



Meeting: **Scrutiny Commission**

Date/Time: **Wednesday, 22 April 2026 at 10.00 am**

Location: **County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Mrs J Twomey (Tel: 0116 305 2583)**

Email: **joanne.twomey@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mrs. D. Taylor CC (Chairman)

Dr. J. Bloxham CC Mrs. K. Knight CC
Mr. M. Bools CC Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC
Mrs. L. Danks CC Mr. B. Piper CC
Dr. S. Hill CC Mr J. Poland CC
Mr. A. Innes CC Mr. K. Robinson CC
Mr. P. King CC Mr. C. A. Smith CC

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2026.	(Pages 3 - 14)
2. Minutes of the special meeting held on 18 March 2026.	(Pages 15 - 16)
3. Question Time.	
4. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).	
5. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.	
6. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	



7. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.
8. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.
9. The Leicester and Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership Director of Public Health, Law and Governance (Pages 17 - 24)

Mr Peter Chandler, Head of Economic Regeneration at Leicester City Council, has been invited to attend for this item.

The Leader, Mr D. Harrison CC, and the Deputy Leader, Mr C. Crook CC, have been invited for this and the following item.
10. Place Marketing - Leicester and Leicestershire Director of Public Health, Law and Governance (Pages 25 - 52)

Mr Mike Denby, Director of Inward Investment & Place Marketing at Leicester City Council has been invited to attend for this item.
11. Youth Justice Plan Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 53 - 88)

The Lead Member for Children and Family Services, Mr C. Pugsley CC has been invited to attend for this and the following item.
12. Community Safety Annual Update and revised Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 89 - 220)
13. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled to take place on 11 May 2026.
14. Any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent.



Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 11 March 2026.

PRESENT

Mrs D. Taylor CC (in the Chair)

Dr. J. Bloxham CC
Mr. M. Bools CC
Mrs. L. Danks CC
Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. A. Innes CC
Mr. P. King CC

Mrs. K. Knight CC
Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC
Mr. B. Piper CC
Mr J. Poland CC
Mr. K. Robinson CC
Mr. C. A. Smith CC

In attendance

Mr. H. Fowler CC (minutes 71 and 72 refer).

63. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2026 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

64. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that five questions had been received under Standing Order 32.

Questions asked by Mr. Stephen Walkley

“The Council has spent £39.4m on Lutterworth East (FOI response 16 October 2025 - EIR/009476).

- (1) Has the council an estimate of the additional infrastructure costs of the development to the Council? If so what are they?
- (2) When does the Council expect work commence on the development?
- (3) Is Lutterworth East considered to be a viable development?
- (4) Is it still the intention to build a spine road for Lutterworth East, rather than the urgently needed North / South bypass for Lutterworth? If so when is construction expected to start?
- (5) At the Harborough District Council Planning meeting the representative of the County Council accepted that as the affordable housing percentage had reduced from 40% to 10% the houses that would be built would be larger and therefore

there would be room for fewer than the original plan of 2,750 houses. How many do the Council now expect to be built in Lutterworth East?"

Reply by the Chair

- (1) Lutterworth East has been granted planning consent for a development scheme which includes substantial infrastructure works. These include on site infrastructure including widening of the A4304 to allow for access to the Site and accommodate traffic, the provision of a spine road and bridge of the M1 to the A426 for the benefit of the development and the wider area, community and social facilities including primary schools, sports pitches and public open space. Offsite infrastructure requirements include improvements to M1 J20 and M1 J21, the Frank Whittle roundabout, A5/Gibbet Lane roundabout, public transport improvements, connections into Lutterworth town centre, secondary education, GP, police, waste and library contributions.

The Council are currently looking at options for the delivery of the development which will be delivered in phases and by development partners who will build and finance the infrastructure works. The majority of works are expected to be paid for by developers rather than the County Council.

