



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

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 6 September 2022 at 2.00 pm**

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

Contact: **Damien Buckley (Tel: 0116 3050183)**

Email: **damien.buckley@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC (Chairman)

Mr. M. Frisby CC Mr. N. Lockyer
Mr. L. Hadji-Nikolaou CC Mr. R. Martin
Mr. R. Hills CC Mr. C. A. Smith CC
Mr. Max Hunt CC Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mrs. C. Lewis

Please note: this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's web site at <http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk>

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022.	(Pages 5 - 12)
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.	
6. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance	



with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

7. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.
8. SEND and Inclusion. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 13 - 18)
9. Closure Report - Defining Children and Family Services for the Future. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 19 - 26)
10. Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Report. Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Executive (Pages 27 - 34)
11. Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 35 - 54)
12. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 8 November 2022.
13. 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 Governance and Scrutiny website www.cfgs.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?

Members are reminded that, to ensure questioning during meetings remains appropriately focused that:

- (a) they can use the officer contact details at the bottom of each report to ask questions of clarification or raise any related patch issues which might not be best addressed through the formal meeting;
- (b) they must speak only as a County Councillor and not on behalf of any other local authority when considering matters which also affect district or parish/town councils (see Articles 2.03(b) of the Council's Constitution).

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Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 7 June 2022.

PRESENT

Mr. M. Frisby CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC
Mr. R. Hills CC
Mr. Max Hunt CC

Mr. N. Lockyer
Mr. R. Martin
Mr. C. A. Smith CC
Mr. G. Welsh CC

1. Appointment of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mrs. H. Fryer CC be appointed Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2023.

Mrs. H. Fryer CC – in the Chair

2. Election of Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. C. Smith CC be elected Deputy Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2023.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2022 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The following question, received under Standing Order 34 of the County Council's Constitution, was put to the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Question asked by Mrs Sue Whiting:

“Could the Chair please state:-

Now that Covid restrictions are more relaxed could the Chair please inform me what plans are being made for the Local Offer Roadshows before the Summer holidays and the next academic year and will those plans also include voluntary groups including parent led groups and LEICESTERSHIRE MUSIC?”

Reply by the Chairman

The Department are currently developing a draft plan for the next round of roadshows which will commence from September 2022. A [survey](#) remains open for families to help the Department to shape how they will look, including aspects such as timings, the format, and types of stands.

Two focus groups with parents have also been held to help shape the draft plan. All Roadshow information will be available in the [SEND News](#), on [Facebook](#), on the [Council's Website](#) and also for anyone who is signed up to receive Local Offer updates. The Roadshows are open to any groups or organisations who wish to take part. The Department encourages a broad range, where both the venue and the organisations capacity permits. Groups and organisations can contact Karen Hall, SEND Family Information Worker, directly to be kept informed of the Roadshows and for booking information (Karen.Hall@leics.gov.uk).

Supplementary question

“Thank you Chair for the answer that Roadshows are being planned and for the links embedded in the answer.

Could you explain which two focus groups with parents have been held as there are many different groups of parents within the SEND provision and Parents/Carers can belong to many different groups depending on the needs of different children whether with entirely Specific Education needs or Health needs?”

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services responded that both focus groups had been open to all parents and carers and had been advertised via the Local Offer Facebook page, the parent carer forum and the Leicestershire SEND HUB. A survey had also been created for parents and carers as another avenue to share their views with the Department.

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

The following questions, received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5) were put to the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Question asked by Mr Max Hunt CC

- “1. Is the County Council broadly in support of Josh McAllister’s Independent Review of Children’s Services (May 2022) and will we be writing to MPs and Ministers urging the implementation of its major recommendations.
2. Some of the recommendations from Josh McAllister’s Independent Review of Children’s Services are or could be instigated independently of Government and, for example, the Report says that local authorities “need help to take back control of this system through establishing new Regional Care Cooperatives (RCCs)”. Is this something we could consider?
3. Would it be helpful or unhelpful to raise a windfall tax on the county council’s providers, as the Independent Review of Children’s Services Report suggests?
4. Was the County Council invited to give evidence to the Review and if so can this be made available for committee members?

5. The Review identifies a rising number of Looked After Children from 2011 to date and projected to rise to nearly 100,00 in the next ten years if the reforms are not implemented. What are the equivalent annual figures for this period in Leicestershire?"

Reply by the Chairman:

1. The Children and Family Services department welcomes the publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care's final report. The report has a welcomed emphasis on children's rights and outcomes, on social justice and on relationships and doesn't shy away from the big challenges children, families, public services and society faces, in particular the report highlights the need for significant investment in rebalancing the social care system towards early family support.

The Department are looking at the review and its recommendations and are keen to work with MPs and Ministers over the next few months to further understand what it will mean for Leicestershire. It is likely that government funding will be required to make significant changes to how services operate.

2. The Department are looking carefully at the review in order to understand what can be instigated independently of government. No decisions have yet been made around what this could look like.
3. The windfall tax is one of the recommendations in the review that government will comment on. It is too early for the County Council to make a comment on how helpful this would be.
4. Staff across the Department were involved in an engagement event as part of the review. A summary of the review's workforce engagement (that includes input from Leicestershire) can be found here [Workforce Engagement Summary](#).
5. In Leicestershire, the Department has done a five year projection of the number of children in the care of the Local Authority based on a 4% increase each year which will see the number of children in care in Leicestershire rise from 690 in 2022 to 840 in 2027.

Mr Hunt thanked the Chairman and officers for an informative response to his questions.

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. Quarter 4 2021/22 Performance Report.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Children and Family Services which presented an update on the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period to March 2022 (Quarter 4). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

In presenting the report, the Director advised of an error in paragraph nine which referred to 'Intensive Referral Order' but should read 'Independent Reviewing Officer'.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- i. Members raised concerns about the delays in Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan assessments for those children transitioning to junior or secondary school in September 2022. It was noted that these should have been completed by mid February, but a number still remained outstanding. A member commented that this could be worrying for families, particularly given the level of vulnerability of those children affected.

The Director provided assurances regarding the Departments intention to work through the backlog by the end of June and confirmed the issue was being monitored on a weekly basis and that discussions with schools and parents were ongoing to ensure they were kept informed of progress.

Members noted that the Department had seen an unprecedented increase in the number of requests for EHC plans, particularly this year, which had contributed to the delays in meeting the statutory assessment deadlines. However, whilst acknowledging staff and demand pressures faced by the Department, having regard to the impact such delays had on families, the Committee requested more detailed information on the current number of assessments outstanding and details of how this was being managed.

- ii. Members noted the Department's plans to resolve significant staffing issues within Social Care though the implementation of a detailed recruitment and retention strategy. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified social workers had been a national issue and the Director confirmed that the Department would work to address this locally by reviewing pay scales, reconsidering caseloads, and adapting working environments. Members were pleased to hear about a social work apprenticeship scheme for employees of the Children's Social Care and Children and Family Wellbeing Service noting that the first cohort of apprentices would qualify in autumn 2022. Members were assured that a review of capacity within the Departments business support service had taken place to ensure that performance, in terms of case review meetings being conducted on time, could be improved.

- iii. The Director reported that the percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPPS) for a second or subsequent time continued to be a significant area of focus for the Department. Performance had declined in this area for a number of reasons, but most significantly as a result of Covid and the lack of external support (including access to health services and schools) for children and families during that period. Despite the increase in repeat plans, Members noted that a review by the Department had shown that in the majority of cases, the timescales between plans were in excess of two years.
- iv. In response to questions raised, the Director advised that regular audits were being conducted to understand themes around the circumstances leading to repeat CPPs and these had so far shown that substance abuse, parental mental health problems and domestic abuse remained key factors. Members were pleased to hear that the Department had provided additional training to staff around these issues. The Director also reported that the implementation of the new Domestic Abuse toolkit would aim to strengthen exit arrangements from CPPs, thus reducing the risk of repeat plans, where domestic abuse was a factor.
- v. In response to a question raised, it was noted that the refreshed High Needs Development Plan aimed to ensure that the best services were being made available to children and that individual SEND needs were being met. It was not yet known what affect this might have on wider performance targets, but some impact was expected (for example, the Plan may reduce EHC plan numbers if some children's needs could be appropriately met without such a plan having to be put in place).
- vi. Members noted that a detailed report would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting in September on SEND and this would include an update on the Department's High Needs Development Plan, progress towards SEND system improvements, and an overview of how the financial challenges in this area were being addressed.

Mr. M. Hunt CC commended the work of the Department and thanked the Director of Children and Family Services for facilitating a visit to the Loughborough Early Years Centre.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the update on the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period to March 2022 (Quarter 4) be noted.
- (b) That the Director of Children and Family Services be requested to provide Members of the Committee with details of the current number of outstanding assessments for EHC Plans for those children transitioning to junior or secondary school in September 2022.
- (c) That it be noted that a report would be presented at the next meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September on SEND and this would include an update on the Department's High Needs Development Plan, progress towards SEND system improvements, and an overview of how the financial challenges in this area were being addressed.

11. Impact of Covid-19.

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children and Family Services on the Impact of Covid-19 with an overview of how the pandemic had and continued to impact key aspects of service delivery across the Children and Family Services Department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. In response to a question regarding the long lasting effects of Covid-19, members noted that the pandemic had posed unprecedented pressures and challenges upon the Department and the children and families it supported. Despite this, all services had continued to operate throughout the period with processes having been quickly adapted to reflect the changing circumstances, guidance and restrictions imposed nationally and locally. The Director reported that the Department had learnt a number of key lessons including the use of technology to enable remote working, the ability to work virtually with families, and improved engagement with young people, parents and carers. The Department would aim to continue to develop services whilst recovering from the effects of Covid-19 recognising that the experience had given rise to some opportunities and improvements for future working practices.
- ii. Members were concerned to note the increase in the number of children representing with more complex needs and the number of older young people coming into care as families struggled to cope and relationships broke down.
- iii. The Department had compared the most recent performance data to that from before the pandemic. Members noted that whilst the number of children requiring support had not increased, there had been an increase in the number of children of all ages presenting with more complex challenges. There had also been an increase in the number of requests for older children to move into social care. It was understood that this had largely been due to challenging relationships at home during periods of lockdown, as well as complex mental health needs. It was recognised that during the pandemic, access to health services and schools had been reduced and also had an effect. The position was being monitored by the Department and its partners.
- iv. There had been difficulties in recruiting foster carers during periods of Covid-19 restrictions. However, members were pleased to note that this had improved in the three months leading up to this report. In response to a question raised, Members noted that there had been no evidence to suggest that the Homes for Ukrainian Refugees scheme had contributed to a decline in applications from potential foster carers. Initial conversations would always be had with members of the public interested in foster caring to ensure this was the best option for them. If not, they would be signposted to another service if another option was deemed to be more appropriate.
- v. Members raised concerns about the number of children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan who had been adversely affected through discontinuity of support during the pandemic. Members were reassured that the Department had been working with health colleagues to address this as a key priority. Members noted that a quality assurance framework within the EHC process had been introduced and discussions had taken place within parent and carer forums to

ensure that the holistic needs of children were being met and captured in EHC plans or through education settings.

