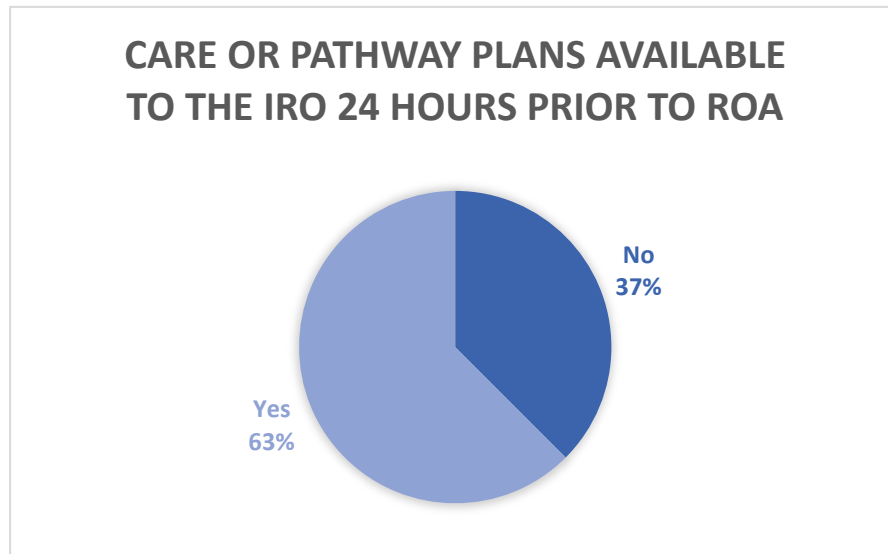
IROs have been working to make review meetings more inclusive, utilising Signs of Safety methodology and thinking creatively with our young people, including examples of some children chairing their own review and creating the review as a Power Point presentation. The Safeguarding Unit is committed to improving the active participation of our children in their review and to look at broader ways of increasing participation such as technology. This is driven from the voice of our children who have highlighted the importance and impact of being actively involved in their LAC review. Involving children in their reviews needs to continue to be promoted within the service and further development work will continue around ensuring participation is key on the IRO agenda.

As can be seen from the table above a key factor in why the overall number of children participating in their reviews has declined is due to the significant decrease in 'children who did not attend but participated in their reviews in other ways'. It is believed that the higher numbers for this group in 2016/17 and 2017/18 was in part due to the use of the participation document given to young people in advance of their ROA to capture their views. However, this has been used less in the current report period.

Following the most recent Corporate Parenting Board meeting it was agreed to relaunch this document. In addition, the Participation Officers within the Safeguarding Unit have been working with the Children in Care Council to further look at other creative ways to enable young people to engage in their reviews. This is in addition to the creative ways in which the IROs already obtain the views and wishes of young people who do not attend their reviews. This includes using communication methods many of our young people are familiar with such as email, texts, phone calls and skype. For children where communication can be more difficult, our IROs continue to work closely with their Social Workers, Carers and other key professionals to be guided on different tools and approaches which can be used to obtain their views and wishes and ensure their participation.

IROs aim to have strong and meaningful relationships with the children and young people with whom they work. There remains a strong commitment to keeping in contact with them in between and prior to their reviews, although due to capacity issues, this has been a considerable challenge in this financial year. It is hoped that with the additional resources which have now been agreed by senior management IROs will be able to renew their focus on building and maintaining these relationships. This is seen as vital, as young people have routinely provided feedback at Children in Care Council meetings and at the Corporate Parenting Board on the value of knowing their IRO to enable them to use their ROA to best effect as a safe space to raise any issues or concerns that they may have.

Care or Pathway Plan paperwork available to the IRO 24 hours prior to the ROA:



At the end of 2018/19 the overall percentage of Care or Pathway Plans being available to the IRO 24 hours prior to the ROA meeting stood at 63%. This is a significant increase from the previous year when the end of year average was 47.9%. This improvement is as a result of the implementation of the Quality Assurance alerts where reports had not been received within timescales. This had a significant effect with performance reaching as high as 75.9% in July 2018.

This evidence suggests that overall performance has improved significantly with Social Workers working hard to ensure timescales for reports are met. It is positive to observe the increase in the statistics which IROs are encouraged to remain focused on ensuring they address any performance issues via the Quality Assurance process in respect to timescales, thus ensuring this performance continues to be sustained.

Updated Social Work Assessment Report available to the IRO 24 hours prior to the ROA:

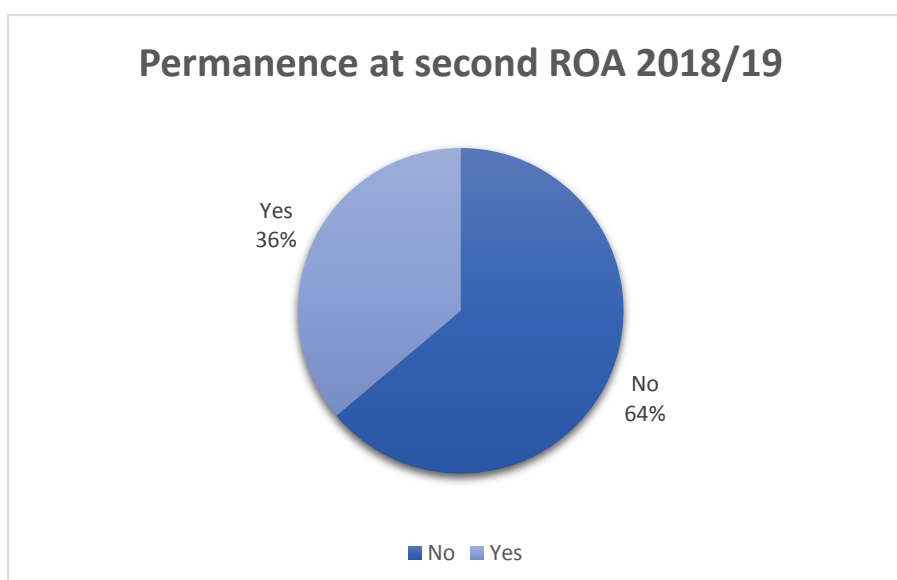


At the end of 2018/19 on average, 76% of Social Work assessment reports were available to the IRO 24 hours prior to the ROA meeting. This is a significant improvement on the previous year which saw an end of year average of 51.1%. Similar to the above statistics, once the IRO service raised the concern and were committed to improving this performance via the Quality Assurance alert process an increase in reports being received in timescale was observed. The IRO service will continue to monitor performance in this area and any concerns will be addressed via the Quality Assurance processes.

Permanence

Securing permanence for children in a timely manner continues to be high on the agenda for IROs and something which is routinely reviewed during ROA meetings. IROs will arrange additional ROA meetings to be convened if there are concerns regarding drift and delay in respect of permanence and care planning as well as using the Quality Assurance alert and escalation process.

In between ROA meetings, IROs will also endeavour to track cases and this is recorded on the child's file on Mosaic as IRO case tracking. The IRO footprint has developed significantly during the past three years. IROs are ensuring they have oversight during review periods and addressing any concerns regarding drift and delay. The Safeguarding Unit is looking to develop a template to ensure this oversight is applied in a consistent and unified manner. In addition to this, it further evidences our commitment to The Road to Excellence Continuous Improvement Plan by demonstrating strong and effective management oversight and rigorous decision making.



Statutory guidance for care planning states that there should be a permanence plan for all looked after children at the time of the second review of arrangements. In 2018/19 the Safeguarding Unit undertook 177 second ROA meetings and of these 64 children and young people had permanence plans agreed at that time. At each review meeting IROs discuss all possible options for a child's permanence and what actions need to be taken for these to be progressed.

One difficulty in this area is the length of time it may take for assessments to be completed on family and other connected carers and in particular delays in identifying those who would like to be considered as connected carers. One means of addressing this difficulty has been for colleague Child Protection Chair's, who may be working with families before the children become looked after, to highlight the importance of Signs of Safety Family Network meetings and what role extended family and friends can play in providing safety for the children. In this way it may be possible that if the child/ children do become looked after there is a strong network of people who understand the issues and concerns within the family and can make an informed decision at the earliest opportunity as to whether they would like to put themselves forward for a viability assessment with a view to offering the children long term care.

As stated above, once these assessments are underway the IRO will track progress of these to ensure there is no drift or delay.

IROs contribute to the Permanence Panel which sits fortnightly. Since the Permanence Panel has been implemented there has been significant developments in respect of children's permanence being secured and management having rigorous oversight of the care planning for children. This has enabled decisions to be made in a timely way, thus reducing drift and delay for children.