- (2) Work is happening to progress the development, for example ground surveys and obtaining the necessary planning documents in relation to the conditions forming part of the planning consent. The design of the initial road works is currently being undertaken. The technical approval and traffic management plus procurement of the contractor will be undertaken through the summer and a start on site is expected during the summer and autumn of 2026 for initial access works. Preparatory work is expected to commence in the Spring.
- (3) The original planning consent from May 2022 included a requirement of 40% affordable housing and a condition restricting the size of any building on the B8 (warehousing/distribution) site of the development to 9,000sqm. Following the covid pandemic and rising construction costs these requirements were making the scheme unviable and unattractive to developers. The Council succeeded in obtaining a variation to the planning consent at the HDC planning committee in December 2024 to bring the level of affordable housing down to a minimum of 10% and allow for larger warehouse units to be built on the B8 site with the restriction being removed from the planning consent.

The variation was granted following the provision of an independent assessment of viability, this also showed that the scheme could be viable with the requested changes.

As with all large scale developments viability is assessed at key decision points. If viability of the scheme improves the level of affordable homes would increase accordingly.

- (4) Yes – planning permission was granted for a spine road as part of the development. This will be constructed as the various phases of the development move forward. There is a planning requirement to complete the spine road between the A426 and A4304 prior to the occupation of the 650th dwelling or a vehicular connection is available for public use onto Gilmorton Road whichever is the sooner. The initial construction phase is likely to be linked to the construction

of the B8 site.

- (5) The number of homes remains at 2,750 houses in line with the original hybrid planning consent, despite changes to the affordable housing percentage.

Affordable housing refers to price and tenure, not physical size. Therefore, reducing the proportion of affordable housing does not necessarily mean that the remaining homes will be larger, nor that fewer homes will be built overall.

Affordable housing is defined as social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

It should include provisions for the development to remain at an affordable price in perpetuity for future eligible households or, where any affordable housing development is subsequently sold on the open market for the value to be recycled for replacement affordable housing provision in the locality.

Affordable housing will be provided based on the policies in the Harborough District Council's Local Plan; the National Planning Policy Framework and the Section 106 Agreement for the development

Whilst the minimum level of affordable housing has been reduced from 40% to 10% to make the development viable, four viability re-assessments will take place at key stages of the development to review whether there can an increase in the affordable housing provision or not."

With the consent of the Chairman, Mr Walkley advised that he had four supplementary questions.

Mr Walkley asked on the response to his question (1) if the Council had an estimate of the costs to the Council for the Lutterworth East scheme? £39.4m had already been spent on the scheme, and just to say 50% of the works were expected to be paid by developers would still leave the Council committed to significant expenditure.

At the request of the Chairman, the Director of Corporate Resources responded to advise that the vast majority (not just 50%) of costs would be met by the developers. However, by way of an estimate, on a scheme of this scale, the infrastructure to be provided covering roads, education and other elements could be in the region of £150m. The final amount would, however, depend on the approach taken to build that infrastructure and the timing of construction.

On the response to question (2) Mr Walkley asked, as the Council only had outline planning permission for the scheme, how works could commence without detailed planning permission having been obtained? The Director responded that the works related to initial road access as agreed with Harborough District Council as part of the implementation of the planning permission.

Regarding the responses provided to question (3), Mr Walkley asked when the last assessment of viability had been carried out and when it was expected that the next key decision point be and at which time a new viability assessment would be needed?

At the request of the Chairman the Director advised that the last assessment had been undertaken in conjunction with Harborough District Council when changes had been made to the planning permission. The next viability assessment would be carried out either when government funding had been secured to support the scheme or a housing developer sought to progress the first stage of the residential part of the scheme. It was emphasised that carrying out a viability assessment was a costly and time consuming exercise and so would not be done until necessary.

Mr Walkley asked on the response to question (4) when it was expected that construction of the spine road would start, noting that it was stated this would be when construction of the B8 site commenced.

The Director responded that construction of the B8 part of the scheme would go out to an external developer and it would be up to the preferred bidder to schedule when to carry out those works, including those required to the spine road that provided access. It was highlighted that the spine road had been appraised to be sufficient for the development as part of the planning process and that no national funding scheme to support a new bypass existed so the construction of the spine road continued to form part of the overall scheme.

65. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 32(1).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 32(1).

66. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

67. 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.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

69. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 33.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 33.