- vi. In response to a questions regarding what would be done to address the widening gap in attainment between disadvantaged and other children in education, Members noted that the Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership (LEEP) had engaged with schools, the early years sector and government throughout the pandemic to implement priority actions on addressing disadvantage and inequality of opportunity. The Director confirmed that schools were working hard to identify the impact of Covid on each child and offer programmes such as targeted classes, as appropriate, to increase attainment and address specific learning requirements. Supporting the most vulnerable learners and continuing to deliver education and learning interventions to narrow identified gaps in attainment arising from Covid would remain a focus for the Department and schools for some time.

The Director expressed their thanks to all staff within the Department for continuing to deliver services during what had been a very difficult time. They also recognised the strength and resilience of children during the pandemic. The Committee thanked officers for all their hard work throughout the pandemic.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overview of how COVID-19 had impacted and continued to impact key aspects of service delivery across the Children and Family Services Department be noted.
- (b) That the Committee's thanks be passed on to officers within the Department for all their hard work throughout the pandemic.

12. Leicestershire Music Service.

The Committee considered a presentation of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an overview of the work of the Leicester Music service. A copy of the presentation slides is filed with these minutes.

Members welcomed the presentation and were pleased to note the achievements of the children involved.

Arising from the presentation, Members noted the following:

- i. The Leicestershire Music Service offered activities for pupils aged 3-18.
- ii. The Service had re-joined the Department in 2022 after having previously been part of the Council's Traded Services.
- iii. Children could engage with all types of music, including learning to DJ and use SoundCloud, and would have the opportunity to perform within orchestras and bands.
- iv. The key objectives for the Service would be primarily about growth and increasing engagement with both schools and pupils across all activities.

- v. By 2026 the service aimed to increase participation of young people from Leicester and Leicestershire in activities funded by Leicestershire Music to 20%, of which 25% should be from disadvantaged backgrounds. The offer to disadvantaged families and children provided a clear pathway for their involvement with the Leicestershire Music Service and this had been clearly communicated across schools and the wider community. Since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, the 'Big Band' had performed a concert at Wigston Academy with full support of parents and Leicestershire Music staff. Bands and orchestras had also performed at Holy Trinity Church and would be preparing for the Leicestershire Music Summer festival at De Montfort Hall in June 2022.

The Chairman requested that the presentation provided be circulated to all members of the Council for information and that they be notified of the opportunity to purchase tickets for the Leicestershire Music Summer Festival.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the presentation on the Leicestershire Music Service be noted and welcomed.
- (b) That a copy of the presentation provided be circulated to all members for information and that they be notified of the opportunity to purchase tickets for the Leicestershire Music Summer Festival.

13. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 6 September 2022 at 2:00 pm.

2.00 - 3.24 pm
07 June 2022

CHAIRMAN



**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

6 SEPTEMBER 2022

SEND AND INCLUSION

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

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on planned activity and progress being made around SEND and Inclusion. It will consider current financial challenges (MTFS position), demand in the SEND system and provide an overview of the new Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme. A report providing a more detailed update on the TSIL programme and progress against workstreams will be brought to a future Children and Family Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The primary legislation regarding children and young people with SEND is the Children and Families Act 2014. The 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2015) is the statutory guidance that sets out how local authorities and Integrated Care Boards (formerly Clinical Commissioning Groups) must work together to support children and young people with special educational needs.
3. In December 2018 the Cabinet authorised a consultation on the High Needs Block development plan, including proposed development of enhanced and expanded SEND provision across the County.
4. In October 2019 the Cabinet was advised of the progress of the High Needs Block development plan and on 5 November 2019, a report was considered by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee summarising the national and local context relating to SEND along with an overview of the plans to continuously develop and improve services to support children and families who are experiencing SEND.
5. On 21 January 2020, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report that provided an overview of the Ofsted and Care and Quality Commission (CQC) SEND Inspection Framework. An update

was provided on 1 September 2020 following the local area SEND inspection that took place in Leicestershire in February 2020, resulting in a Written Statement of Action. The report gave an update on the progress of the High Needs Block development programme.

6. On 2 November 2021 the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report that provided an overview on progress against the Written Statement of Action. That report also included a further progress report for the High Needs Block development programme.
7. In March 2022 the Government set out its ambitions for changes to the SEND system and opened a period of consultation on the proposals which Leicestershire has responded to. The Green Paper, 'SEND review: right support, right place, right time' proposes some fundamental changes to the SEND system, including:
 - a) A single national SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) System.
 - b) Excellent provision from early years to adulthood.
 - c) Reformed and integrated role for alternative provision.
 - d) System roles, accountabilities and funding reform.
 - e) A National framework for funding SEND.

MTFS Position

8. Despite achievements and improvements made as a result of the previous High Needs Development Programme, considerable challenges remain in the SEND system. The current financial position, as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), indicates further deterioration and the in year deficit has increased for the last three years. Failure to deliver savings is predicted to lead to a cumulative deficit in 2025/26 from £63 million to £84 million.
9. The Department for Education (DfE) has implemented a 'Changes Approach'. Nine Local Authorities with the highest level of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit have been entered in to 'Safety Valve Agreements'. A further 55 local authorities (including Leicestershire) with less severe but substantial deficits have been invited to join the 'Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme'. Initial discussions with the DfE about this programme have taken place but the nature of the programme and the level of support from the DfE currently remains unclear.

Leicestershire Position

10. Increasing demand in the local SEND System is affecting the department's financial position and ability to deliver assessments within statutory deadlines.
11. Since 2016, there has been a 54% increase in the number of children and young people requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Leicestershire. This compares to a national increase over the same period of time in England of 38% and in the East Midlands of 32%. At the same time, funding has not increased in line with this local trend.

12. This increase in demand for EHCP's has led to drift and delay in the Special Educational Needs Assessment (SENA) service and means that currently statutory deadlines, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2014) are not being met. Currently (August 2022) there are delays in the issuing of draft and final EHCPs (issuing), phase transfers, and reviews of EHCPs across all age groups. This in turn is leading to a significant increase in the number of complaints being received from parents and carers, mostly related to a lack of timely response or communication with SENA and/or not having had a school place identified in a timely manner. There has also been an increasing number of appeals against decisions and growing number of cases going to tribunal, often leading to the Courts overturning the decision of the Local Authority. This in turn creates additional work for the SENA service.
13. In response to this situation, the department has implemented the following:
- a) Information about current workloads and position on drift captured and monitored through weekly demand meetings.
 - b) Clear continuous improvement plan in place with strengthened leadership across Education, SEND and Commissioning directorate.
 - c) Recruitment at all levels within the department to drive the improvement journey.
 - d) Exploration of opportunities for additional resource to place the service in a stronger position to deal with the increasing demand.
 - e) Assurance, by managers, that all plans and reviews (cases) are being progressed – although not currently in timescales.
 - f) Redefining the contact centre offer to improve service level and response teams. This is being aligned with further communication plan planning with Corporate Communications team for SENA.
 - g) Improvements to internal systems (such as Synergy – a new electronic portal for use by SENA, parents and carers as well as other stakeholders in the SEND system).
 - h) Diagnostic examining current position within local SEND system as precursor to the implementation of new Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme to drive change and improvement in the system, which is outlined below.
 - i) Continued focus on addressing sufficiency in terms of local provision – further two resource bases due to open in Autumn 2023 and expansions have taken place at all five Local Area Special Schools (including new satellite bases) to provide an additional 94 places from September 2022.

Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL Programme)

14. The department is embarking on a new change programme for SEND and inclusion: Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL). This programme replaces the former High Needs Block Development Programme and whilst it builds on previous activity it will take a broader approach:
- a) It will focus on taking a whole system approach to support inclusion across settings, wherever possible.
 - b) A third-party partner (Newton Europe) commissioned to support the programme, provide challenge to the system and ensure effective child centred delivery. Central to the programme will be working collaboratively

with a wide range of parents, young people, leaders and staff across the education system (early years, mainstream, specialist provision and Further Education) and health, to design and implement an inclusive system that puts independence, outcomes, and educational achievement at the centre.

- c) Parent/Carer and children and young people involvement; in order to ensure the work undertaken through the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire it is critical that not only are children and young people with SEND's needs at the heart of the plan but that they and their parents and carers are involved in the designing and development of the work. This will be achieved through active engagement with a wide range of forums (including the Parent and Carers Forum) across Leicestershire.

15. As a precursor to the programme a diagnostic was undertaken in late 2021 to understand the challenges and difficulties in the local SEND system and to inform programme planning for the TSIL programme. The diagnostic identified four key elements in the SEND system that could be the focus of developments through the TSIL Programme and highlighted some potential actions/activities:

- a) Inclusive support in mainstream schools:

- Better understand demand and capacity in the local SEND system, including how best to ensure the right levels of support (for children and young people with different levels of Special Education Needs (SEN) are available in mainstream schools.
- Work more closely with mainstream schools to define their offer around inclusion.
- Grow the range and quality inclusive practice in mainstream schools and academies.

- b) Statutory support in mainstream setting:

- Understand better the growing demand and number of requests for EHCPs – this will include:
 - Better understanding including key drivers in the system.
 - Reviewing the department's processes, including decision-making processes, to ensure that the department is making best use of statutory support in mainstream settings.
- Explore the barriers to supporting children with an EHCP and an appropriate level of need in a mainstream setting.