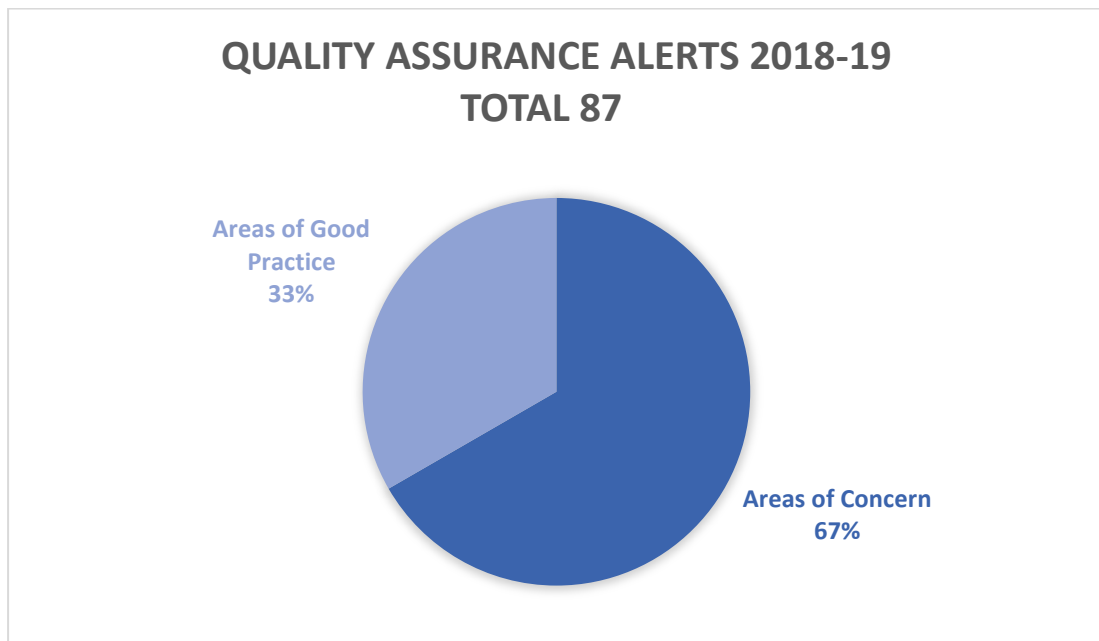
The Permanence Panel makes matching decisions for children requiring long term placements. The local authority is committed to improving the matching processes for children who require long term care and increasing the percentage of children who are in the same placement for two years or more. IROs share their views as part of the reports presented to the panel and make recommendations regarding matches and care plans. It is a significant positive step that IROs are now able to support the decision making for some young people, where appropriate, for their permanence plan to be in a residential placement. At each review IROs will always consider the appropriateness of the child's placement and how best permanence can be achieved, which in many cases will be to move from a residential to a foster placement. However it has now been acknowledged that for some young people a residential setting is far better placed to meet their needs. This is a further indicator of the local authority's commitment to achieve permanence for our looked after children.

IRO Challenge & Escalation

Since September 2016, the Quality Assurance Alerts have been used by the IRO service effectively to identify areas of good practice as well as areas of concern, including quality and timeliness of reports, drift or delay in care planning, concerns regarding statutory duties not being met and areas of practice which need

developing. As a service, we have routinely reviewed the Quality Assurance Alerts to help identify any key themes or areas which need to be addressed; this is then shared within the Senior Management Group.

From 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 there were 87 Quality Assurance Alerts completed in respect of children in care. Of these there were 29 for good practice and 58 highlighting areas of concern. This is a reduction in the overall number of alerts since the previous year (115), although there was an increase in the number of alerts for good practice from 23 to 29.



18 cases of Excellent Practice have been identified through positive alerts. On a number of occasions this has reflected how impressed IROs have been by the quality of direct work social workers have completed with children. There were also 9 alerts recognising good quality reports and assessments. An example here is the excellent use of Signs of Safety danger statements, safety goals and a child focused safety plan.

IROs recognise the importance of acknowledging good practice and ensuring this is formally recorded via the Quality Assurance process. Feedback from Social Workers and Teams indicates that the receipt of positive Quality Assurance alerts is very much welcomed and helps build on workers confidence, self-esteem, enabling them to be proud of their hard work and commitment to our children and families. It is recognised that this is an area where we need to continue to develop, and we need to be ensuring that good practice is regularly acknowledged, as this contributes greatly to staff feeling valued and for positive morale within individuals and teams.

In 2018/19, of the 58 Quality Assurance Alerts sent as escalation of concern, the key areas have been in relation to drift and delay within care planning, statutory visits to children not being completed and timeliness of social work reports. The majority of

the Quality Assurance Alerts are resolved in the first stage and do not require further escalation due to the effective response of team managers and social workers and the improved impact for children and families.

As a result of sending the Quality Assurance alert, the IRO requests an urgent explanation as to the reasons for the drift / delay, followed by identifying clear expectations of work to be completed to address this. They then continue to have oversight of the progress and will use the escalation process when needed.

The themes from the Quality Assurance Alerts are fed into performance and practice forums across Children's Social Care and connect into the department's Quality Assurance Improvement Framework. The feedback from the identified themes is welcomed by Senior Managers to enable us to continue to develop practice and improve the outcomes for our looked after children.

IROs ensure that the escalation process for the Quality Assurance Alerts is implemented within the timeframes identified. Team Managers are required to respond within 5 days and if no response is obtained or the concerns continue to be present, it is escalated to the relevant Service Manager. If no response is then received within 5 working days the matter is raised with the relevant Head of Service.

Following the escalation process being completed, if the concerns remain, discussion will take place with the Assistant Director at the Challenge Meetings. IROs work persistently to try to get the matter resolved in a timely manner with the management group and are in most cases effective in doing so. However, it is acknowledged that the number of Quality Assurance Alerts, although increasing, is lower than would be expected if the IROs were robustly fulfilling their Quality Assurance role.

An example of a successful Quality Assurance Alert is Child A. Child A was in a placement with connected carers. There had been considerable concern about Child A's emotional well-being due to the impact of trauma during their early life. A course of therapeutic intervention was arranged, and Child A engaged well. At the following ROA all professionals agreed this had been a positive intervention, and it was noted that the therapist recommended an additional twelve sessions to further address the key concerns which had clearly been identified. This was agreed at the ROA and written into the care plan. However, following case tracking the IRO became concerned that there was several months delay in the Local Authority agreeing funding for the additional sessions. Following the alert, the team manager raised this with the service manager and the issues were resolved in a very short space of time. This example highlights how alerts for concern are not necessarily a criticism of individual practitioners or managers but rather, through having a clear escalation process any drift and delay can ensure any blocks or obstacles in the system can be quickly addressed.

In addition to the local authority escalation process, if an IRO has any concerns about a child's care planning, which it is believed cannot be resolved by the internal escalation processes, it is the duty of the IRO to refer the case to CAF/CASS. It is however, a procedure which is rarely invoked on a national basis. The Leicestershire IRO service has not referred any cases to CAF/CASS in 2018/19.

For the IRO service to be effective it is essential that it retains its independence from the local authority's Children's Social Care Services. The management within the Safeguarding Unit are highly committed to the IROs ability to exercise their independence and ensure that they have ready access to independent legal advice if the IRO wishes to challenge a local authority care plan. In 2018/19 independent legal advice was sought on one occasion. This could be seen as an example of the effectiveness of the escalation process and the commitment within the local authority to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity.

IROs routinely provide a view on care planning as part of the ROA and this is recorded and presented in all cases in proceedings. In addition, the court can ask for a written statement from the IRO; again this is in exceptional cases with IROs only being required to produce written statements on two occasions in 2018/19.

Challenge Meetings – IROs, Assistant Director (AD) & Agency Decision Maker (ADM)

The management group for the Safeguarding Unit meet each month for a Pre-Challenge Tracking Meeting, to discuss cases and themes of concern. It is then considered whether these cases / matters need to be taken to the Challenge Meeting with the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care, or if further actions can be taken in the first instance. A tracking spreadsheet is kept with a log of these discussions and the cases / themes are followed up with the allocated IRO during supervision or during Team Meetings if necessary.

Following the Pre-Challenge Tracking Meeting, the managers from the Safeguarding Unit meet with the ADM and Assistant Director monthly to discuss identified areas of concern. Cases discussed in this forum are cases which have followed the full escalation process. Given the quality assurance role of the ADM, particularly in respect of permanence, this working together forum is key to identify themes and areas of practice which need further development.

As an outcome of case discussions held at the Challenge Meeting, a number of cases have been resolved in a timely manner, achieving positive outcomes for children. One example is that of Child B who was residing with his maternal grandmother. Grandmother had stated that she was unable to manage due to her own physical and mental health needs and the level of B's challenging behaviour and complex needs. Therefore, a plan was developed which was to include a residential school placement. This was a highly complicated case in which there had been significant delay and following the escalation process became a subject of the Challenge Meetings. Having reviewed the concerns in some detail the issues were referred the relevant senior manager who ensured this was progressed within a clear timescale and satisfactorily resolved. This has now resulted in B having a suitable residential school place which he enjoys attending during the week and he spends his weekends with his grandmother. There is a robust support package in place including additional respite, provided by the school, when required.

By having clear lines of communication between practitioners and senior managers, working to improve outcomes for children, it has also provided learning opportunities for the practitioners to further develop and improve their practice and care planning.

As part of the Challenge Meeting process managers routinely seek to identify themes which can inform practice that are then disseminated across children's services, for example a recent issue highlighted has been the importance of robust sibling assessments which need to be objective and independent of any other care planning assessments so as not to pre-empt any decision as to what is in the best interests of the children.

More broadly the Safeguarding Unit has undertaken thematic audits as part of the Continuous Improvement Plan. In addition to the service wide audits these are specific pieces of work carried out when issues arise which may need targeted intervention to achieve improvements. One example of this has been looking at the timeliness of pre-birth case conference as it was identified that a significant number of Initial Child Protection Conferences were being held close to the unborn child's estimated due date. It was found that while there were several valid reasons for this, there was sufficient concern to look to develop an action plan which included requiring teams to revisit the relevant LSCB guidance.

Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)

The IRO service continues to maintain a good working relationship with CAFCASS Children's Guardians, at both IRO and management level. IROs routinely liaise with Children's Guardians during Care Proceedings and ensure their views on the care plans are represented. In addition to the liaison with the Guardian, the IRO also completes an IRO legal view on the proposed final Care Plan, which is emailed to the local authority's legal representative and included within the final Court bundle.

The Safeguarding Managers attend management meetings with CAFCASS Service Managers along with colleague Service Managers from Children and Family Services and Legal Advisors from both Leicestershire and Leicester City to discuss areas of mutual interest and concern. It is positive that CAFCASS management has expressed a strong commitment to continuing to build productive working relationships between IROs and Guardians. Through Guardian's attendance at ROAs and planned joint IRO/Guardian workshops they are developing a shared understanding of the child's needs and good communication to achieve outcomes in the best interests of children.