70. Member Conduct Arrangements

The Commission considered a report of the Monitoring Officer, the purpose of which was to set out the Council's ethical governance arrangements relating to member conduct following a request made by the Scrutiny Commissioners in January this year. The report focused on the framework, processes and governance measures in place but did not consider individual allegations of misconduct, nor the merits of any specific complaints

which fall outside the remit of scrutiny. The report also highlighted where leadership on conduct and standards is exercised alongside the formal standards framework, particularly through the expectations placed on all elected members. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) The Monitoring Officer advised of her intention to present a report to the Corporate Governance Committee at its meeting in June. This would be to provide an update on Member conduct complaints since the last report of the Monitoring Officer in November last year. The current practice was to provide an annual report, however, due to the increased number of complaints received, it was considered appropriate for a mid-year update to also be provided.
- (ii) As part of the report to the Corporate Governance Committee, Members noted that a summary setting out the context and seriousness of particular complaints where a public apology had been made would be included, and this would also name the members who had been the subject of those particular complaints. The Committee would also be asked to amend the current procedure for dealing with complaints to allow for this summary to be published at the time the public apology is made, rather than relying solely on reporting to the Committee. The Commission supported this proposed change in approach, and agreed that for the public apology to be meaningful such details should be published at the same time.
- (iii) Members questioned how it was determined that a member was acting in their 'official capacity', particularly in relation to social media comments. It was noted that members might state they were acting in a personal capacity but if comments related to Council business or their role, the Code could still apply. Posts unrelated to Council business would be unlikely to fall within the remit of the Code, however, each complaint and the circumstances surrounding this would need to be considered on a case by case basis. It was recognised that this caused some confusion amongst members of the public. The Monitoring Officer emphasised that members were not expected to be acting as councillors 24/7, but some actions (such as referencing their role even if expressing their personal views) could bring their behaviour within the remit of the Code.
- (iv) Members commented on the limitations of current sanctions available when a member was found to have breached the Code. Existing sanctions were widely considered not to be fit for purpose and relied heavily on party group discipline which did not cover independent or parish councillors. Members noted that historically, a national standards regime existed but that this had been replaced due to lengthy appeals and politically motivated complaints. The Monitoring Officer advised that national reforms were expected from the Government which might reintroduce more severe sanctions, including temporary suspensions, but details of how this would operate in practice had not yet been made clear.
- (v) The implications of a temporary suspension were queried regarding how this would interact with the rule which meant members who did not attend a meeting during a six month period were disqualified from office. The Monitoring Officer advised that this had been a concern raised during the Government consultation on proposed changes to the standards regime and it remained a matter under

consideration.

- (vi) Some Members commented that whilst stronger sanctions were to be welcomed, care was needed to ensure problems that arose under the previous system were not re-created.
- (vii) Members expressed concern regarding both repeat offenders and repeat complainers. The Monitoring Officer assured members that patterns of behaviour could be addressed through training and targeted support which was provided to groups and individual members where needed. Members further noted that the Corporate Governance Committee had agreed criteria to be applied by the Monitoring Officer and the Member Conduct Panel which included the ability to reject complaints considered to be politically motivated or vexatious.
- (viii) A Member questioned whether consistent standards were applied to both officers and elected members. It was noted that both were governed by distinct statutory frameworks but that the Nolan principles applied to both. Also the Member Officer Protocol within the Council's Constitution ensured officers and members worked together in an environment of trust and respect. It was acknowledged that different Codes were needed to reflect the different roles officers and members played within the Authority. Officers, as employers, were restricted in ways that elected members were not particularly regarding political expression, for example.
- (ix) In response to questions regarding the most common themes of complaints received, the Monitoring Officer advised that key issues related to respect and perceptions of bringing the Council into disrepute. Members noted the need to balance robust political debate, which was acceptable, against personal or targeted attacks, which were not
- (x) A Member queried how the number of complaints received in Leicestershire compared with neighbouring and comparator councils. The Monitoring Officer agreed to look into this and share more information if this was available when reporting to the Corporate Governance Committee. It was noted that not all councils published such data and those that did were not necessarily in comparable formats.
- (xi) Members queried whether conditions such as autism, which may affect communication or understanding of consequences, were considered as part of the Council's current complaints processes. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that where such information was known, it would be taken into account by both her and the Panel.
- (xii) The Commission noted that an unprecedented number of complaints had been received in the last 12 to 18 months and that this had increased processing time due to necessary checks having to be undertaken in line with the Council's procedures which included meeting with the independent persons.
- (xiii) Members expressed concern about the overall cost to the Council arising from the increased number of complaints and questioned what additional costs were incurred when an investigation had to be carried out. The Monitoring Officer advised that complex cases often required investigation following consideration by the Member Conduct Panel, and that the cost of such investigations could range

significantly from £2,000 to £20,000.