- c) Specialist provision:

- Review processes to ensure that children and young people with an EHCP are accessing the right type of specialist support in the right sort of provision at the right time.
- Review information available for parents and carers to ensure that information is easily accessible which will include information about the spectrum of support available for children and young people with an EHCP.

- d) Effective reviews:

- Review the approach to the way the department (and other professionals) write, put in place and review EHCP's.
 - Ensure that the review process maximises opportunities to ensure that provision is meeting need and leading to positive outcomes for all children and young people with an EHCP.
16. The TSIL programme commenced on 22 August 2022 and will seek to explore these opportunities. The next phase of work for the programme is to set up the four main workstreams: Decision Making and Ways of Working [Service Transformation]; Inclusive Practice in the System [System Transformation]; Digital and Performance; and Communication and Engagement. There will be a particular focus on areas of improvement that can be delivered quickly so that 2022/23 academic year commences with demonstratable progress against the programme. Furthermore, as the programme progresses the department will ensure that developments are aligned to the developing SEND Green Paper ('SEND review: right support, right place, right time') so that where there are policy changes, these are accounted for in programme outcomes.
17. The success of the programme will depend on the following critical enablers:
- a) Aligned Vision within the Local Authority – a vision and purpose that the department can clearly articulate and is working towards.
 - b) Partners and Parents – alignment and closer working with schools, health and parents to work towards common goals.
 - c) Belief in Change – a shared belief that change is possible and that the department is able to drive that commitment.
 - d) Performance culture – focus, accountability and a focus on monitoring and data to drive performance.
 - e) Digital and Data – ensuring that the department has data visibility across its services so that it can understand the impact they are having.
 - f) Right Capacity – having the right people where they are needed and who are empowered to deliver their work.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

18. None.

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

19. There are no Equalities or Human Rights implications directly arising from this report. Within the report, there is reference to a number of on-going programmes of work and activity and as these develop any potential equalities and human right issues will be addressed in line with LCC policy and procedure (such as completing EHRIAs).

Officers to Contact:

Alison Bradley
 Assistant Director Education, SEND and Commissioning
 Tel: 0116 305 58825
Alison.Bradley@leics.gov.uk

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**CLOSURE REPORT - DEFINING CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMME**

**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 outcomes and benefits of the Defining Children and Family Services for the Future (DCFSF) programme and to forward the recommendation to close the DCFSF programme, phase 1.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children Act 2004 allocates duties to Local Authorities to ensure that children are safeguarded, and their welfare is promoted. This key piece of legislation underpins the work of Children and Family Services with respect to looked after children, children in need and children in need of protection.
3. Furthermore, The Children Act 2004 places a duty upon Local Authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation between itself and organisations and agencies to improve the wellbeing of local children.
4. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 strengthens this important relationship with partners by placing new duties on key agencies in a local area. Specifically, the police, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Local Authority, work together in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.
5. The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 place a duty upon Local Authorities to commission education, health and social care services jointly and provide more streamlined and co-ordinated assessment processes. These key pieces of legislation are key influences for the future work of Children and Family Services supporting children and young people with SEN or Disabilities and our responses to parents and young carers.

6. It should also be noted that the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' guidance provides a framework for all the relevant legislation and sets out the importance of early identification and response to issues of concern, particularly for vulnerable groups.
7. Other relevant policies include:
 - a) Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022;
 - b) Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2020-2023;
 - c) Road to Excellence – Continuous Improvement Plan 2017-2020;2021-2023;
 - d) Voice and Influence Strategy 2020-2023;
 - e) Children and Family Services – Commissioning Strategy 2016-2020;
 - f) Children and Family Services – Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework (QAIF).
8. All the relevant legislation and policies outlined above informed the DCFSF programme which help to develop and future proof Children and Family Services.
9. This programme will support the service's continuous improvement plan - The Road to Excellence.
10. At its meeting on 20 November 2020, the Cabinet approved the request to continue to work with the Strategic Partner, Newton Europe to deliver the next phase of the DCFSF Programme.

Background

11. The Children and Family Services Department faces significant challenges due to increased growth and demand on its services. This was reflected in the growth approved within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by the County Council on 7 February 2020.
12. The County Council, following a competitive process, commissioned an independent specialist consultancy, Newton Europe, in February 2020 to work alongside the service to undertake a diagnostic assessment of front-line services and to consequently, work with the Department to lead on the delivery of an overall change programme. This was subject to a satisfactory outcome from the diagnostic assessment, an independent review (The Gateway Review) and approval to proceed from The Cabinet on 20 November 2020.
13. The diagnostic assessment involved working with a cross section of staff within the service to complete a deep dive review of a number of children's cases to

consider if anything different could have been done to prevent the child escalating to a higher level of need and intervention. The main objective of the diagnostic assessment was to identify opportunities to improve outcomes for children and young people. The diagnostic assessment explored activity modelling, financial analysis, and benchmarking against other local authorities, across services for children and families, by engaging with frontline staff and partner agencies to explore areas for improvement.

14. The diagnostic assessment was subject to validation by the Department and corporately. The opportunities identified in the diagnostic aimed to contribute to the future proofing of Children and Family Services so that the right interventions, are delivered in the right way, at the right time, to ensure that children, young people and families achieve the best possible outcomes whilst also ensuring that the service is financially sustainable going forwards.
15. Broadly, the opportunities are categorised into four main themes:
 - a) **Children's Pathways** - placing greater focus on earlier interventions and preventing the level of need escalating into higher tier interventions;
 - b) **Timeliness of interventions** - ensuring that interventions are delivered in a timely way as part of a child/young person's journey in order to meet needs at the right time and by the right team;
 - c) **Settings** - ensuring that Children and Young People are placed in the most appropriate setting for their level of need;
 - d) **Children with Disabilities** - ensuring that children and young people with disabilities are supported to achieve greater levels of independence.

Outcomes and benefits

16. The key benefit was fewer children escalating to Children in Need and Child Protection Services by reducing re-referral rates through a more targeted focus on the resolution of risk factors, focusing primarily on domestic abuse. This was achieved through the development of the domestic abuse toolkit to be used by staff when working with a domestic abuse case. The toolkit will be expanded and updated over time, with intervention and resource lists maintained, so that service users continue to receive relevant and appropriate support. In addition, improvement cycles were established and embedded enabling managers to review intervention effectiveness data, understand variances in performance and undertake SMART actions to address performance issues.
17. Through case management changes enacted through the 'Plan/Do/Review' workstream as part of the DCFSF programme, drift and delay in child protection plans has been reduced as a result of the following steps:

- a) Rolling out training material to CFS staff on trauma informed practice, planning with SMART goals and signs of safety.
 - b) Development and implementation of revised Mosaic forms enabling managers to see how SMART the plans of their teams are, the current status of their teams case load, the length of time cases have been open and their team's timeliness in meeting frequency practice guidelines.
 - c) Development and implementation of a caseload management tool to provide a clear view to practitioners and managers of caseloads and plans, the ability to track outstanding actions by flagging cases open longer than expected timescales to support prioritisation and providing a flexible structure to plans so that they are easily communicable to practitioners working with children and families.
18. The DCFSF programme had a focus on supporting kinship carers with the process of applying for Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's) so that children and young people could achieve permanence outside of care. This work was divided into two distinct pathways. Firstly, the carer assessment process was changed so that conversations with prospective carers about SGO's happened earlier with those carers undergoing fostering and SGO assessments simultaneously alongside practice changes so that practitioners could consider carers applying for an SGO even if that carer has been approved for fostering. Secondly, a process using dedicated workers to support Children in Care (CiC) workers and existing kinship carers with a Full Care Order (FCO) in making the decision to apply for an SGO, and then supporting them through the court process, has been established to reduce the current cohort of Kinship Carers supporting children and young people through FCO's.
19. One of the key aims of the DCFSF programme has been to enable the growth of Leicestershire internal foster carer numbers. The programme has delivered a recruitment and assessment pipeline to give a visible end to end process enabling managers to identify current capacity and bottlenecks so they can take actions to address issues at an early stage. Additionally, a method to capture carer withdrawals has been established so that lessons can be learned from the withdrawal of prospective carers in order to increase the conversion rate from Initial Enquiry to Approval over time. Finally, an improvement cycle has been established and embedded to review performance regularly giving the service the tools needed to identify and address the biggest impacts on the growth of foster carer growth.
20. In order to improve the utilisation rate of Leicestershire internal foster carers the DCFSF programme set up a dedicated duty worker for the Team Around the Child, ensuring there was a dedicated ownership for the management of foster carer vacancies to enable strategic matching and forward planning. Additionally, the compliance tracker used for making matches between children

and foster carers has been streamlined to increase efficiency, with a foster carer register being produced in Mosaic to provide a single version of the truth, reducing dependence on offline documents and maximising opportunities for foster carers to be matched with children.

21. The DCFSF programme delivered a workstream to redefine residential care to tackle issues around market sufficiency, where this workstream had the aims of ensuring children get the right placement and that children are stepped down from a residential placement at the right time. To ensure that children get the right placement this workstream developed digital tools to increase the visibility of children at risk of going into residential care, setting up a working group to prevent unnecessary residential starts and started the recruitment of specialist carers. In order to enable children to be stepped down at the right time placement plans were improved to make them more consistent and SMART, and placement reviews were optimised to ensure that children have a plan to permanence.
22. The DCFSF programme principally focused on maximising independence for young people approaching adulthood. This was achieved through the following actions:
 - a) The development of new ways of working to support the development of independence focussed plans with SMART goals with the journey to independence indicated within the plan.
 - b) The provision of SMART planning training which included a training video on planning for adulthood throughout a child's journey to increase independence and resilience.
 - c) The development of a priority cohort meeting focusing on young people from 15 years of age to discuss current support needs and the likely support requirement when nearing adulthood to manage the transition more effectively to adulthood, where support will focus on independence skills that will improve a young person's long-term quality of life.
 - d) The development and implementation of digital tools enabling managers to track the journey of children and young people through our services and monitor progress.
23. At the Programme Delivery Board in March 2022 the programme reported an expected total annualised financial benefit, when at full run rate, of £10.7m which was over and above the target annualised benefit of £8.7m at full run rate. The key performance indicators driving benefits will continue to be monitored closely, and the monitoring of benefits will feed into the annual MTFS planning work, with current programme benefits expected to contribute to MTFS savings of £3.3m in FY 22/23 increasing to £12.2m by March 2026.