Family Justice Board

The Safeguarding and Improvement Unit Service Manager attends the Family Justice Board meetings. This enables the IRO Service to have a direct connection into Family Justice Board and the Performance Sub Group of the Board. This assists with the IRO service being kept up to date with any issues arising from the Public Law work that in turn influences IRO practice. It also enables IROs to continue to be up to date with changes to legislation, policies and procedures, enhancing their oversight of the practice and performance of the local authority in respect to children who are subject to care proceedings. This in turns helps ensure timely care planning

and better outcomes for the children. The Service Manager ensures the IRO service is updated of key information via Team Meetings, emails and supervision.

Regional IRO Forums

The IRO Service has continued to engage in the East Midlands Regional IRO forums and has had the benefit of four tailored training and networking opportunities over 2018-19 covering several areas to support professional development, including quality assurance. As a result of the quality assurance day in February 2019 the Safeguarding Unit has undertaken to develop a standardised template for IROs to complete mid-way desktop case reviews to ensure care planning remains on track, as well as developing a consistent approach to the quality assurance of plans, 28 day ROAs and subsequent reviews.

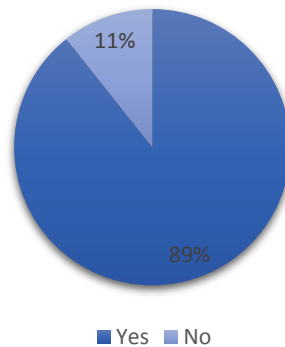
Personal Education Plans

In 2018/19 eighty-five per cent of all looked after children had a Personal Education Plan (PEP), this is in line with the previous year. At ROA meetings IROs routinely confirm if PEP meetings have taken place, that all recommendations are being progressed and if this is sufficient or whether further actions necessary. Completion of PEP's is seen as high priority as they are fundamental to ensuring each child has access to the right educational support to enable them to achieve their potential. To this end IROs work closely with the Virtual School, with the Education Improvement Officers regularly attending the child's ROA.

There are several reasons why a child may not have a PEP on file, one of the most significant being that they are not in school due to an unplanned placement move. With any unplanned move the IRO will undertake a 28-day ROA to ensure the right steps have been taken to support the child in their new placement, including education provision. This has been an area of increased focus within the Safeguarding Unit in 2018/19, to ensure there is no drift and Safeguarding Managers have been reviewing caseloads with IROs in supervision to identify any cases of ongoing concern where a young person is not accessing education and requires escalation within the Education Department through the Virtual School.

Health Checks completed within twelve months

Number of children who have had their most recent health check within the last 12 months



In 2018/19, of the 599 children who were eligible for a looked after health assessment, 89% (535) children had one completed. The number of children who have had their health review completed on time has increased from 79.6% in 2017/18 to 82.2% in 2018/19.

Again, this has been a key focus within the local authority with the importance of these being raised across a range of forums including the Corporate Parenting Board. Within this reporting period the Service Manager for the Safeguarding Unit along with the Looked After Children's Nurse from the Clinical Commissioning Group have undertaken an improvement activity audit to assess the effectiveness of IRO challenge within the ROA process. The focus of this has been to ensure both Initial Health Assessments and Review Health Assessments are completed on time and that the contents of the assessments are informing care plans.

The audits found some strong examples of good practice, such as the health needs of the child being clearly documented in child friendly language as well as appropriate challenge of drift. However, it was identified that this good practice needed to be more uniformly embedded within the ROAs. A number of improvements were outlined including the need for more consistency in IROs ensuring all health needs are highlighted and the need to have oversight of the health care plan and actions to ensure that these are being progressed without delay.

It was also highlighted that the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire, which looks at the child's emotional health and wellbeing, should be a more integral part of the ROA process. A comprehensive action plan was developed and implemented in the final quarter of 2018/19, therefore impact of this will be documented in the 2019/2020 report.

Dental checks within a twelve-month period

As with health reviews dental checks are viewed with high importance in contributing to children and young people's wellbeing. In 2018/19 out of 599 children, 465 (77.6%) had a dental check within the last twelve months. Again, this is an area which is routinely scrutinised by IROs within the ROAs. The general expectation is that all children in care see the dentist every six months.

Independent Reviewing Officer: Child Protection Chair

Child Protection Conference Activity

The number of Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences chaired over 2018/19 was 851, involving 1,565 children.

Children discussed at ICPC

	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19
Child to be Subject of CP plan	35 97.2%	39 95.1%	27 100.0%	32 97.0%	36 87.8%	37 97.4%	42 91.3%	48 78.7%	52 92.9%	41 95.3%	45 88.2%
No CP Plan required	1 2.8%	2 4.9%		1 3.0%	5 12.2%	1 2.6%	4 8.7%	13 21.3%	4 7.1%	2 4.7%	6 11.8%
Grand Total	36 100.0%	41 100.0%	27 100.0%	33 100.0%	41 100.0%	38 100.0%	46 100.0%	61 100.0%	56 100.0%	43 100.0%	51 100.0%

Children discussed at ICPC per month

In 2018/19 there were 516 Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) of which 42 (8%) had an outcome of no Child Protection Planning. This small number of children not being made subject to a Child Protection plan at ICPC indicates that consistent and appropriate thresholds are being applied in relation to children being at risk of significant harm. This results in the right children being considered in need of child protection planning and therefore receiving the right support at the right time.

Numbers of Child Protection Plans

Numbers of children subject to child protection plans measured at year end (31st March 2019) has slightly decreased from the previous reporting year:

2017-18	394
2018-19	388

Repeat Child Protection Plans

In this reporting period the rate of children becoming subject to a child protection plans for the second or subsequent time has again reduced to 15.2%.

Repeat planning analysis has continued to be common practice for the Conference Chairs, who are required to complete their analysis as part of their preparation for the Child Protection Conference.

IROs are independent of the care planning process and a primary focus of an IRO is quality assurance. This enables IROs to be in a prime position to highlight and analyse concerns that have led to further child protection planning. This analysis and understanding will assist the IRO in setting out a robust plan with clear timescales to ensure that the needs of children and families are understood and comprehensively responded to, to prevent drift and delay or lack of progress for the family.

Repeat child protection plan figures 2018/19	%
Leicestershire	15.2%
Statistical neighbours	21.8%
East Midlands	20.5%
National	20.2%

As part of the Quality Assurance learning framework, two audits of repeat plans have been completed in 2018/19 by the managers of the Safeguarding and Performance Service covering August – November and December- February.

The range of time from the previous plan to the current plan ranged from 8-80 months, with the majority of cases being over 18 months. The low number of repeat planning and the timeframe for the subsequent conference is positive, as it highlights a low rate of children being considered at risk of significant harm for a second or subsequent time. This suggests that the right decision was made and support was in place at the end of the previous plan.

The audit work also highlighted that there had been drift and delay in some cases and elements of a 'stop start' process for children and families through changes in social worker. The impact of this is significant for children and families as it can impact on the continuity and robustness of the child protection plan and the safety plans with families. The changes achieved by families may not then be sustained, resulting in services having to become involved again.

The majority of the identified cases where there had been previous Child Protection planning were stepped down to Child in Need plans, as opposed to ending involvement of children's social care. Those that had closed, did so due to sufficient safety being identified within the family and in cases where Court Orders were in place.

Neglect was a clear dominating risk category in 16 of the 21 cases audited. The trilogy of risk was also a common theme and professional optimism was highlighted as an issue in a few of the cases, especially in relation to domestic abuse. One of the key actions from the audits is for the IRO to ensure that there is evidence of appropriate assessments and intervention that is having a positive impact on the outcomes for children and families. For cases stepping down to a Child in Need plan, the IRO has a pivotal role in facilitating the discussion to ensure plans are robust, generated by the family and that their network and professionals continue to engage with the family.

The performance data shows Leicestershire's maintained reduction of repeat planning and this highlights that the best practice indicators above are successfully

being implemented in the majority of cases where child protection plans are being ended. The impact for children and families is that they are provided with the best opportunities to successfully maintain safe and good enough family environments where children are not at risk of significant harm.

Plans Ending

Over 2018/19 the performance data showed that of the 505 Child Protection plans ending in the reporting period, 73 (14.4%) ended at the first Child Protection Conference. This remains a low figure, which again indicates that the reason for the ICPC was right, and in the majority of cases there was a safe rationale for ending the Child Protection Plan. This was largely due to the child/ren becoming subject to legal proceedings and in local authority care, therefore no longer needing a child protection plan as their care will be overseen by an IRO and there is no need for dual planning. There is now an extra element of oversight in these cases that includes the need for agreement from the Service Manager for a child protection plan to end at the first Review Child Protection Conference.

Length of Plans

Plans that have been in place for lengthy periods of time are also scrutinised to look at the effectiveness of the intervention and how robust the approach is in bringing about lasting change/permanence for children and young people.

Over this reporting period there have been two audits to look at the cases subject to a child protection plan over 18 months. The audits covered August - February and moving forward will be completed every four months by the Safeguarding Managers. The audit highlighted inconsistency in quality assurance alerts being sent by IROs in relation to drift and delay in cases and the limited IRO footprint on these cases. As a result of this audit more robust monitoring is now in place that includes conference chair oversight by the second review of all child protection conferences to ensure the plan is not static or not providing safety for the child/ren. This is to ensure that plans are robust and impacting positively on the outcome for children and families and if not, then the role of the IRO as a critical friend is to highlight the issue and provide support to drive the plan forward in the best interests of the children.