- (xiv) Members strongly supported enhancing the Council's current training requirements. Training on the Code of Conduct was not currently mandatory, however, members agreed that this should be introduced and requested that reporting on those that had and had not completed this should be included in the Monitoring Officers update to the Corporate Governance Committee. It was noted that training on the Code was often required by the Member Conduct Panel where a breach was found to have occurred. The Monitoring Officer also advised of additional training and support resources now available through the LGA.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report and additional information now provided by the Monitoring Officer on member conduct matters be noted;
- (b) That the Corporate Governance Committee be requested to consider:
- Making training on the Members' Code of Conduct mandatory, with compliance to be monitored and reported annually;
 - Allowing for a summary of complaints to accompany the publication of a public apology to provide some contextual information;
- (c) That the Monitoring Officer be requested to consider how the number of complaints received in respect of Leicestershire members compared to other similar county authorities and to provide such benchmarking information in future reports to the Corporate Governance Committee.

71. Rural Estate Strategy

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, which presented the draft Investing in Leicestershire Programme Rural Estate Strategy for 2026 to 2036 for comment and set out the proposed approach to future management of the Programme's portfolio of farms and rural properties. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

In presenting the Strategy the Lead Member for Resources, Mr Harrison CC, emphasised the importance of the rural estate not only in financial terms but also in supporting farming communities, protecting the countryside and sustaining the viability of tenant farmers in a challenging economic environment.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) Members noted that tenant engagement during the consultation on the draft Strategy had been positive with many of their priorities aligning with those of the Council around sustainability and viability. Members agreed the need for ongoing communication to support both tenants and the Council's management of the estate for the long term.
- (ii) Members supported the proposed vision of the Strategy and the aim to support new entrants into farming. The Director outlined proposals to establish 'nursery farms' that would run as pilots within Leicestershire. The need to strike a balance between ensuring business viability, which was difficult for a small farm, and

providing an opportunity for new farmers to establish themselves, was recognised.

- (iii) Members endorsed the overall Strategy but stressed the need to ensure the estate remained viable without subsidisation. A member further commented on the need to balance the benefits of retaining farmland whilst also exploring opportunities for development to maximise the Council's income. The Director advised that disposals were only considered where development opportunities existed and that, despite this, the estate was expected to remain broadly the same size overall, with acquisitions also considered where appropriate.
- (iv) Concerns were raised regarding the recent significant increases in tenant rents, acknowledging that this had resulted from rent reviews not having been carried out over several years. Members welcomed assurances provided by the Director that rent reviews were now up to date across the estate and that these would be carried out on a three-year cycle as part of the Rural Strategy. This would improve estate management and avoid future rental spikes for tenants in the future.
- (v) Members reiterated the strategic importance of farming to the wider economy and national food security, particularly in light of global uncertainties.
- (vi) Members noted works to support biodiversity initiatives which also helped deliver the Council's statutory biodiversity duty and its Local Nature Recovery Strategy, as well as outcomes within its Climate Resilience Delivery Plan. A Member suggested that further pilot activity in this area would be advantageous, building on the success of places like Broombriggs Farm, for example.
- (vii) Questions were raised about how the Council's returns compared with other authorities with farm holdings. The Director advised that the Council sought independent external advice to ensure rents were set at market levels. Past benchmarking had shown the Council's rental levels to be above average, however, the availability of national benchmarking data in this area was limited to make a truly fair comparison.
- (viii) A Member queried the criteria adopted by the Council when considering the allocation of a new farm tenancy and questioned whether priority was or could be given to local residents who had a commitment to the County. The Director undertook to provide further information on this to members after the meeting.
- (ix) Members welcomed plans to work more collaboratively with Brooksby Agricultural College, the Veterinary School at Nottingham University, the NFU, National Forest and other organisations to support research and student engagement on Council owned farms and to support those interested in agroforestry.
- (x) Members noted that diversification requests from tenants were received but that these were generally low, typically one or two per year. These were permitted when they aligned with the farms agricultural purpose. The Council recognised the need for farmers to diversify to make farms sustainable and sought to support this as far as possible.
- (xi) In response to a question raised, the Director advised that there were currently no discussions taking place with neighbouring authorities regarding the rural estate and the potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation. Such discussions