Conclusion

24. Paragraphs 17 – 24 describe the outcomes which are being achieved as a result of the DCFSF programme. It can be seen that the new processes put in place are helping children and young people in care to be cared for in the most appropriate settings to meet their needs, are helping to avoid cases escalating so that children, young people and their families don't reach crisis point and are also helping children and young people with disabilities to achieve greater levels of independence so that they can lead happy and fulfilling lives.
25. In addition to the improved outcomes for children, young people and families being achieved through the processes put in place by the DCFSF programme, these outcomes are being realised in a way which will significantly reduce costs to the Council in the long term, with the key performance indicators currently showing that a total annualised financial benefit of £10.7 million is expected for the MTFs when the full run rate is achieved.

Background papers

26. Report to the Cabinet, 20 November 2020 (exempt item).
27. Report to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 18 November 2020:
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/g6183/Public%20reports%20pack%20Wednesday%2018-Nov-2020%2009.30%20Children%20and%20Families%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Commi.pdf?T=10>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

28. None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

29. Public authorities are required by law to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not;
 - Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
30. All programme workstreams were evaluated and deemed to have a positive impact on the public, improving the department's ability to deliver the right services at the right time.

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

QUARTER 1 2022/23 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 on the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period to June 2022 (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 was agreed by the Council, setting out priority outcomes for delivery and supporting performance metrics, and this was refreshed in 2020. A new Strategic Plan has been signed off and was agreed by the Cabinet on 18 May 2022. Performance reporting arrangements for 2022/23 will be revised accordingly to reflect these changes.
4. The Children and Family Services Department has also produced a Departmental Plan 2020-2023 which identifies ambitions and measures to monitor progress. The following report and accompanying dashboard aim to report on the priority areas identified by both plans and monitor performance of key indicators on a quarterly basis. The current performance dashboard is appended and has been refreshed to concentrate on indicators where updated data is available for Quarter 1.
5. Quartile positions are added where comparative national data is available. Comparative data is not available for all indicators.

Overview

6. From 24 measures that have been reported, five have improved and eight have declined. Ten indicators are provided for information only, with no polarity, with one remaining indicator to be confirmed.
7. From 14 measures that have a national benchmark, three are in the top quartile, six are in the second quartile, three are in the third quartile and two are in the fourth quartile.

Helping children in Leicestershire live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments

8. Local Authority comparisons used are most recent figures published by the government for end of year benchmarking.
9. The percentage of Child Protection cases reviewed within timescales was 76.0% at the end of Quarter 1, a decline on the Quarter 4 figure (86.3%). This continues to place Leicestershire in the fourth quartile of all local authorities by published benchmarks.
10. The percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time decreased slightly to 27.6% at the end of Quarter 1. In this period 37 children began a second or subsequent plan, a decrease from 60 reported in the preceding quarter. Leicestershire remains in the fourth quartile of local authorities compared to most recent national results published for 2020/21. This is an area of focus for the service and regular audits are completed, to understand any themes around the circumstances leading to repeat periods of child protection planning.
11. The percentage of re-referrals to Social Care within 12 months was 23.1% at the end of Quarter 1 compared to 20.1% at the end of the previous quarter, with 316 children 're-referred' within Quarter 1. This places Leicestershire in the third quartile of local authorities.
12. The percentage of single assessments completed within 45 days was 89.1% at the end of Quarter 1, a slight decrease from quarter 4 (90.7%). This represents 802 assessments completed within timescale in Quarter 1 compared to 814 in the preceding quarter. Leicestershire remains in the second quartile of local authorities.
13. Eight Child Protection plans lasting two years or more were open at the end of Quarter 1, representing 1.5% of cases. This is the same number and similar proportion as the end of Quarter 4 (8 children, 1.4%). Leicestershire remains in the second quartile of local authorities.
14. The percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation was 85.3% at the end of quarter 1 (52 out of 61 young people). This is a decrease from quarter 4 (92.5%) and places Leicestershire in the third quartile of local authorities using available comparisons. Performance has since improved at the end of July to 90.9%.

15. The percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training was 62.3% at the end of Quarter 1 (38 out of 61 young people). This is an improvement from the end of Quarter 4, 58.5%, and continues to place Leicestershire in the top quartile by comparison with other local authorities. The service continues to provide careful oversight to the care leaver indicators and is driven by a corporate commitment for creating mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers.
16. The percentage of Children in Care who have had a dental check at the end of Quarter 1 was 43.3% (292 children), a slight decrease from 44.3% at the end of the previous quarter. Routine dental treatment has been limited since Covid-19 lockdown began in Spring 2020 and figures are now beginning to rise, increasing to 55.8% at the end of July.
17. The percentage of Children in Care who have had an annual health assessment within the last 12 months was 80.6% (544). This is a decrease compared to the end of the previous quarter (83.6%).
18. 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. Both managers attend quarterly operational and strategic meetings with health partners to discuss and address the health needs of children in care and how best to meet these needs.

Helping children and their families build strength, resilience, confidence, and capacity

19. During Quarter 1 2022/23, the Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) worked with 3,812 individuals and 1,427 families across Leicestershire. This is lower than Quarter 4 2021/22 in both cases when the figures were 4,080 and 1,519, respectively.
20. The Children and Families Services Departmental Plan states the intention to ensure that the needs of young people are identified as early as possible so that timely and appropriate support is provided in the right setting, therefore reducing the risk of needs escalating at the same time as ensuring children and young people's best outcomes are achieved.
21. The number of children in mainstream schools in Leicestershire with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) was 2,363 in the Summer 2022 school census. This is 72 higher than the Spring 2022 census (2,291). The Summer term 2022 school census EHCP numbers are the highest recorded and highest proportion of pupils on roll since 2017, when the phasing in of the 2014 SEN Code of Practice changes were completed.
22. The number of children in mainstream schools in Leicestershire without an EHCP but in receipt of SEN Support was 12,204 in the Summer 2022 school census. This is 626 higher than the Spring 2022 census (11,578). The Summer 2022 school census SEN support numbers are the highest recorded and highest

proportion of pupils on roll since the completion of the phasing in of the 2014 SEN Code of Practice changes in 2016.

People are safe in their daily lives

23. No updated Youth Offending statistics are available for Q1 2022/23. The latest Youth and Justice Management Board reports can be viewed at the link below:
24. <https://leics.sharepoint.com/sites/childrenandfamilyservices/SitePages/youth-and-justice-management-board.aspx>

Help every child to get the best possible start in life

Early years

25. The percentage of eligible two-year and three-year olds taking up the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) is reported termly, and latest figures include the 2022 Summer term.
26. During the Summer term, the percentage of eligible three-year-olds taking up their FEEE place was 92.6% (6,922), a slight decrease on the Spring term (93,9%). The percentage of eligible two-year-olds was 80.7% (1,235), an increase on the Spring term (76.5%). Eligibility for two-year-olds is more targeted towards disadvantaged families, hence the smaller number of children.
27. In the Summer term, the percentage of all two and three-year-olds accessing their FEEE in Good or Outstanding settings was 95.6%, a slight increase compared with 95.1% in the Spring term.
28. The figures for the past year have been heavily affected by Covid-19 restrictions which has meant that newly eligible children were unable to begin their placement and some parents preferred to keep their children at home. However, recent figures are now approaching pre-pandemic levels.

Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their maximum potential

29. The percentage of primary schools rated Good or Outstanding was 91.6% at the end of Quarter 1. This is 0.1% higher than the Quarter 4 figure (90.5%). This figure is within the second quartile of local authorities.
30. The percentage of secondary schools rated Good or Outstanding was 75.6% at the end of Quarter 1. This is unchanged since Quarter 2 2022. This figure is within the third quartile of local authorities.
31. The number of children Electively Home Educated (EHE) was 883 at the end of Quarter 4, an increase of 54 since Quarter 3. This was also an increase of 59 students (7.15%) in comparison to the end of Quarter 4 2020/21.
32. This follows the national trend of an increasing EHE population. The Association of Directors of Children's Services complete an annual survey which includes 124

of the 152 local authorities nationally responding with data on their EHE cohort. In November 2021, they published their latest findings which suggested that the EHE population in the UK had increased by 7% in comparison to October 2020 and an increase of 34% since October 2019.

33. Leicestershire figures closely follow the national trend since 2019 with its cohort at the end of Quarter 4 2021/22 increasing by 29.3% since Quarter 4 2019/20.¹
34. The trend has been driven by two factors during this period: firstly, having experienced a period of enforced home schooling, some parents have opted for EHE as a lifestyle choice and have chosen to continue this even when schools reopened. The second factor has been ongoing health concerns which could be for the child, vulnerable parents, or general safety concerns. The numbers will continue to be monitored closely.
35. The percentage of applicants obtaining their first preferences for first time admission to Primary school in 2022/23 was 93%. This is the same as last academic year. This figure is within the second quartile of local authorities.
36. The percentage of secondary pupils achieving their first preference for Secondary transfer in 2022/23 was 84.8%. This is 4.2% lower than the last academic year (89%). This figure is within the second quartile of local authorities.
37. The number of permanent exclusions as a percentage of School population in 2020/21 academic year was 0.01. This is 0.01 lower than the last academic year (0.02). This figure is within the first quartile of local authorities.
38. The number of children receiving at least one day of fixed term suspension as a percentage of School population was 1.62. This is 0.18 higher than the last academic year (1.44). This figure is within the first quartile of local authorities.
39. The suspensions and permanent exclusions data for 2020/21 and the previous academic years should be treated with caution when making comparison between the periods because both periods were affected by Covid-19 restrictions at different points in time that impacted on on-site attendance.
40. Primary Key Stage assessments outcomes for Leicestershire Schools in 2022 will be included in the next report to allow comparison to the relevant national benchmarking data to contextualise results.
41. Latest Leicestershire NEET data (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training) for the end of Quarter 1 (June 2022) shows a rate of 1.4%. This is unchanged since the end of Quarter 4 2021/22 (March 2022).

Conclusion

42. The report provides a summary of performance at the end of Quarter 1 2022/23, covering the period April-June 2022.

¹ Report available online at:
https://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS_EHE_Survey_2021_Report_FINAL.pdf

43. Details of all metrics (reflecting any changes in indicators for 2022/23) will continue to be monitored on a regular basis throughout the year and any subsequent changes will be notified in future reports.