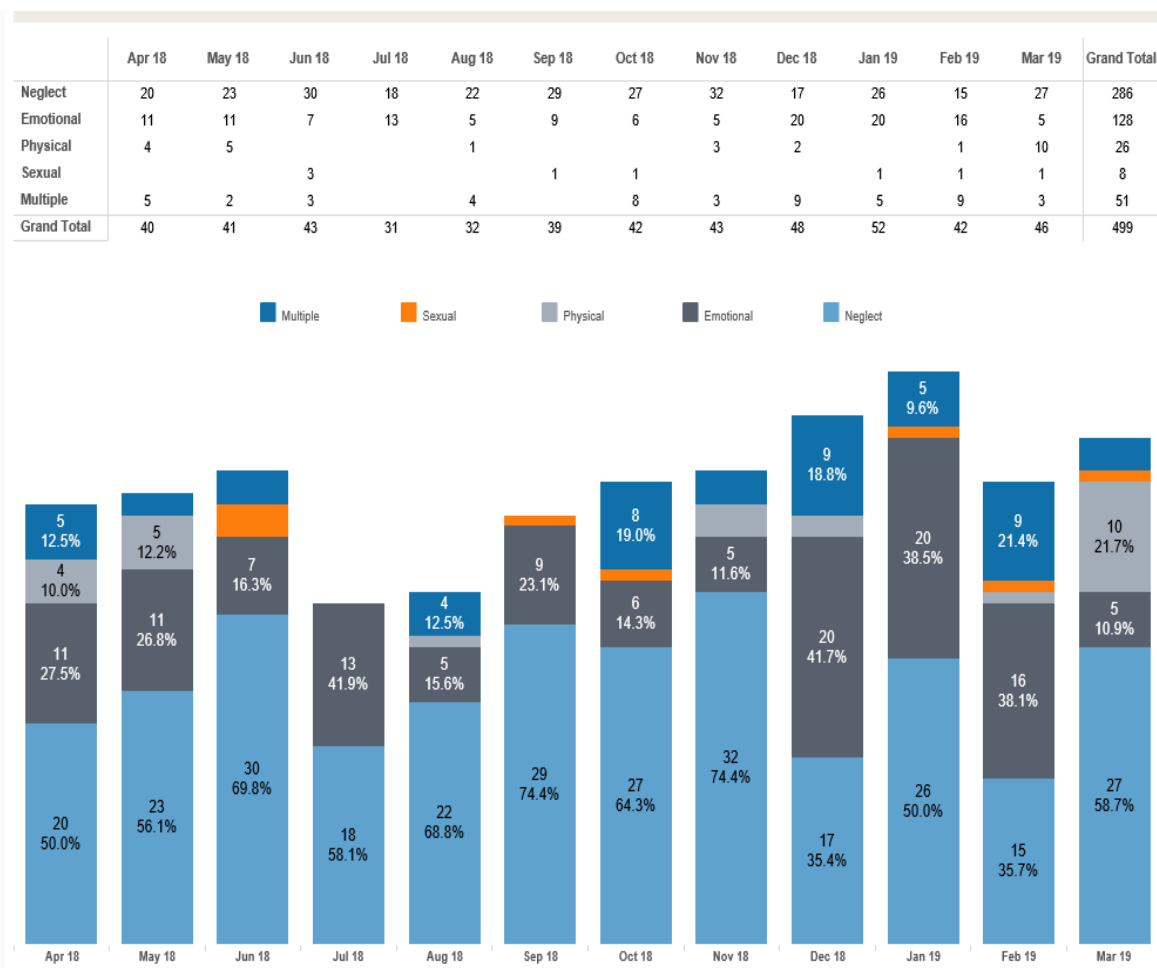
The audit also showed that the highest risk category for children subject to plans over 18 months is neglect and that the use of the neglect toolkit to support with understanding of the issues and measurement of change had not been consistently used with families. Further work has been done with IROs and locality social work teams to re-invigorate the use of the neglect toolkit to ensure children and families are given the tools and best opportunity to affect positive change.

Child Protection Plan Categories of Risk

There are four main categories of risk that can be used as a determination of the primary risk factor for the child when subject to a child protection plan; neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. In 2018-2019 the breakdown of categories of abuse at the start of the child protection planning for the 499 children

whose Child Protection Planning started was Neglect 286 (57.3%), Emotional 128 (25.6%), Physical 26 (5.2%), multiple 51 (10.2%) and Sexual 8 (1.7%).

These figures are very similar to the previous reporting period, the only slight difference is that the risk category 'Physical' is slightly down from 11% to 5.2% and that the multiple category has increased from 7% to 10%.



This data continues to highlight that neglect is the primary risk category. During this reporting period there has been a Neglect Thematic Audit completed and the findings highlighted a lack of consistent use of the neglect tool kit; a finding also in the repeat planning audit discussed previously within this report. This audit highlighted that, of the cases where the neglect tool kit had been used, this supported the analysis and had been used to inform the child's plan. There has been a co-ordinated response from both from the IRO service and Quality Assurance team to re-engage the use of the neglect tool kit as it has a clear positive impact on assessment, analysis and plans and therefore the outcome for children and families.

Children subject to a plan under the category 'at risk of sexual abuse' continues to be low at 3.7% (children subject to a plan under the category of sexual abuse including both singular and multiple categories). Whilst nationally the prevalence of children subject to a child protection plan by initial category of sexual abuse has reduced since 2015, with the rate dropping from 4.7% in 2015 to 4.1% in 2018, reporting in Leicestershire is lower than this level. In response to this under

representation there has been a specific piece of audit work undertaken within this reporting period that looked at the number of cases that have a 'risk of sexual abuse' identified from the point of contact to those subject to a child protection plan under this category.

The analysis of this audit did not highlight a concern regarding the response, assessment and outcome for cases where sexual abuse had been identified as a risk factor from the point of contact. Child protection plans, with the category of sexual abuse, which had ended did not identify an issue with plans ending too early and all had appropriate decisions for the family. None of the cases that had ended had re-referrals. A recommendation of the audit for the IROs was for a stronger analysis regarding decision making around the category used and for this to be clear where the category of the plan changes. These recommendations have been taken forward with IRO team.

The IROs have continued to address and be mindful of having multiple categories of risk used in Child Protection plans, although there has been a slight increase in the use of multiple categories from 41 (2017-18) to 51 (2018-19). Ensuring that multiple categories are used appropriately and only when required remains a focus of the Safeguarding and Performance Service. The use of multiple categories can impact the identification of need from a departmental commissioning perspective and more importantly can make it less clear for children and families as to the primary presenting concerns.

Following learning from a serious case review a case file check of cases which have used the 'emotional abuse' category in either the last six months or last 20 cases was undertaken This was to establish if 'emotional abuse' was being used as the appropriate category within those cases. The report author agreed with nineteen out of twenty cases that Emotional Harm was an appropriate category, although in several cases there was justification for dual categorisation.

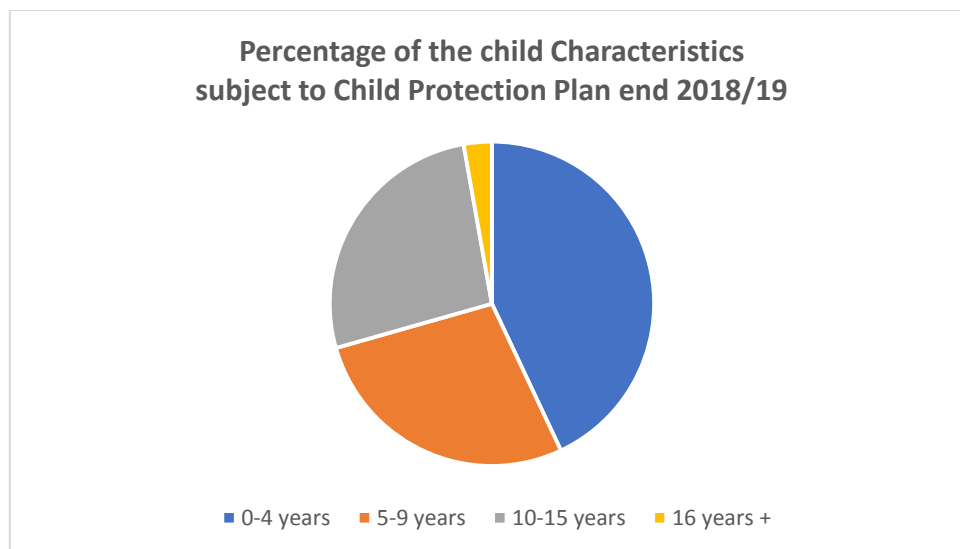
Following the audit there has been work undertaken with the IROs to have a collective understanding of when dual categories are appropriate and in what circumstances the category of 'physical abuse' should take priority over the category of 'emotional abuse'. Consideration will be given to all risks but dual categories should be reserved for when there is equal concern in two areas. Ensuring the right category is used is central to developing a robust and effective plan to achieve positive change and outcomes for children and families.

Child Characteristics

The age range of children subject to a Child Protection Plan remains similar to the previous reporting year:-

Age	Percentage of the child Characteristics subject to Child Protection Plan end	
	2017/18	2018/19
0-4 years	40.5%	43%
5-9 years	30.5%	27.6%

10-15 years	25%	26.6%
16+ years	4%	2.8%



The gender of children subject to Child Protection Plans for this reporting period remains the same - Female 49% and Male 51%.

The ethnic profile of children subject to Child Protection plans also remains consistent to previous years with 88% of children being of White origin and the remaining 12% distributed across Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds with those of Asian/Asian British accounting for most.

Historically the data in Leicestershire regarding numbers of children with a disability subject to a Child Protection Plan is low although there continues to be no accurate way of collecting this data.

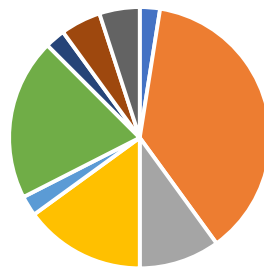
Conference Performance

For the reporting period 2018/19, there were 851 Child Protection Conferences and 40 (4.7%) had been problematic from the perspective of having to go out of date or be stood down on the day and rearranged; this is a slight increase from the last reporting period which stood at 2.5%. Although this is a very small percentage, the impact for all concerned, especially the families, is acknowledged. When this happens, any learning is considered, and avoidable issues are taken up by the Service; for example delay in social worker requesting the conference is addressed with their line manager, agency attendance is taken up with agency leads and Quality Assurance Alerts are considered.

The main reasons for conferences not being able to go ahead at the time are recorded in the table below;

Number of conference having to go out of date or had to be stood down.	Reason.
1	Lack of an interpreter
15	Lateness in the request for an ICPC
4	Parent/carer not available.
6	Lack of professionals in attendance
1	Social Worker did not attend conference.
8	Unknown reason
1	Sickness with the Conference chair
2	No clerk available
2	Social Workers work commitments.

Number of conference having to go out of date or had to be stood down.



- lack of interpreter
- parent/carer not available
- social worker did not attend
- sickness of the conference chair
- social workers prior work commitments
- lateness in the request for ICPC
- lack of professionals in attendance
- unknown
- no clerk available

The timeliness of Review Conferences over this reporting period was good with 97.3% convened within statutory requirements, which is a very similar figure to the last reporting period at 97.1%. Timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences remains consistently high at 91.5%. The table above highlights the many challenges to convening conferences in a timely manner. The achievement in maintaining good performance data in timeliness indicates the dedication and understanding of the importance for children and families to respond with the right action at the right time and minimise delay.

There has been an increase in conferences being stood down due to the lack of professionals in attendance from 3 in the last reporting period to 6 in this reporting period. Work is being undertaken in collaboration with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to improve attendance and engagement of partners at conference to ensure that the issue of quoracy is minimised and that the child

protection conference is meaningful and effective for the engagement with children and families.

Conference Records

Distribution of child protection conference records during this period continues to be very timely, largely because of a collaborative approach with the team that provides administrative support for conferences.

The majority of records, along with a copy of the Child Protection Plan, are distributed within 5-10 working days of the conference taking place. In addition to the full records, a typed copy of the mapping (the information completed on the whiteboard in the conference) is given to all attendees to take away with them at the end of the conference so everyone, including families, have a clear record of the strengths, concerns and what needs to happen to address the risk of harm to the children and young people concerned.

It is important to note the contribution from the clerks whose professional skill and diligence have ensured a continued high standard of recording. Capacity issues with regards to the IROs and Admin staff are referenced and considered in more detail within this report.

The service strives to provide the same conference chair for all conferences for a family, but this has continued to be a challenge over this reporting period and has not always been achieved due to recruitment and pressure points in capacity within the service at different times. Realistically there will always be times, mainly due to sickness, that a change of Conference Chair will be needed but overall, the additional capacity of 2 FTE IROs agreed in the service will make it more possible to deliver this standard moving forward. In situations where it is not possible to provide the same person, those picking up the responsibility endeavour to spend additional preparation time reviewing previous records and liaising with allocated social workers, so they are prepared and are in the best position to provide a good service.

When a child or young person has been subject to child protection planning and becomes accommodated into local authority care within this Child Protection planning period we endeavour, as much as possible, to keep the allocation with the same IRO as the family already know them and the IRO has knowledge of the child/ren's journey into local authority care.

During this reporting period there has been continued consideration to ending the child protection planning for looked after children to prevent dual planning for children and young people once they have been accommodated into local authority care. Currently this cannot be completed outside of a child protection conference, but all attempts are made to minimise the number of meetings for both family and professionals. Since the reporting period there has been agreement to a process and guidance to enable ending of a child protection conference by letter at the 28 day Review of Arrangements meeting.

Social Work Conference Reports

In line with LSCB procedures and the Practice standards, parents should receive the report for an Initial Conference at least 1 working day in advance of the conference and it should be with the chair 1 working day in advance. The report for a Review Child Protection Conference is to be with the parent and the Conference Chair at least 3 working days in advance of the Review Child Protection Conference.

It is essential that parents/carers have the time to digest and consider the information contained in the social work reports and enter the child protection conference feeling clear and prepared. The Signs of Safety ethos of working openly and transparently with families supports this approach and without it, families are left feeling anxious and unprepared, which does not make for good working relationships and does not support good quality child protection conferences.

Performance in this area has continued to evidence improvement; 75% of parents received the report before conference (69% last year), 22% on the day of the conference and 3% did not receive a report at all. There is still room for further improvement and work continues to take place to ensure all parents receive the report within the expected timescales.

Consultation

The Conference Chairs and managers continue to offer consultation to the locality social work teams in situations that might be more complex or have several complicating factors that could impact negatively on a smooth Child Protection Conference process. When this has been taken up, it has often resulted in the preparation for conference being more effective, particularly with planning for conferences with multiple parents.

Agency Contribution & Participation

It is expected and clearly outlined in LSCB procedures that agency representatives should provide accurate and concise information to conference, in the agreed format, in advance of the conference.

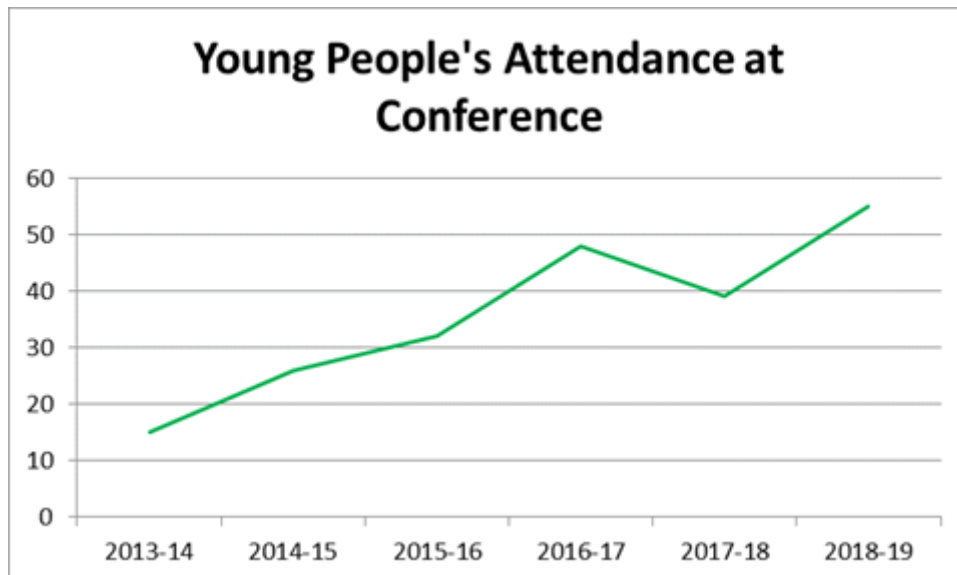
It is unfortunate that over this reporting period agency participation is not fully recorded for the whole year as the recording is incomplete. The LSCB has convened a task and finish group to look at professional's attendance at conferences and make recommendations for improvement. There will also be a full 12 months report for attendance for 2019/20.

Implementation of Signs of Safety Child Protection Conferences

Since July 2015, all Child Protection Conferences in Leicestershire have been delivered using the Signs of Safety approach and Conference Chairs continue to develop and improve their skills through bespoke thematic training as well as attendance and contribution to Practice Lead Workshops. There have been periods where practice observations have been undertaken by the Safeguarding and Performance Managers which has been fed into a combination of individual supervision sessions, team meeting practice sessions as well as the IROs development practice days with the Signs of Safety trainer.

One of the four behaviours that underpins Leicestershire's continuous improvement plan, "The Road to Excellence" is the importance of voice 'listening and responding to what the child and family tell us'. Within child protection conferences, the implementation of the strength based Signs of Safety framework ensures a collaborative approach with families and recognises the importance of their voice being key to decisions. We have a comprehensive advocacy offer for children (10+years) attending child protection conferences through our Children's Rights Service (CRS), which ensures that they are supported to attend if this is what they want to do, or their views are represented if they do not.

The majority of children and young people choose not to attend their conference. Nevertheless, during the year there were 55 attendances of young people at their conferences which is an increase from 2017-18 and represents the highest figures since the CRS began supporting young people through the CP process.



Young person: R, 17 years, subject to a Child Protection Plan

Case Summary: R had been on a CPP for almost 2 years and was approaching her 18th birthday. Parents would not engage with CFS and were refusing to allow R to see any social workers alone which left her at risk. R was NEET, but wanted to be in education, this meant she was very isolated.

<i>The worries</i>	<i>What worked well</i>	<i>Outcome for young person</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R was not in any form of education, employment or training and had not been for over 3 years. She spent the vast majority of her time at home, under the supervision of her parents. • R had a Risk Assessment from CAMHS which meant that colleges felt unable to offer R a place without additional support. However, R did not have an EHCP to enable additional support to be put in place. • R had had 3 changes in social worker for the duration of her Child Protection Plan. • R's parents prevented workers from speaking to R alone, were dishonest and prevented R from accessing tuition which was put in place by CFS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R engaged well with the CRO, CRO was able to insist that parents allowed her to see R alone in order to be able to carry out effective advocacy. R's strong views about this reinforced this position. • The CRO was able to represent R with the Special Educational Needs service and to parents. CRO was able to facilitate a meeting between R and the Educational Psychologist, which parents tried to prevent. • CRO was able to facilitate a meeting between the Transitions Social Worker, college and R (at R's request) so that they were informed about R's concerns re. her parents and she was reassured that they would work with her, in her own right, given her age and clear views. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R received an EHCP quickly and was accepted onto her chosen college course. R was achieving well and had safety people she could speak to at college, so she was not so isolated. • As R had an EHCP she was eligible for a Transitions social worker who worked well with R, and ensured an Adult Mental Health social worker was in place prior to R turning 18. This ensured R had ongoing support and safety in place. • R became more confident to speak to other professionals over the time the CRO was working with her, partly because she felt supported to give her views. <p><i>Increased safety</i> <i>Improved school attendance/attainment</i> <i>Increased YP Voice</i></p>

For those younger children who do not have the offer of advocacy the IRO (conference chair) will ensure that the voice of children is central to the child protection conference and the paperwork brought to conference supports the requirement for this to be captured and shared.

Completing the child protection conferences using the Signs of Safety framework ensures that the conference process is inclusive of the family and is completed with them. The impact for children and families is that they understand the worries and risks and feel valued and included to work towards achieving and maintaining change. It is evidenced that good relationship-based practice will improve outcomes for children and families.