Background Papers

None

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

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

Appendices

Appendix A - Children and Family Services Department Performance Dashboard for Quarter 4, 2021/22

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Topic	Theme	Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Previous Period	Previous Value		Latest Period	Latest Value	Trend	Target	Status RAG	National benchmark (quartile 1 = top)	Most recent Statistical Neighbour average
					Value	Value							
Help children and their families build strength, resilience, confidence and capacity	CFWS	Individuals worked with by CFWS during period	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	4,080	Q1 2022/23	3,812	Decrease	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	CFWS	Families worked with by CFWS during period	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	1,519	Q1 2022/23	1,427	Decrease	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	SEND	Children in mainstream schools with EHCP	Term	Spring 2022	2291	Summer 2022	2363	Increase	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	SEND	Children in mainstream schools in receipt of SEN Support (without EHCP)	Term	Spring 2022	11578	Summer 2022	12204	Increase	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Help children in Leicestershire to live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments	Social Care	Child protection cases which were reviewed within timescales	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	86.30%	Q1 2022/23	76.00%	Decrease	>97.2%	Red	4	92.3%	
	Social Care	Children becoming subject to a CPP for second or subsequent time	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	28.00%	Q1 2022/23	27.61%	Decrease	<20.8%	Red	4	24.3%	
	Social Care	Re-referrals to CSC within 12 mths	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	20.10%	Q1 2022/23	23.08%	Increase	<18.7%	Amber	3	21.3%	
	Social Care	Single Assessments completed within 45 days	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	90.70%	Q1 2022/23	89.81%	Decrease	>90.3%	Green	2	86.7%	
	Social Care	CPP lasting 2 yrs or more open at the end of the quarter	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	1.40%	Q1 2022/23	1.51%	Increase	<3.0%	Green	2	2.5%	
	Social Care	Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	92.50%	Q1 2022/23	85.25%	Decrease	>92.0%	Amber	3	88.7%	
	Social Care	Care leavers EET	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	58.50%	Q1 2022/23	62.30%	Increase	>54.0%	Green	1	50.6%	
	Social Care	Children in care who have had dental checks within last 12 months (at end of period)	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	44.30%	Q1 2022/23	43.26%	Decrease	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Social Care	Children in care who have their annual health assessment within last 12 months (at end of period)	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	83.60%	Q1 2022/23	80.59%	Decrease	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Help every child to get the best possible start in life	Early Years	Eligible 2 year olds taking up their FEEE	Term	Spring 2022	76.50	Summer 2022	80.67	Increase	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Early Years	Eligible 3 year olds taking up their FEEE	Term	Spring 2022	93.9	Summer 2022	92.61	Decrease	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Early Years	Eligible 2 and 3-year olds taking up their FEEE in a high-quality provision	Term	Spring 2022	95.1	Summer 2022	95.6	Increase	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Education	Primary schools rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	91.5%	Q1 2022/23	91.6%		N/A	Amber	2	88.6%	
	Education	Secondary schools rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'	Quarter	Q4 2021/22	75.6%	Q1 2022/23	75.6%		N/A	Amber	3	82.2%	
Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their maximum potential	Education	Applicants obtaining their first preferences for first time admission to Primary school	Annual	2021	93.0%	2022	93.0%		93.7%	Amber	2	92.3%	
	Education	Secondary pupils achieving their first preference for Secondary transfer	Annual	2021	89.0%	2022	84.8%		92.2%	Amber	2	89.2%	
	Education	Children Electively Educated at Home	Quarter	Q3 2021/22	829.0	Q4 2021/22	883.0		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Education	NEET young people aged 16-17	Last Mth of Qtr	Mar-22	1.4	Jun-22	1.4	No change	<2.1%	Amber	2	3.5%	
	Education	Permanent exclusions as a % of School population	Annual	2019/20	0.02	2020/21	0.01		N/A	N/A	1	0.04	
	Education	Children receiving at least one day of fixed term suspension as a % of School population	Annual	2019/20	1.44	2020/21	1.62		N/A	N/A	1	2.1	

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

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

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Committee on the draft Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership for 2021/22.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties for local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area; section 47 of the same Act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
3. These duties can only realistically be discharged with the full co-operation of other partners, many of whom have individual duties when carrying out their functions under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
4. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018 (statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children) give responsibility for this join-up locally with the safeguarding partners, the Police, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the local authority, which have a shared and equal duty to agree and make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
5. The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements locally are managed through the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland.

6. It is a statutory requirement, as set out in Working Together 2018, that the Safeguarding Partners publish a report at least once every twelve months on the arrangements and their effectiveness.

Background

7. The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for Leicestershire and Rutland were presented to this Committee on 5 March 2019, prior to being published on 28 June 2019.
8. The Safeguarding Children Partnership shares some operational arrangements with the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB) and some partnership structures with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPb).
9. During the period of the Annual Report the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) for the area were the Safeguarding Partners for health. From 1 April 2022 this responsibility transferred to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for the area.

Annual Report

10. The key purpose of the Annual Report is to assess the impact of the work undertaken in 2021/22 on safeguarding outcomes for children in Leicestershire and Rutland. Specifically, it evaluates performance against the priorities that were set out in the LRSCP Business Plan 2021/22.
11. The Draft Annual Report 2021/22 is appended to this report. This is the content of the report which will go to design to be finished into the document that will be published.
12. The report outlines the learning, assurance, training and improvement activity of the LRSCP and its partners, and the impact this has had on safeguarding children. Key messages from the SCP specifically in relation to Leicestershire are:
 - a) Partner organisations, workers and managers have worked well together to safeguard children and to identify needs and areas for improvement to safeguard children in the midst of ongoing challenge and change relating to the pandemic and other societal pressures.
 - b) The partnership has responded to emerging risks, such as safeguarding babies.
 - c) More work is required to understand how well the partnership works to safeguard children from diverse backgrounds.
 - d) There remains room for improvement in how the department listens to and responds to the voice and lived experience of children, particularly where there is domestic abuse in the household
 - e) The partnership has worked to improvement engagement with schools from all sectors and improve learning processes
 - f) The partnership will continue to work together, consider and respond to national developments relating to safeguarding, foster a reliable, trusting

culture in organisations and across the area and challenge and drive improvement in multi-agency safeguarding of children.

Proposals/Options

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

Consultation

14. The Annual Report includes a summary of the consultation and engagement work the SCP has carried out with children and young people.
15. All members of the SCP have had opportunities to contribute to and comment on earlier drafts of the Annual Report.

Resource Implications

16. Safeguarding partners have, along with Safeguarding Adults Board statutory partners set a single agreement of principles to share the operating costs of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards for Leicestershire and Rutland.
17. As part of this agreement Leicestershire County Council contributes £112,633 to the SAB and SCP in 2022/23. This is 31% of the total funding for the Leicestershire and Rutland SAB and SCP (£358,500). This compares with £102,496 in the previous year which was 31% of the total budget for the Leicestershire and Rutland LSCB, SCP and SAB of £327,126 in 2021/22.
18. The Partners of the Leicestershire and Rutland and Leicester SCP and SABs agreed a one-off reduction in contributions for the period of the Annual Report to help them to manage financial challenges. The balance was to be funded from the Safeguarding Partnership's reserve funds. Vacancies in the support office team and underspend on case reviews reduced expenditure to just above the reduced level of the pooled budget. The balance of £468 was taken from the Safeguarding Partnership's reserve funds, which as of 1 April 2022 stand at £98,209. Plans for further use of these reserve funds will be drawn up in the coming year.
19. Leicestershire County Council also hosts the Safeguarding Boards' Business Office that supports the SCP and SAB.
20. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Timetable for Decisions

21. The Annual Report of the Safeguarding Children Partnership will be presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 September

2022 and the Cabinet on 16 September 2022. The Annual Report will be published by the end of September 2022. Any comments will be considered and addressed prior to the final report being published.

Background Papers

None

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

22. None.

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership 2021/22.

Relevant Impact Assessments:

Equality and Human Rights Implications

23. 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. The Partnership had a specific priority in 2021/22 exploring safeguarding of children from diverse backgrounds. The work on this is continued into 2022/23.

Crime and Disorder Implications

24. There is a close connection between the work of the LRSCP and that of community safety partnerships in Leicestershire. For example, the LRSCP 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 LRSCP also supports community safety partnerships in carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews and acting on their recommendations.

Partnership Working and associated issues

25. Safeguarding is dependent on the effective work of the partnership as set out in national regulation, Working Together 2018, published by the Department for Education.

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Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021-22

Foreword

We are pleased to present this report of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Over the past year the Covid-19 pandemic has continued to impact on families and children, and more recently additional pressures have emerged, such as increased cost of living. These factors have put further pressure on those working with families and children and the whole system supporting children's health, wellbeing and safety.

As a partnership we have sought to work together and support each other across the system and at all levels of our organisations to continue to identify and respond effectively to children in need of safeguarding. We have seen good progress in sharing information well and in developing new approaches to support the safety of babies and adolescents.

In the midst of the challenges we see workers and managers in organisations across Leicestershire & Rutland striving to work with others to support the welfare and safety of children.

We know, however that we cannot be complacent, we need to continue strong communication, robust challenge, a desire to improve and a focus on the welfare of children across our and all organisations working with children. As a partnership we will continue to focus on learning and improving, and look to better understand the impact that our work together as partners has on supporting children to be safe and well and reach their full potential.

Thank you to all workers and managers who really see, listen to and work so hard to support children in Leicestershire & Rutland to be safe.

The Safeguarding Partners for Leicestershire & Rutland

"[The worker] always made me feel heard and safe. I often would cry at the constant unconditional kindness she would show me. It helped me find the strength to open up to others too" (Young person – Barnado's Consultation)

The Partnership

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) brings together organisations across the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland with the vision:

“For children and young people in Leicester to be safe, well and achieve their full potential”

The members of the Partnership include the statutory safeguarding partners: Police, Local Authorities, and Clinical Commissioning Groups, as well as other relevant agencies including schools, health agencies, probation and other organisations working with children.