There continues to be improving evidence of good quality child protection plans that were SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely). However this is not consistently the case across all plans. The goal is for all plans to be outcome focussed and owned by the family. The main challenge has been to ensure that all child protection plans identified clear bottom lines and Safety Goals for the family and that all plans set out clear outcome focused objectives with timescales.

The discussion around these issues formed part of the work with IROs in the Signs of Safety Development Day highlighting their Quality Assurance role to be the critical friend and to support improved practice and outcomes. It was also acknowledged that the outline child protection plan created by the IRO at the end of a child protection conference needs to support the development of a SMART plan. In addition, IROs have observed and shared each other's practice, as part of their peer reviews to support learning from good practice. This will continue to be supported moving into the next reporting period.

Feedback

The IROs have continued to provide direct support and advice to Social Workers on the Signs of Safety approach, this has been welcomed, as evidenced from the communications received from Social Worker's and Team Manager's in supporting case discussions and skilfully managing the Child Protection Conferences.

We have gathered feedback from families and professionals on their child protection conference experience; in the main there was good feedback and most people felt that their conference experience was positive in the fact they felt they were able to contribute.

Below are some of the comments made.

- The meeting was chaired well.
- The meeting was very child focussed.
- One parent would have benefitted from seeing the social worker's report prior to the conference.

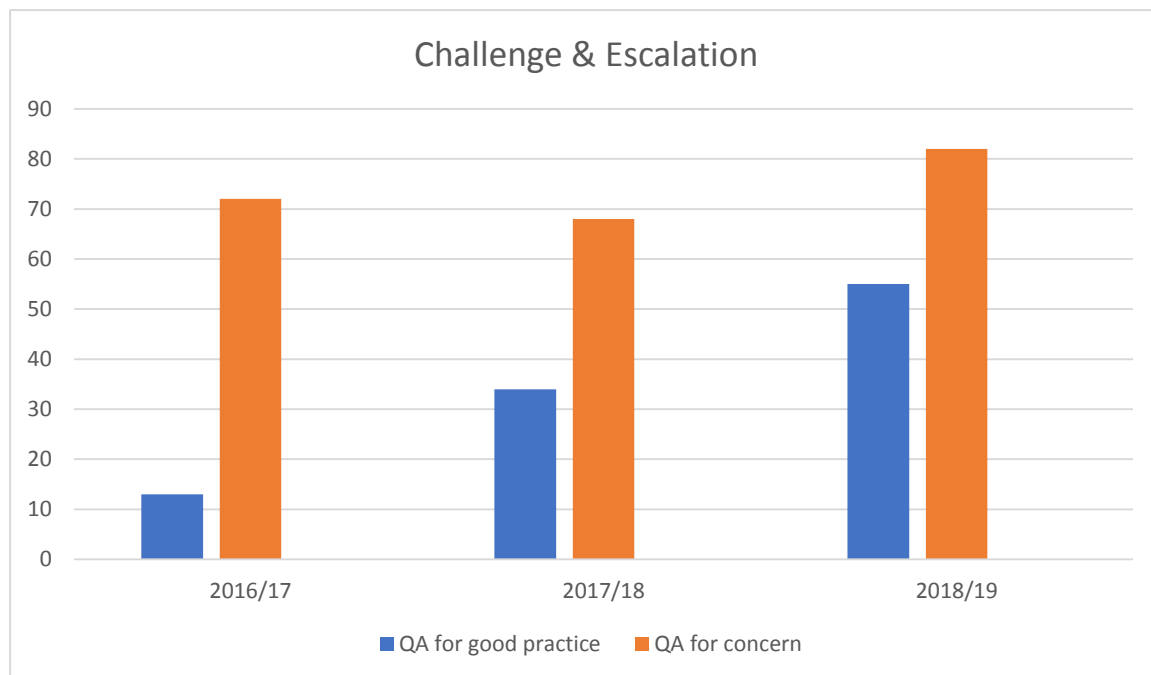
Challenges & Escalation

As referenced in the introduction of this report, IROs within the Safeguarding and Performance Service have a Quality Assurance role in identifying areas of concern in child protection practice and undertaking challenge where it is required. IRO Quality Assurance Alerts were devised and implemented as a means of formally and systematically capturing and evidencing IRO activity. This ensures there is a clear and consistent process that can be reported on and provides information about individual impact as well as themes to feed learning and service improvement. It is important to note that the QA Alert is not just about drawing out concerns but highlighting good practice as well.

For this reporting period 2018/19, there were 137 IRO Quality Assurance Alerts. 55 of these were good practice alerts raised and 82 were alerts for concern. The amount of IRO Quality Assurance Alerts has increased steadily from 2016/17.

However, it is acknowledged that the number of Quality Assurance Alerts although increasing is lower than would be expected with IROs robustly fulfilling their Quality Assurance role and supporting improvement in practice and impact for children and families.

Monthly overview reports are completed and shared with departmental senior management meetings (SMT) and fed into performance meetings.



Good practice examples have noted:

- Great report from the Social Worker and excellent presentation at conference and great contributions/suggestion to CP Plan. Thorough piece of work.
- Workers have worked hard to ensure the best outcome for a new born baby, particularly working across borders, distances involved, and varying process and procedure and risks involved, social work team did not transfer to a longer-term team due to this transferring to another local authority.
- Social worker attending social events out of her normal working hours in support of children in care and celebrating their successes.
- Excellent matching and transition plan devised for two children in care and supporting them through their move of placement.
- Progress of the child protection plan was thorough and timely.
- Social worker has a great relationship with the young person she is working with and has always promoted her aspirations; encouraging her but also giving her practical and realistic advice and support and has always been open and honest with her. Clear plans are in place for her prior to and post turning 18, the social worker has worked hard to ensure this young person has had as many opportunities as possible.

Concerns:

The key areas of concern in this reporting period was drift and delay and statutory visits to children not being completed in line with statutory timeframe or as agreed in plan.

Timescales:

It continues to be of concern that practitioners along with managers have not always responded to Quality Assurance Alerts and/or have not done this in a timely manner and IROs have not always consistently and robustly escalated concerns when a response is not satisfactory/not responded to, setting realistic timescales that guard against delay.

Over this reporting period safeguarding managers have been discussing Quality Assurance within supervision along with cases that may need to be escalated to the Pre-Challenge/Challenge meetings. The Service Manager for Safeguarding and Performance also attends the Service Manager meetings for field work. This is to support with shared peer challenge and learning from themes highlighted through Quality Assurance Alerts.

Appeals/Complaints

Children continued to be offered to be supported in attending or having their voice heard in child protection conferences. There has not been any young person who has appealed the decision to make them subject of a child protection plans in this reporting period. They are supported by the Children's Rights Officers, for which there is a separate Annual report giving more detail around children's participation and voice in child protection conferences.

There have been thirteen complaints made by parents/carers in this reporting period, most of which were a joint response between the safeguarding and performance unit and the identified locality team. Most were resolved at Stage 1, and on one occasion the service manager and Head of service went to meet a family. There is one complaint that has gone to stage 2, with regard to the reporting period and this was still ongoing.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

This has been a very busy and exciting period due to the implementation of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) processes and procedures across Children & Family Service. This has heightened the profile of HSB and raised the awareness of the support needed for these young people and their families through the roll out of the new HSB Policy and the new HSB meetings which are convened by trained IROs.

The Safeguarding Lead has continued to be involved in a significant amount of development work that has been undertaken across CFS and has attended regional HSB meetings every quarter.

A task and finish group was established to develop the operational response to HSB, made up of key managers and practitioners from CFS including the HSB lead, specialist therapeutic social worker, along with Police Child Abuse and Investigation Unit and Learning and Development representatives. Through these meetings the HSB procedures, policies and tools are now readily available on the intranet and through the learning hub.

There has been an increase in training throughout CFS for staff at all levels in the assessment and referral for children and young people exhibiting HSB.

LCC in the context of National Developments

The Notion of 'Harmful Sexual Behaviour' has a dual concept of harm to others and harm to self. Choosing the right terminology is important to avoid stigmatisation of children and young people. It is also important that descriptions of HSB are contextualised about age appropriate healthy sexual behaviour among children and young people. It is pleasing to report that the terminology Harmful Sexual Behaviour has been widely adopted and recognised by staff members across CFS as well as our partner agencies.

Training & Workforce Development

Staff understanding of HSB thresholds has continued to improve over this reporting period. There continue to be different levels of training needs across the staff group; 'Brook's traffic light tool' basic training for all CFS staff, AIMS 3 training for experienced qualified Social Workers, AIMS training for managers supervising cases of HSB and 'good lives intervention model' for those practitioners who have completed the AIMS 2/3.

The charity 'Brook' has a sexual behaviour traffic light tool which can be used to distinguish different types of sexual behaviours at different age levels. It is also important to indicate what constitutes HSB when it's displayed by children or young people with a learning difficulty or developmental disorder which may have inhibited their sexual maturity.

AIMS is a nationally recognised risk assessment tool for children over the age of 10 years who are displaying HSB. The risk assessment assists practitioners to identify a suitable intervention programme. In the last reporting year 2017/18 there are over 60 Social Workers whom are AIMS 2 trained, we now have 3 IROs trained in AIMS 2 and the Safeguarding Manager is also training in AIMS 2.

AIMS 3 will be available in the summer 2019 and this training will be made available for staff across CFS. The main differences between AIMS 2 and AIMS 3 is that it considers technology assisted HSB and can be completed with younger children. Managers from the teams, where staff members have completed the AIMS 2 training, should be giving these workers permission to use this qualification and work alongside the allocated social worker in completing this risk assessment.

AIMS training for Managers is designed to support line managers who supervise workers undertaking the AIMS 2 and intervention programmes with children and young people who display HSB.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Meetings

Historically HSB meetings have been in the main one-off meetings. The ambition is for there to be a full review of the HSB for each identified young person, where an initial HSB meeting was convened and if adopted then a safety plan can be put into place along with an action plan. This action plan is then reviewed until the group of professionals and family agree that the plan is as safe as it can be and that the family and professionals own this plan and adapt it accordingly for the HSB meetings to come to an end. This process focusses upon the needs, risk and safety of the child(ren) and provides a framework where plans can be reviewed, amended and updated to ensure that the needs of the child are being met.

It is important that the HSB meetings run alongside any other plans, such as child protection planning or care plans and that they inform each other, and there is not any further weight offered to any other plan.

Recommendations 2019-2020

1. Following the increased capacity within the IRO service and the safeguarding administration team, improvement in the timeliness of production and distribution of LAC Review records needs to be evidenced. Managers will have robust oversight of records timeliness and caseload analysis within the team to ensure that senior managers are aware of pressure points within the year. There has been the introduction of Actions from Review of Arrangements being uploaded within 5 days. In addition, IROs are also uploading their own records so we will be able to report on both areas in 2019/20 which will give a more accurate picture both IRO and administration team improvements.
2. Development of a broad use of tools to support the participation of children in their Review of Arrangement. Consideration of the use of technology to support inclusion. In addition to continue to build upon ensuring that LAC Reviews are more child focused and to develop our opportunities for gaining feedback to inform our learning cycle.
3. Operational teams to evidence improved and sustained performance over 2019-20 in relation to timeliness/availability and quality of social work reports, updating assessments and plans for LAC Reviews and child protection conferences. This will be achieved through effective use of the Quality Assurance Alert to highlight poor practice and celebrate improvements in terms of timeliness and engagement of children and families.
4. Improvements in how the LAC review effectively supports good emotional and physical health for children in care. For the review to consider the health action plan from the initial/review health assessment. For the IRO to have an

understanding of the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire score to develop the care plan and to ensure that the leaving care health summary is understood and engaged with by young people and carers.

5. Development of the Quality Assurance Alert process on Mosaic to enable better performance data to be captured to ensure the alert process being central to the learning cycle. IROs need to ensure that they are effectively utilising the Quality Assurance Alert to highlight both concerns and positive practice. The escalation of the QA needs to be consistently applied to ensure impact is effective and timely. IRO Service to provide quarterly IRO QA Alert overview reports to SMT and Performance Meetings.
6. IRO Service to work closely with CAFCASS over 2019-20 to ensure full and consistent application of the IRO/CAFCASS Protocol – particular emphasis on improving the instances of formal handover from the Children’s Guardian to the IRO at the conclusion of proceedings and participation of Children’s Guardians in LAC Reviews.
7. IRO Service to continue to contribute to robust and focused practice to ensure low instances of repeat child protection plans for children – this will include analysis of cases to draw out themes and learning through quarterly audit by Safeguarding Managers.
8. IRO Service to consistently implement the process to systematically review cases of children subject to CP plan for 9 months and consider exit plans that will achieve maintained safety and permanence for children
9. IRO Service to maintain good performance in relation to timeliness of both initial and review child protection conferences.
10. IRO Service to evidence consistency of chair for child protection conferences, as far as capacity will allow.
11. IRO Service to work with Business, Intelligence & Performance team to improve reporting capacity of agency attendance at child protection conferences and then use this data to inform best practice approach with partner agencies.

Kelda Claire

Service Manager, Safeguarding and Improvement Unit

Stuart Jones

Safeguarding and Improvement Team Manager: Performance and Corporate Parenting Lead

Kara Walne

Safeguarding and Improvement Team Manager: Safeguarding Lead



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
3 SEPTEMBER 2019

QUARTER 1 2019/20 PERFORMANCE REPORT

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with an update of the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period April to June 2019 (Quarter 1).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children and Family Services Department's performance is reported to the Committee in accordance with the Council's corporate performance management arrangements.

Background

3. A Strategic Plan 2018-2022 has been agreed by the Council. The current performance dashboard is attached as Appendix A, and this has been refreshed to concentrate on indicators where new data is available for Quarter 1, including provisional education data for 2019 and annual statistics for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
4. Quartile positions are added where comparative national data is available. Comparative data is not available for all indicators.

Overview

5. From 42 measures that have been reported, 12 have improved, 11 show no significant change and nine have declined. In addition to this, ten indicators provide information with no polarity (for example SEND activity and CSE referrals).

6. From 20 measures that have a national benchmark, six are in the top quartile, six are in the second quartile, four are in the third quartile and four are in the fourth quartile.

Children at most risk are kept safe and protected from harm

7. The number of 'Child Protection cases reviewed within timescales' was 94.7% in quarter 1. This equates to 373 of 394 plans being reviewed in time, showing an increase in volume compared to quarter 4 (2018/19) when 97.3% (251 out of 258) plans were reviewed in time. This is a lower percentage than quarter 4 but remains good by national levels and in the second quartile of all local authorities.
8. The percentage of 'Children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time' increased from 13.6% to 14.8%. This represents 19 children. Despite this small rise, this remains in the first quartile of local authorities by available comparisons.
9. The percentage of re-referrals to Social Care within 12 months was 21.7% (297 children); this was a slightly lower percentage than quarter 4 but more children, reflecting a higher volume of cases. (The quarter 4 figure was 22.3% (257 children)). This places Leicestershire in the third quartile of local authorities and better than statistical neighbours. Monthly audits take place within the service to monitor this.
10. The percentage of 'single assessments completed within 45 days' was 71.8%. This was a large improvement compared to the quarter 4 figure of 60.3% and represented 924 assessments (compared to 631 in quarter 4). This is lower than available national and statistical neighbour comparisons, which are both over 80%. The service has run an assessment campaign over the last six months as part of the continuous improvement plan, the focus of which has been on improving the quality of assessments as well as timeliness. Month on month timeliness figures are improving.
11. Five Child Protection plans lasting two years or more were open at the end of quarter 1, representing 1.1% of cases. The current figure places Leicestershire in the second quartile of local authorities using available comparators.
12. There were 67 Child Sexual Exploitation and 22 Child Criminal Exploitation referrals in Leicestershire during quarter 1.

Children are living in stable and secure environments

13. The 'percentage of children with three or more placements during the year' was 8% (48 children). This is similar to quarter 4 and Leicestershire remains in the top quartile nationally. The 'percentage of children in the same placement for 2+ years or placed for adoption' was 61.6% (117 children). This is lower than quarter 4 (65.7%) and takes Leicestershire in the fourth quartile by national

levels. The Service Manager for Fostering is leading on an audit that will consider all children impacted in quarter 1 (placement moves and placed for adoption) to determine what the cause is and what can be done in the future.

14. The percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation was 93.0% at the end of quarter 1 (53 young people). This is higher than quarter 4 (89.5%) and better than the statistical neighbour average of 83.8%.
15. The percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training was 59.6% at the end of quarter 1 (34 young people). This is similar to quarter 4 (61%) and above the statistical neighbour average of 53.2%.

Child Health and Wellbeing

16. The percentage of 'Children in Care who have had an annual health assessment' within the last 12 months was 89.3% (535 children). This is 4.3% higher than quarter 4. Completion of health assessments continues to be overseen by the Children in Care Head of Service and Service Manager, with specific actions identified to address delays and barriers including systems support, processes and staffing pressures.
17. The percentage of 'Children in Care who have had a dental check' was 77.6% (465 children). This is slightly lower than quarter 4 as a percentage (79.5%) but represents the same number of children within a larger cohort.
18. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a tool which is used to identify Looked After Children who are at risk of developing emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Department for Education (DfE) classes a score of 0-13 as 'normal', 14-16 as 'borderline' and 17-40 as 'cause for concern'. The mean score for Leicestershire children was 15 in quarter 1. This figure has been between 14 and 16 in Leicestershire during the past year. A score of 15 for Leicestershire is slightly higher than the statistical neighbour average of 14.66 and on the border of the first and second quartile of all local authorities. The scores for Leicestershire children range from a low of zero and one to a high of 31.

Families are self-sufficient and able to cope

19. The new Children and Family Wellbeing service has now been established and new reporting is currently being developed. Therefore quarter 1 results are not directly comparable with 2018/19 data.
20. The number of families recorded as receiving targeted Early Help during quarter 1 was 566, which was lower than quarter 4 (762). The number of individuals recorded as receiving help was 1,491, which was also lower than quarter 4 (2058). These indicators could be affected by reporting changes and will be monitored in future quarters.
21. To date, the Supporting Leicestershire Families programme has claimed Payment By Results (PBR) for 1884 families. This represents 68% of the

overall target for Leicestershire. Progress towards the 100% target by March 2020 remains strong.

People are safe in their daily lives

22. Youth Offending statistics are usually reported one or two quarters in arrears as data has to be produced and validated by legal bodies such as the Police and courts before being released to local authorities.
23. The cumulative 2018/19 figure for 'first time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17' was 100 at the end of quarter 4. This is lower than 2018 end of year figure of 104.
24. The rate of re-offending per young offender is reported two quarters in arrears and was 1.1 offences per offender for quarter 3 2018/19. This is higher than the end of year figure for 2017/18 of 0.71.
25. Two young people were sentenced to custody during quarter 4.

Every child has access to good quality education and achieves their potential

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

26. The Department for Education's annual dataset 'Statements of SEN and Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, England, 2018' was released during Q1. This contains data about young people with Special Educational Needs with a Statement or EHCP.
27. The data is taken from a census date in January 2019 and shows that 4,222 children and young people in Leicestershire had a statement or Education Health and Care plan on this date. This is an increase of 14% from the January 2018 figure of 3,703.
28. The number of 'initial requests for assessments' for a plan in 2018 increased to 936 from 683 in 2017. Of these requests in 2018, 176 were refused (18.5%) compared to 226 being refused the previous year (34%).
29. The number of EHCPs issued in 2018 was 635, a 63.7% increase compared to 2017 when 388 plans were issued. An EHC plan was not issued in 24 cases (3.6%) which is a significant increase compared to the previous year when a plan was not issued in only 2 cases.