The Partnership:

- Sets how organisations should work together to safeguard children
- Provides multi-agency training and development resources to support good safeguarding
- Tests how well organisations are working together and the difference this is making
- Reviews serious safeguarding incidents to identify improvements needed
- Uses learning and feedback to improve and develop how agencies work together to safeguard children.

This is the statutory report of the SCP outlining the work it has carried out from April 2021 to the end of March 2022.

For more information on how the Partnership works please visit <https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp>

The work of the Partnership

The Priorities of the Partnership

The SCP worked with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to identify the following shared priorities and outcomes for 2021/22:

Covid-19 response (shared with the Safeguarding Adults Boards for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland): Understanding and responding to the impact of Covid-19 on Safeguarding adults and children so that safeguarding approaches are effective in recovery from Covid-19 and informed by learning from the pandemic

What we did: *The partnership continued to assess and respond to the impacts of the pandemic on safeguarding and held reflective review meetings to identify learning and partnership working to continue and adapt.*

Safeguarding Babies: Improving how we work together with families before and after births to safeguard babies and seek assurance that multi-agency working with families to safeguard babies is effective.

What we did: *The partnership changed procedures and provided training to respond to learning from local and national reviews. The partnership supported the roll out of the ICON project to support new parents to cope with crying babies.*

Child Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing: Seek assurance that partnership working supports good mental health for children and that mental health and safeguarding are effectively addressed together

***What we did:** The partnership gained assurance of safeguarding approaches for children on waiting lists for mental health services. The partnership needed more assurance that pathways for mental health support also support good safeguarding, so will continue to follow this up in the coming year.*

Domestic Abuse and Child Safeguarding: Seek assurance that partners are responding appropriately to safeguard and support children living with domestic abuse

***What we did:** The partnership carried out an audit of cases involving domestic abuse and sought the voice of children and fed the findings from this into domestic abuse needs assessments, reviews of domestic abuse services and a review of domestic abuse safeguarding procedures.*

Harm outside of the Home: Seek assurance that the local approach to safeguarding children from extra-familial threat is effective.

***What we did:** The partnership received updates on progress in the development of the local approach to address harm outside the home. The partnership will continue to follow this up in the coming year when this is completed. The partnership reviewed local approaches regarding peer-on-peer sexual abuse and developed engagement with independent education settings.*

Safeguarding Children from Diverse backgrounds: Understand and improve how well partners work together with children and families from diverse backgrounds.

***What we did:** The partnership identified many partners had not carried out work internally regarding understanding safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds and scoped work to continue into the next year through a dedicated group.*

The work on these priorities was embedded within the assurance, training, procedure and review work of the partnership outlined in more detail in the following sections of this report.

“Don’t see people like us as weak, victims or broken, we are strong and survivors. I want to hear ‘you can do it’ not ‘you went through all this and that’s why your life sucks’ completely changed the narrative of the support” (Young person – Barnado’s Consultation)

Seeking Assurance

The partnership has a Quality Assurance Framework shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. This can be found here <https://lrsb.org.uk/aboutlrsbp>.

Performance data

During the year the partnership reviewed comparative data for the safeguarding system against other areas of the country. This showed that rates of referrals and repeat referrals in Leicestershire

& Rutland and trends in these were in line with other areas of the country. End of year data had not been considered by the time this report was completed and is not able to be shared.

Self-assessment

During 2021 the safeguarding partners and specific relevant agencies carried out a self-assessment of their safeguarding effectiveness. The partnership focussed this assessment on specific areas of priority in the pandemic, including staff welfare, support and capacity, responding to the voice of children and response to domestic abuse.

Following improvement work in the year almost all partner agencies provided some evidence that they were effective across all areas in the assessment:

- Governance of safeguarding,
- Consideration of safeguarding in commissioning,
- Consideration of safeguarding in service change, including the response to Covid-19,
- Supporting workforce capacity and resilience in order to effectively safeguard children,
- Engaging with children to hear and respond to their voice, and
- The response to children affected by domestic abuse.

The assessment did not directly identify any areas for significant work across partners or on a multi-agency basis. All agencies were asked for their plans for how they would improve effectiveness, which will be followed up in next year's assessment

Audits

The SCP carried out one multi-agency audit in 2021-22 focussed on domestic abuse and safeguarding children. Alongside this health partners funded Barnado's to carry out some work to hear the voice of Children from homes where domestic abuse had taken place.

The audit found that across the majority of cases there was good multi-agency working, information sharing and involvement in safeguarding processes. The voice of children was often sought and considered well by most, but not all, agencies. There were a number of notable areas for improvement:

- There was a consistent lack of engagement with the perpetrators of domestic abuse, often males, and a lack of consideration of referral to routes to address their behaviour.
- In some cases there was an over-reliance on victims to manage the behaviour of perpetrators
- Sometimes expectation was placed on children to report if parents' abusive relationships restarted, a potentially inappropriate responsibility.
- In Leicestershire domestic abuse agencies were not being invited to multi-agency child protection meetings.
- The diversity and backgrounds of children and families and impact of this was not clearly considered in most cases in Leicestershire & Rutland

The Barnardo's consultation work sought the views of young people whose parents had been considered as at high risk of harm at Domestic Abuse MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meeting. The findings from this are detailed in the section of this report on feedback from children and families.

A review of the SCP domestic abuse procedures will be completed in 2022 which will take into account the findings and recommendations of the audit and Barnado's report. These findings have also been reported into local Community Safety and Domestic Abuse Partnership arrangements and the SCP will follow up how these have been responded to.

"I felt like I had to keep explaining myself which was exhausting" (Young person – Barnado's Consultation)

Schools Surveys

Rutland Safeguarding through Education Audit was undertaken during October 2021. The audit was distributed to all Rutland education providers inclusive of:

- Rutland State Funded and Independent schools,
- Individuals in governance roles in maintained schools and academy trusts,
- Private and Voluntary Early Years Sector,
- Wraparound and Holiday Childcare providers, and
- Out-of-County providers of Rutland children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Children Looked After (CLA).

50% of Rutland's education sector returned their response to the audit and these indicated widespread good practice in governance, process and practice in relation to safeguarding children.

Future engagement activities and promotion of the audit will be planned to increase the number of responses to ensure that the information gathered is even more robust and reflective of practice across all Rutland education and childcare providers including 'Out of County' provisions accessing Rutland funding for children with special education needs and/ or disabilities and for Children Looked After. In addition focused Rutland Safeguarding events have been diarised through to January 2023.

Leicestershire Schools Safeguarding Annual Return was sent out for return in November 2021. XX% of schools in Leicestershire returned the survey. The return identified widespread good practice in training and recruitment in relation to safeguarding children and prompted improvement in practice in relation to checks made by the safeguarding governor for almost 20% of schools. The return also prompted improvement in practice in regard to approaches to hearing the voice of children in schools and responding to sexual abuse.

The surveys in both Leicestershire and Rutland asked about the actions or planned interventions schools took in response to Ofsted's sexual abuse in schools and colleges report. Almost all schools had taken action in response to this, in terms of training, policy update, awareness raising with staff and pupils and many had worked with pupils to provide additional routes to raise concerns or identify areas of particular concern in the school.

"I feel like school had a big part in it, they were very supportive. I had a time out card at school which allowed me to get out of lessons and talk to someone or be alone if I needed to" (Young person – Barnado's Consultation)

Other assurance work

The Independent Advisor carried out visits to the ‘front door’ services for Children’s Social care and the Police to meet with staff and managers and assess local working and systemic issues impacting their practice. This is detailed further in the report of the Independent Advisor.

The local SCPs set up a monthly ‘Keep in Touch’ assurance meeting to continue to consider ongoing impact of the pandemic and other operational matters affecting safeguarding services, with a particular focus on workforce capacity and wellbeing. During the year this identified the following areas of concern:

- There are workforce capacity issues in many services and significant area of challenge in some services. Covid-19 is a factor in this, as well vacancies and availability of trained staff. All services are prioritising children at risk and safeguarding within their response to these challenges. (Oct 21)
- Workforce capacity issues could prevent concerns and issues being picked up early and could lead to missed opportunities to identify and respond to risk of abuse or neglect early. (Jan 22)
- Permanent exclusions have increased and there remains a large increase in number of children electively home educated, which decreases visibility of these children.
- There are large waiting lists for children’s community health services which may potentially impact upon the development, health and well-being of children, and increase stress in families (Mar 22)

In response to these concerns the SCP has supported open reflection and conversations regarding the impact of workforce gaps on services and how this is impacting safeguarding through the Keep in Touch meeting and at the main Partnership meetings and has gained assurance that safeguarding continues to be prioritised. The partnership also tasked partners to review how they were identifying and supporting children at risk of harm, particularly those who were less visible to services, such as those missing education or electively home educated.

In addition the SCP reviewed local approaches and practice regarding:

- Peer on peer sexual abuse between children
- The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse reports regarding religious institutions and institutional responses to allegations.
- Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing children

From these the partnership identified a need to develop engagement with private schools in the area regarding safeguarding, and following consultation set up a safeguarding forum for private schools in the area alongside existing safeguarding engagement approaches with maintained schools that will commence in the summer of 2022. When the partnership followed up progress on work to address peer on peer sexual abuse at the end of the year it identified inconsistencies in responses across the area and commenced a review of procedures in line with national guidance which will be completed in summer 2022.

This work has also shaped the partnership’s priority for 2022/23 to support safeguarding in independent, out of school and small community settings.

“My social worker was kind, she helped me with practical things. However, my social worker then changed lots of times to someone I had no connection with, I would get transferred and wouldn’t know it was going to happen...it was a very unsettling time; I didn’t know what was happening or when?” (Young person – Barnado’s Consultation)

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures

The partnership has ensured procedures are in place for multi-agency safeguarding in line with Working Together 2018 and has specifically revised the following procedures in response to learning from local and national reviews and assurance processes:

- Procedure for Children on child protection plans who leave the UK,
- Guidance regarding children with mental health needs/self-harm and suicide
- Neglect Toolkit updated to include adolescent neglect, SUDI and pre-birth neglect
- Pre-birth procedure
- Review of the Multi-agency Thresholds document
- LLR Child Protection Practice standards document
- Procedure linked to the National Concordat on Children in Custody?

In addition work was underway at the end of the year to complete:

- A review of the Fabricated and Induced Illness procedures
- A review of the domestic abuse procedures

Training

The SCPs training co-ordination and delivery function is shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to support consistent and effective partnership working.