Early years

30. In quarter 1 The percentage of eligible two year olds taking up the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) offer was 72% (1,168 children). This is similar to the previous reported figure of 73% and places Leicestershire in the second quartile of all local authorities by available comparisons. The percentage of

eligible 3 and 4 year olds taking up the FEEE offer is 98% (11,382 children), which is similar to the previous reported figure of 99% and places Leicestershire in the top quartile of local authorities.

31. The percentage of childcare providers in Leicestershire rated as good or outstanding remained at 95%. This is slightly lower than statistical neighbours (96.6%) and places Leicestershire in the third quartile of local authorities.

Primary school outcomes

32. Provisional 2019 data for primary school outcomes is now available. Historically, provisional data for Leicestershire has proven to be very close to the final validated data (for example within 0.1%). National data is not yet published although some unvalidated benchmarking figures are available internally.
33. Provisional data indicates that the percentage of children reaching a 'good level of development' at the end of the reception year (5 year old children) is 72.1%. This is a rise of 1.3% compared to 2018. This figure has risen every year in Leicestershire since the measure began in 2013, when a score of 46.3% was recorded. A 'good level of development' covers Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; Communication and Language Development; Literacy and Mathematics.
34. Early indications are that the national figure is likely to be slightly lower this year. If this is the case, Leicestershire will be above the national level for the first time since the measure was introduced. Provisional data also indicates that Leicestershire performance is likely to be above national levels in each of the development areas listed in paragraph 33.
35. At the end of Key Stage Two (11 year olds leaving primary school), provisional data shows that 66.8% of Leicestershire children reached the expected standard for Reading, Writing and Mathematics. This is an improvement on the 2018 figure of 65.6%. Unvalidated data suggests that Leicestershire performance is likely to be higher than the national figure by around 2%.
36. Progress between Key Stages One and Two is measured against a benchmark of '0' being expected progress. This has traditionally been an area with room for improvement in Leicestershire. Provisional data suggests that progress between the key stages has improved in the county in each core subject of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, with positive progress in Mathematics and Writing; and a slight minus figure of -0.01 in Reading (improved from -0.27 in 2018).

Outcomes for vulnerable groups

37. Provisional data indicates that the percentage of children eligible for Free School Meals achieving a Good Level of Development is slightly higher than 2018 with a rise of 0.3% to 48.7%. No national data is yet available for comparison.

38. Data for pupils eligible for Free School Meals at Key Stage Two suggests an increase of 2.9% to 39.8% in children achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics compared to 2018. No national data is yet available for comparison.

Ofsted

39. The percentage of Leicestershire schools rated as Good or Outstanding was the same as quarter 4 at 86% (240 schools). Due to a slight rise in the national figure, Leicestershire is now in the third quartile by 0.1% but very close to the middle point. The proportion of Leicestershire pupils in good or outstanding schools is 84.1% (81,012). This is similar to quarter 4 and in the second quartile of local authorities.
40. The percentage of primary schools rated Good or Outstanding was 87% at the end of quarter 1 (195 schools). This is the same as quarter 4 and in the third quartile of local authorities. The equivalent secondary school figure was 79.2% (38 schools). This is also the same as the quarter 4 figure and remains in the second quartile of local authorities.
41. The percentage of Good or Outstanding Special Schools remained at 100% (six schools).

Leicestershire has a highly skilled and employable workforce

42. Latest NEET data (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training) is for the end of June 2019 and shows a Leicestershire figure of 2.1%, representing 281 young people. This is lower than Q4 (i.e. better) when the figure was 2.3% (302 young people). Leicestershire is in the second quartile of local authorities for NEET and similar to statistical neighbours.
43. The NEET figure for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities was 4.9% (52 young people) at the end of June 2019. This is higher than quarter 4 and represents a rise of seven young people.

Conclusion

44. The report provides a summary of performance at the end of Quarter 1 of 2019/20, covering the period April to June 2019.
45. Details of all metrics will continue to be monitored on a regular basis throughout the year and any subsequent changes will be notified in future reports.

Background Papers

Strategic Plan 2018-22 and Outcomes Framework

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Rights Implications

46. Addressing equalities issues is supported by this report, with a focus on vulnerable groups within Leicestershire, including children in care. Education data relating to different context groups including children with Special Educational Needs and Free School Meals is reported when data becomes available.

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Children and Family Services Department Performance Dashboard for Quarter 1, 2019/20

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Children and Families Performance FY2019/20 Q1

Latest update Current Performance Compared to previous data point Trend Charts Status RAG National benchmark (quartile 1 = top) Most recent Statistical Neighbour average

Children at most risk are protected from harm and kept safe

	Latest update	Current Performance	Compared to previous data point	Trend Charts	Status RAG	National benchmark (quartile 1 = top)	Most recent Statistical Neighbour average
% child protection cases which were reviewed within timescales.	Q1	94.7% (373)	Lower (high is good)		G	2	91.2%
% of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for second or subsequent time	Q1	14.8% (26)	Higher (low is good)		G	1	21.9%
% re-referrals to childrens Social Care within 12 months	Q1	21.7% (297)	Better		A	3	24.4%
% single assessments completed within 45 days	Q1	71.8% (924)	Better		R	4	82.0%
% of Child Protection plans lasting 2 years or more open at the end of the quarter (low = good)	Q1	1.1% (5)	Higher (low is good)		G	2	2.0%
Placement stability - % children with 3 or more placements during a year (low = good)	Q1	8% (48)	Similar		G	1	10.7%
Placement stability - % children in same placement for 2+ years or placed for adoption	Q1	61.6% (117)	Lower (high is good)		R	4	70.0%
% of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (end of quarter)	Q1	93.0% (53)	Higher (high is good)		n/a	n/a	83.8%
The % of Care leavers in education, employment and training (EET) (end of quarter)	Q1	59.6% (34)	Lower (high is good)		n/a	n/a	53.2%
CSE referrals	Q1	67	Higher - no polarity		n/a	n/a	n/a

Child Health, Wellbeing and SEND							
The % of children in care who have had dental checks within last 12 months (at end of period)	Q1	77.6% (465)	Lower (high is good)		n/a	n/a	n/a
The % of children in care who have their annual health assessment within last 12 months (at end of period)	Q1	89.3% (535)	Better		n/a	n/a	n/a
The average emotional health strengths/difficulties score for children in care. (low = good)	Q1	15.0	Same		A	2	14.66
SEND - Initial requests for assessment for a EHCP	2018	951	Higher		n/a	n/a	n/a
SEND - Initial requests for EHCP refused	2018	176	Lower		n/a	n/a	n/a
SEND - Children and young people assessed and decision taken whether or not to issue a statement, or EHC plan, during calendar year	2018	659	Higher		n/a	n/a	n/a
SEND - children and young people assessed and EHCP NOT issued	2018	3.6% (24)	Higher		n/a	n/a	9.0%
SEND - Percentage of EHC plans issued within 20 weeks	2018	98.3% (634)	Similar		G	1	47.0%
SEND - Total number of statements / EHC plans 2019 SEN census	2019	4,222	Higher		n/a	n/a	n/a
Families are self-sufficient and able to cope							
No. of individuals with an Early Help assessment	Q1	1,491	Lower		n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of families with an Early Help assessment	Q1	566	Lower		n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of SLF families claimed for as a % of overall payment by results target	Q1	1884 (68%)	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
People are safe in their daily lives							
Number of first time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17 (low = good) (year to date)	Q4	100	Similar		n/a	n/a	n/a
Rate of re-offending by young offenders (low = good)	Q3	1.1	Higher (low is good)		n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of instances of the use of custody for young people (low = good)	Q4	2	Higher (low is good)		n/a	n/a	n/a

Every child has access to good quality education and achieves their potential							
The % of eligible 2 year olds taking up their FEEE	Q1	72.0%	Similar		A	2	74.2%
The % of eligible 3 and 4 year olds taking up their FEEE	Q1	98.0%	Similar		G	1	98.3%
The % of all childcare providers rated good or outstanding.	Q1	95.0%	Similar		A	3	96.6%
The % of all schools rated Good or Outstanding.	Q1	86.0%	Same		A	3	86.7%
The % of Primary Schools rated Good or Outstanding	Q1	87.0%	Same		A	3	87.7%
The % of Secondary Schools rated Good or Outstanding	Q1	79.2%	Same		A	2	79.9%
The % of Special Schools rated Good or Outstanding	Q1	100%	Same		G	1	93.3%
The % of pupils in Good or Outstanding schools	Q1	84.1%	Similar		A	2	86.6%
The % of reception pupils reaching a 'Good' level of development'.	2019	72.1%	Better		n/a	n/a	n/a
Key Stage 2 - pupils achieving expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics	2019	66.8%	Better		n/a	n/a	n/a
Progress measures from KS1 to KS2 (Maths)	2019	0.18	Better		n/a	n/a	n/a
Progress measures from KS1 to KS2 (Writing)	2019	0.26	Better		n/a	n/a	n/a
Progress measures from KS1 to KS2 (Reading)	2019	-0.01	Better		n/a	n/a	n/a
Education of Vulnerable Groups							
Good Level of Development- pupils eligible for Free School Meals	2019	48.7%	Better		n/a	n/a	n/a
Key Stage 2 - Expected level in Reading, Writing and Maths - pupils eligible for Free School Meals	2019	39.8%	Better		n/a	n/a	n/a
Leicestershire has a highly skilled and employable workforce							
% of NEET 16-17 for children with SEN and disability (low = good)	Q1	4.9% (52)	Higher (low is good)		n/a	n/a	n/a
NEET young people aged 16-17 (low = good)	Q1	2.1% (281)	Better		G	1	2.4%

RAG rating key

- Top quartile of local authorities or high in second quartile with improving trend
- Second or third quartile with room for improvement
- Fourth quartile or low in the third quartile with a declining trend

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