With the continued impact of the pandemic almost all training was delivered online, however in March 2022 we were able to run our first large-scale in person training event in two years. This was run partnership with De Montfort University (DMU) for World Social Work Day. 125 participants accessed a full programme on ‘Transcending Otherness: Disturbing Othering’ supporting inclusive practice.

We provided training resources and events in support of our priorities as well as other areas identified in a training needs assessment with partners, identifying other key areas including neglect, intrafamilial sexual abuse and multi-agency safeguarding more broadly.

As well as our core training programme we supported the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) with the booking and administration of an extensive, tiered, Trauma Informed training programme. We have also supported smaller projects by individual agencies such as the Reducing Parental Conflict programmes in Leicester City and Leicestershire

We continued to use a more blended approach to learning incorporating video resources and resource packs alongside online training sessions and exploring different approaches.

One new approach was the 'Festival of Learning'. This was run as a series of 43 training sessions held online over two weeks in September 2021 focussed on how the Statutory, Voluntary and Community Sector Work Together to Safeguard Children.

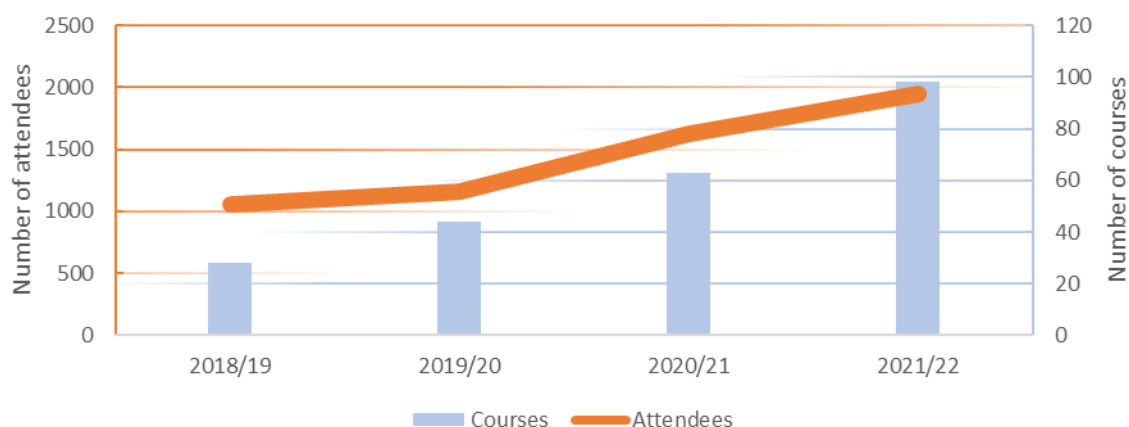
Feedback on the event was good, and demonstrated a need for more training focussed on the voluntary and community sector, however less people attended that we aimed for. The training group has reflected on this and identified areas for improvement for running a similar event in future to increase attendance, including work to increase the reach of information about the event into the voluntary and community sector.

Another new approach has been joint work with the Safeguarding Adults Board to provide some resource packs for learning and sharing on common themes. In 2021-22 we produced two shared 'Build Confidence in Practice' resources:

- 1) Working with Resistance
- 2) Professional Curiosity

Overall training was delivered to almost two thousand (1949) individuals over 98 training events this year. The chart overleaf identifies a continued increase in numbers attending SCP training on previous years.

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Training -
Attendees and Courses



Alongside this increase several training events were cancelled due to sickness and/or low numbers. There were also a lot of courses which were fully booked but only a half to two thirds of registered participants attended. When reaching out to understand lack of attendance workers reported a significant increase in workload which has been aggravated by a lack of staff, either through sickness or outstanding vacancies.

Our training evaluation shows an increase of 80 to 90 points (on a scale from -100 to +100) across evaluated training in all areas of knowledge, confidence, and skills, in line with last year. This is based upon a return rate of 42% of course attendees, which we are aiming to improve. With broadened learning options it is more difficult to identify who is accessing training materials and therefore the full reach and impact of SCP training.

We want to improve our understanding of access to and impact of SCP training resources to enable us to focus on providing effective training and learning resources that support changes in practice.

To do this we will as we explore a learning management system that will work with our continued blended approach including in-person and online training sessions alongside continued use of video and online training resources that can be used in individual agency settings.

To support improved attendance we will also look to reintroduce a charging policy that was suspended with the pandemic.

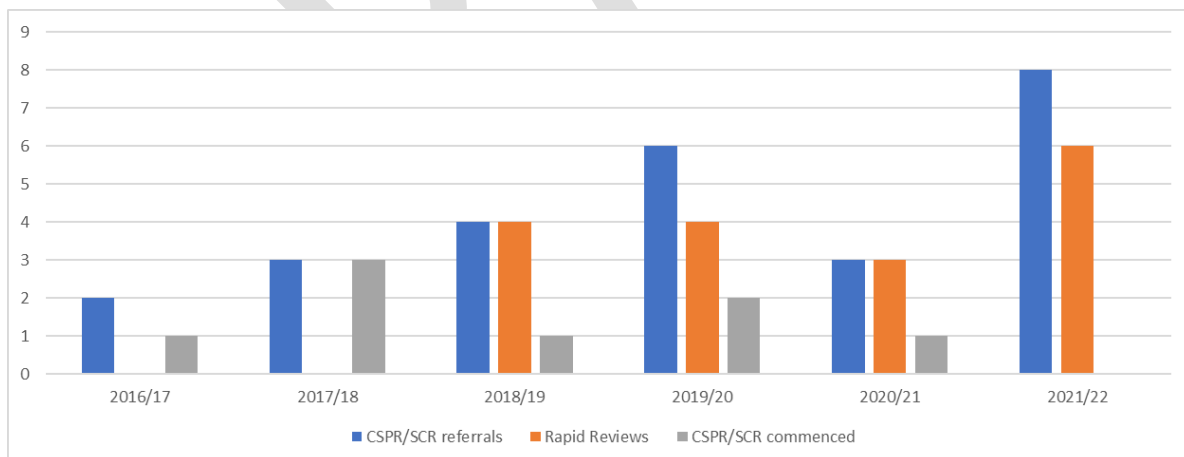
“The training was so insightful and engaging. Really pleased I joined. I have gained so much knowledge but also practical skills as well.”

“This was one of the most comprehensive and interesting training sessions I have attended. Getting the local picture in relation to Modern Slavery was both fascinating, but also worrying, with me now reflecting on recent cases and thinking that I could/should have been more curious. I really recommend all frontline practitioners attend future sessions whether you think it is relevant to your role or not as you will come away knowing just how relevant it is.”

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The partnership assesses Serious Safeguarding Incidents as defined by Working Together 2018 and decides whether a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR), in order to identify how to improve safeguarding responses in future, is required.

The Partnership carried out six rapid reviews following a serious incident notification and considered two further referrals for review in the period of this report. As shown in the chart this is a notable increase in referrals compared to previous years. The Safeguarding partners will monitor this to identify any longer-term trends.



The partnership was able to identify learning to improve safeguarding systems from five of the six Rapid Reviews. The partnership identified no further learning was to be gained from further review of any of these cases and therefore no Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews were required. This view was supported by the Independent Advisor to the Partnership and by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

Two Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews commenced in previous years were nearing completion at the end of March 2022 to be published later in 2022. These have taken longer than the statutory six months to complete for the following reasons:

- Commencing reviews delayed by finding availability for meetings across partners, agreeing an approach regarding the reviewer and commissioning a reviewer.
- The reviewer has identified they need to speak to professionals who worked directly with the children and their families to fully understand the case and learning, which has been delayed awaiting decisions regarding prosecution.
- Criminal processes have also delayed speaking to families.
- In one case lack of availability of the identified expert reviewer to complete the work has delayed progress on the review.

The partnership has continued to develop approaches to improve quality and timeliness of rapid reviews. Local agencies worked well to continue to contribute to rapid reviews and the ongoing Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews whilst facing continued resource challenges during the pandemic.

In addition the rapid reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews have identified good individual and multi-agency working by many organisations to prioritise, see and respond to children at risk of harm during the ongoing restrictions of the pandemic.

The reviews also identified the following key areas for further work:

- Responding to families where parents have chaotic lifestyles and/or multiple complex needs
- Understanding the impact of modern slavery of adults on children's lived experience
- Information sharing between health agencies, particularly midwifery and health visiting services
- Recognising the impact of parental learning difficulties on parenting and responding to additional support needs relating this.
- Improved confidence in recognising and responding to potential Fabricated and Induced Illness.
- Continued work in health, police, local authority services and across all agencies to support identification and response to neglect
- Consistent use of the procedure to respond to bruises or marks of concern on pre-mobile babies
- Promote messages regarding safe use of bath seats

Action plans are in place to respond to these and learning has been shared with practitioners across organisations through the Safeguarding Partnerships' [Safeguarding Matters newsletter](#), through articles and '7-minute briefings' designed to convey key messages from reviews and encourage managers and workers to reflect on their practice.

The following work has been undertaken based upon the learning from local rapid reviews completed and the Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews currently underway:

- Improved the Thresholds document, the Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning procedure and the Management of Bruises, Marks, and Injuries of Concern in Pre-Mobile Babies and Non-Independently Mobile Children procedure
- Significant update to the Fabricated or Induced Illness procedure
- Delivery of a learning session on Modern Slavery and its effect on children, which will be repeated in the New Year due to demand.
- Promotion of bath seat safety awareness with Public Health within social care and the health community
- Promotion of proactive communication with substance misuse treatment agencies where parents are substance misusers.

- Local work to highlight the importance of hearing and responding to the voice of children including promotion of the 'Was not brought' video and 'Was Not heard' video, also used in national psychological wellbeing training
- Neglect toolkit updated to support practitioners to identify and respond to neglect of children including babies and older teenagers.
- Multi-agency training, briefings and learning events to communicate learning, guidance and changes in procedures and learning.

The partnership continues to develop its approach to rapid reviews and these have become a useful tool to identify learning swiftly and ensure action can be taken more quickly to respond to matters arising from serious safeguarding incidents.

During the period covered in this report the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published one National Child Safeguarding Practice Review. "The Myth of Invisible Men" Safeguarding children under 1 from non-accidental injury caused by male carers was published in September 2021.

The report identifies *"an urgent need to improve how the system sees, responds to and intervenes with men who may represent a risk to the babies they are caring for. For this group of men, the role that they play in a child's life, their history of parenting and their own experiences as children and how this affects them as adults, are too frequently overlooked by the services with responsibilities for safeguarding children and for supporting parents"*.

Whilst the recommendations from the report are firstly aimed at national bodies, local partners have been assessing and adapting their response to fathers and other male carers. Five of the eight Rapid Reviews and one of the two CSPRs related to babies who were pre-birth or under 12 months old. Therefore Safeguarding babies has been and remains a priority of the partnership and updates to procedures and training have included the need to consider the role of and include fathers and male carers in work with families.

Local work on the ICON programme promoting strategies to cope with and respond appropriately to crying babies has included a focus on engaging with fathers and public campaign planned for the coming year will have a focus on getting ICON messages to males.

In the coming year the partnership will include focussed questions in all its assurance and review work to assess how fathers and male carers are engaged in safeguarding work and support services. It will also carry out assurance work to assess the effectiveness of local work to safeguard babies

How feedback from children and families has informed our work and influenced service provision.

During the year the SCP reviewed its engagement approach to ensure it was having meaningful engagement with young people that made a difference to the work of the partnership.

The focus going forward will be drawing upon existing participation work within organisations across the partnership, to understand what young people are saying about safeguarding and how partners are hearing and responding to the voice and lived experience of children and young people. This will

reduce duplication and consultation fatigue, and where the partnership requires specific participation work this will be carried out through working with existing participation groups.

Partners commissioned Barnado's to carry out some work to hear from children and young people whose parents have been considered at Domestic Abuse MARAC to understand their experience. The reach of the survey was limited by the pandemic and interviews were only able to be carried out by telephone with eleven young people.

Most young people felt that support they received was helpful, but they had to wait too long for it, and communication with them about their experience and support, including listening to them could be significantly improved.

The more detailed findings of the consultation were:

- Communication with young people could have been better. Many felt professionals seemed judgemental and did not understand what they had been through. Many young people were anxious about support, not understanding what support would be available or be like.
- Many young people had to wait a long time for support, and in the meantime developed their own coping strategies which were not always healthy.
- Almost all young people who received support from specialist domestic abuse services found this to be beneficial and a positive experience.
- Changes in workers was very unsettling
- Having to repeat their lived experience several times as part of the process caused more trauma for some young people.

The report made the following recommendations:

- Scope existing Domestic Abuse support pathways and arrangements to support children and young people, identifying gaps. Build on good practice examples.
- Young people to be involved in shaping new and existing services for domestic abuse.
- Improving access to and range of domestic abuse services and support.
- Discuss the support offer and the benefits of support services
- Explain and re-explain confidentiality
- Provide needs led holistic support
- Triage for access to appropriate referral pathways
- Audit / examine robustness of multi-agency working
- Trauma Informed Practice training for professionals
- Consideration of a Phase 2 Consultation

This will be taken into account in the review of the SCP domestic abuse procedures in 2022 and has been shared with the Domestic Abuse Partnerships to influence domestic abuse strategy, commissioning and service provision.

The Partnership continued to promote and receive excellent feedback on the 'Was not heard' film. This film by young people locally encourages those who work with children to understand how children communicate with them and highlights the importance and legal duty to hear and respond to them.

"It would have been helpful if someone had helped me to understand what was happening and who was going to be helping me" (Young person – Barnado's Consultation)

“I enjoyed the freedom of it. I had a lot of my freedom stripped from me in other ways, and so knowing that I had support and someone I could openly speak about my problems to, without judgement really helped me to be less fearful of speaking about things that happened to me” (Young person – Barnado’s Consultation)

Changes to the arrangements

The partnership is committed to developing and improving. The partnership continued its joint working arrangements with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to support effective use of resources and consistency in approaches.

The safeguarding partners for the two areas, alongside the Safeguarding Adults statutory partners reviewed the business office support arrangements for the SCPs, and decided to retain current arrangements with a greater focus on join up and reducing duplication.

Chairing of the joint partnership moved from the Independent Advisor to the Safeguarding partners for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland in rotation.

The arrangements will also be updated to recognise meetings between the lead representatives of the statutory partners as part of the partnership structure and to clarify delegation and reporting structures within the organisations of the safeguarding partners.

The arrangements document will be updated in line with this and published alongside this annual report.

Independent Scrutiny - Report of the Independent Advisor, Kay Whyte-Bell

Scrutiny Activity

During the last year the impact and challenges of Covid 19 have remained however, statutory and partner agencies have responded robustly, ensuring that the most vulnerable are prioritised. It is important to recognise and appreciate the singular and collective efforts of all members of the statutory and partner agencies in their relentless focus on safeguarding children, their continued collaboration and seeking to identify and seek solutions to the emerging gaps, issues and challenges.

A key priority for Scrutiny Activity was to hear the voice of frontline practitioners and managers. It is important to get a sense of how strategic decisions and partnerships impact on the day-to-day experience and practice of those charge with delivering on those priorities. This was achieved by meeting with staff from both Leicestershire and Rutland Children’s Services, and additionally with Leaders from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Overall, there were minimal multi-agency practice issues identified, and those that were, all practitioners and managers had a good understanding of the route to channel issues and used escalation processes as appropriate. Following on from the national interest in the outcome of the court trials in relation to two child deaths, staff reported calls and activity had

increased at the front line, coupled with the growing pressure due to recruitment or sickness absence. However, staff reported good support from their managers and leaders as well as excellent partnership arrangements to ensure that resources were made available to respond as well as possible to these emerging challenges.

Leaders from the CCG identified capacity issues particularly in health visiting and midwifery (national issue), but were able to clarify how arrangements had been adapted to ensure that safeguarding children remained a priority for front line service provision. Professional relationships are critical but also in calling each Partner to account; to this end there continues to be regular meetings with Children's Social Care Leaders and Health Leaders to focus on the capacity and response issues.

Scrutiny activity during 2021-22 has included:

- Attendance at least once of all the SCP's subgroups to seek assurance of process, attendance and engagement
- Meeting with front line staff and managers from Leicestershire CS and Rutland CS
- Meeting with Health professionals from the CCG
- Regular touch base meetings with the 3 Stat Partners
- Regular attendance at the Audit & Assurance Sub-Group
- Member of T&F Group (Safeguarding Children from Diverse Backgrounds)
- Providing independent advice for Rapid Reviews and Case Review Group
- Regular meetings with SAB Chair to assure progress on joint priorities
- Joint Chairing of SAB and SCP's meetings
- Attendance at Vulnerability Executive
- Attended (The Association of Safeguarding Partners (TASP) seminars and East Region Chairs/Independent Scrutineers quarterly meetings

Key strengths:

- Through meetings with front line managers and staff evidence of strong collaboration, accountability and partnership across the three Statutory Partners and other agencies
- More Children's Services staff co-located in police Safeguarding Hub brings greater partnership understanding, communication and better working together
- A range of new or updated multi-agency procedures and guidance introduced including the Launch of the newly revised Neglect Toolkit to include learning from the Myth of the Invisible Men national report
- Continuation of the Safeguarding Sub-Cell
- Positive Ofsted reports for both Leicestershire County and Rutland Children's Services evidenced strong partnership working
- Relaunch of the public awareness campaign "Our Door is Open"

Key areas identified for further assurance activity:

- Development of a robust multi agency data set linked to the priorities of the SCPs
- Progressing work on joint SAB/SCP's transitions priority
- Evidence of impact in key learning from Rapid Reviews
- Front line staff and managers identified more work to be done on improving the quality of some referrals
- Assurance on the priority of children and young people's mental health and well-being

Emergent challenges:

- Workforce issues across all statutory partner agencies. Assurance is being sought that children who are most vulnerable or subject to CPP are being prioritised by all Statutory Partners.
- The impact of the two recently published national reviews on safeguarding and children's social care is yet to be fully understood

Finance

The work of the SCP is supported by the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Partnership Business Office that also supports the Safeguarding Adults Boards and carries out Domestic Homicide Reviews for Community Safety Partnerships in Leicestershire & Rutland. The SCP is funded by contributions from its partners.

A single funding arrangement for the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards for 2020 onwards has been agreed between the statutory partners for the Safeguarding Adults Boards and the children's Safeguarding Partners for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.

The contributions from partners for the Leicestershire & Rutland SCP and SAB as a whole for 2020/21 were as follows:

	£
Leicestershire County Council	102,496
Rutland County Council	45,833
Leicestershire Police	88,725
West Leicestershire CCG and East Leicestershire & Rutland CCG	88,724
National Probation Services	1,348
Total income for SCP and SAB	327,126

Contributions were reduced from statutory partners for one year with the difference to be funded from the SCP and SAB reserves. Overall expenditure across the SCP and SAB was £327,594.

Expenditure for the SCP is apportioned as follows:

	£
Staffing	105,579
Independent Chairing	7,914
Support Services	12,370
Operating Costs	6,700
Training	48,100
Case Reviews	5,254
Total Expenditure	185,917

Expenditure is broadly in line with the previous year. Expenditure on support services have increased with legal advice for the partnership now funded from this pooled budget, expenditure on training increased as we implemented training in response to previous review findings and adapted training approaches. Expenditure on Child Safeguarding Practice reviews reduced further with no new CSPRs commencing this year.

Priorities 2022/23 onwards

The partnership has reviewed learning from local and national reviews, and from local assurance and engagement work, as well as speaking to children and young people and considering the current context of the pandemic in determining its priorities going forward. The Partnership has identified the following forward priorities shared with Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board:

Safeguarding Babies – Continue to improve how we work together with families before and after births to safeguard babies

Child Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing – Seek assurance that partners are working to support good mental health for children and that mental health and safeguarding are effectively addressed together

Harm outside of the Home – Seek assurance that the local approach to safeguarding children from extra-familial threat is effective. This includes priority work on Safeguarding Transitions shared with the Safeguarding Adults Boards.

Safeguarding Children from Diverse backgrounds – Complete our work to understand and improve how well partners work together with children and families from diverse backgrounds

Safeguarding in Independent and Out of School settings – Work with faith groups, independent schools, community organisations and other settings to support them to play an effective role in safeguarding children.