would commence once the Government had determined its preferred approach.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft Investing in Leicestershire Programme Rural Estate Strategy for 2026 to 2036 be noted and supported;
- (b) That the comments now made by the Scrutiny Commission be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting in April for consideration;
- (c) That it be noted that an annual report would be presented to the Scrutiny Commission setting out a rolling five year financial strategy for the estate;
- (d) That the Director be requested to provide further detail on the criteria applied for allocating new farm tenancies, including whether priority could be given to Leicestershire residents committed to the local rural economy.

72. Medium Term Financial Strategy Monitoring Report

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the 2025/26 revenue budget and capital programme monitoring position as at the end of period 10 (the end of January 2026). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) Members noted the overall budget position which had improved since the previous report to the Commission. An underspend of £700,000 had now been forecast compared to an expected £2.9m overspend at period 6. Based on the current forecast, the anticipated requirement to draw on reserves to balance the budget would no longer be needed which Members welcomed.
- (ii) Demand led pressures continued, despite the improved budget position in the short term. This was particularly so for children's and adult's social care services. For children's social care, residential placement pressures and a sharp rise in looked-after children earlier in the year continued to be an issue. Adult social care continued to report pressures around rising supported living costs.
- (iii) The Commission expressed significant concern about the SEND High Needs Block deficit currently forecast at £43m against a budget of £15m. The Director confirmed that the current strategy of setting aside resources in the MTFS to cover part of this deficit continued. The Government had also announced that up to 90% of national SEND deficits as at 31 March 2026 would be covered centrally, but clarity on how this would be calculated was still awaited.
- (iv) Members noted the slippage in completion of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road due to recent adverse weather. The Director reported that the project remained on track for completion in May, representing only a minor delay.
- (v) Concerns were raised about the level of slippage generally in the capital programme and it was questioned if there were lessons to be learnt given this appeared to be an annual problem. It was noted that the level of slippage was not unusually high when compared to previous years. External factors, particularly

regarding planning and the weather remained material constraints that were outside the control of the County Council. The Director undertook to carry out an internal review to confirm slippage costs remained reasonable and to provide an update to members after the meeting.

- (vi) In response to questions raised, the Director reported that the 'Mosaic' graphs on page 76 of the report related to an internal IT system operated in Children's Social Care Services. The annual 'dip' in the graph reflected the accounting treatment related to the number of weeks it was based on rather than a performance related trend, and the stepped increases represented the typical provider uplift seen at the start of each financial year.
- (vii) There had been a slight shortfall in income from the Council's office estate. This had largely been due to voids and additional maintenance work being carried out before the financial year end.
- (viii) Members raised concerns regarding ongoing pressures relating to children placed in secure accommodation, noting that three children were currently placed under court ordered arrangements, costing in excess of £35,000 per week in some cases. It was noted that the costs were largely unavoidable due to these being court ordered placements and the costs reflected the intensive staff to child ratio support required for such children who often had very complex needs. A Member emphasised the unsustainable financial burden this placed on the Council and requested clarity on the number of children affected and up to date details of the costs being incurred.
- (ix) Members raised wider concerns about the national shortage of secure placements, forcing councils to seek high cost, out of county provision. It was recognised that this was a national issue, and that the County Council had raised its concerns regionally through East Midlands Councils with a view to strengthening lobbying of central government. The Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee assured the Commission that this was being looked at and monitored by this scrutiny on a regular basis. A Member requested that an update be sought from the Lead Member for Children and Family Services regarding actions being taken locally to reduce costs and improve local provision.
- (x) A Member questioned whether the projected overspend of £0.5m across the high needs block funded specialist teaching services aligned with posts previously proposed for removal. The Director undertook to check and report back to Members after the meeting.
- (xi) Clarification was sought regarding whether the net underspend of £5.9m on the Early Years Block could be retained or if this had to be repaid to central government. It was noted that the forecasted underspend was partly due to timing issues of DfE payments and would likely reduce by the year end and that this was reflective of previous years. It was noted that any underspend was retained and early years funding remained ring-fenced.
- (xii) Members noted the TSIL Programme previously reviewed by Newton was not in scope for the ongoing efficiency review, this being an area recently looked at and likely to change as a result of the Government's forthcoming white paper.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 2025/26 revenue budget and capital programme monitoring position as at the end of period 10 (the end of January 2026) be noted;
- (b) That the Director be requested to:
 - (i) carry out an internal review of the capital programme to confirm slippage costs were not unusually high this year and to provide an update to members after the meeting;
 - (ii) clarify the number of children in secure accommodation and up to date details of the costs being incurred for this service;
 - (iii) seek from the Lead Member for Children and Family Services an update regarding actions being taken locally to reduce costs and improve local provision around children placed in secure accommodation.

73. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on Wednesday, 18 March 2026 at 10.00am.

10.00 - 11.58 am
11 March 2026

CHAIRMAN

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Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 18 March 2026.

PRESENT

Mrs D. Taylor CC (in the Chair)

Mr. M. Bools CC
 Mr. G. Cooke CC
 Mrs. L. Danks CC
 Dr. S. Hill CC
 Mr. P. King CC
 Mrs. K. Knight CC

Mr. P. Morris CC
 Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC
 Mr. B. Piper CC
 Mr J. Poland CC
 Mr. K. Robinson CC
 Mr. C. A. Smith CC

In attendance

Mr D. Harrison CC – Leader of the Council
 Mr H. Fowler CC – Lead Member for Resources
 Mrs N. Bottomley CC
 Mr M. H. Charlesworth CC
 Mr C. Whitford CC

1. 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.

It was noted that all members that were also district councillors would have an Other Registerable Interest in agenda item 3 (Local Government Reorganisation – Final proposals and consultation).

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

3. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Mr Mullaney CC raised an objection to the discussion on the following item (Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – Final Proposals and Consultation) being considered in private, emphasising that LGR was a significant issue for everyone in Leicestershire and suggested that, if the Council was confident in its proposals, it should be able to address any arguments raised against it in a public forum.

At the request of the Chairman, the Head of Law advised that premature disclosure of information could prejudice the Council's position and planned response to the Government's consultation which was still being formulated. On balance, this was considered to outweigh the public interest test. The Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring

Officer further confirmed that publication of the Council's response would occur in due course and that for transparency purposes this would be appropriate. However, releasing the information before the Council's response had been finalised and before the deadline for submission could be detrimental to the Council's position.

It was moved by the Chairman and seconded:

"That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 10 of Part I of Schedule 12(a) of the Local Government Act 1972:

- Local Government Reorganisation – Final proposals and Consultation Response

The vote was carried, with 10 members voting for the motion and 3 members voting against. There were no abstentions.

4. Local Government Reorganisation - Final Proposals and Consultation

The Commission received an exempt presentation from the Chief Executive regarding the Council's proposed response to the Government's consultation on Local Government Reorganisation. A copy of the presentation, marked 'Agenda Item 3', is filed with these minutes.

The presentation was not for publication as it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of the authority.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mrs N. Bottomley CC, Mr M. H. Charlesworth CC and Mr C. Whitford CC who had been invited to attend for this item. The Chairman explained that this was to ensure all political parties would be represented in the discussion. Mr J. Miah had also been invited but was unable to attend.

Members commented on each of the consultation questions and the proposed responses to be put forward.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation provided regarding the Council's proposed response to the Government's consultation on Local Government Reorganisation be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 24 March 2026 for consideration.

5. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on 22 April 2026 at 10.00am.



SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 22ND APRIL 2026

THE LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE BUSINESS AND SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Commission regarding the governance and function of the Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership (BSP).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The County Council's Strategic Plan is based on five strategic outcomes which describe the Council's vision for Leicestershire, including:

"Strong economy, transport and infrastructure: Leicestershire has a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy and infrastructure which meets the demands of a growing population and economy."

3. The Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 10th March 2025 received a report providing an update on the work of the Business and Skills Partnership.

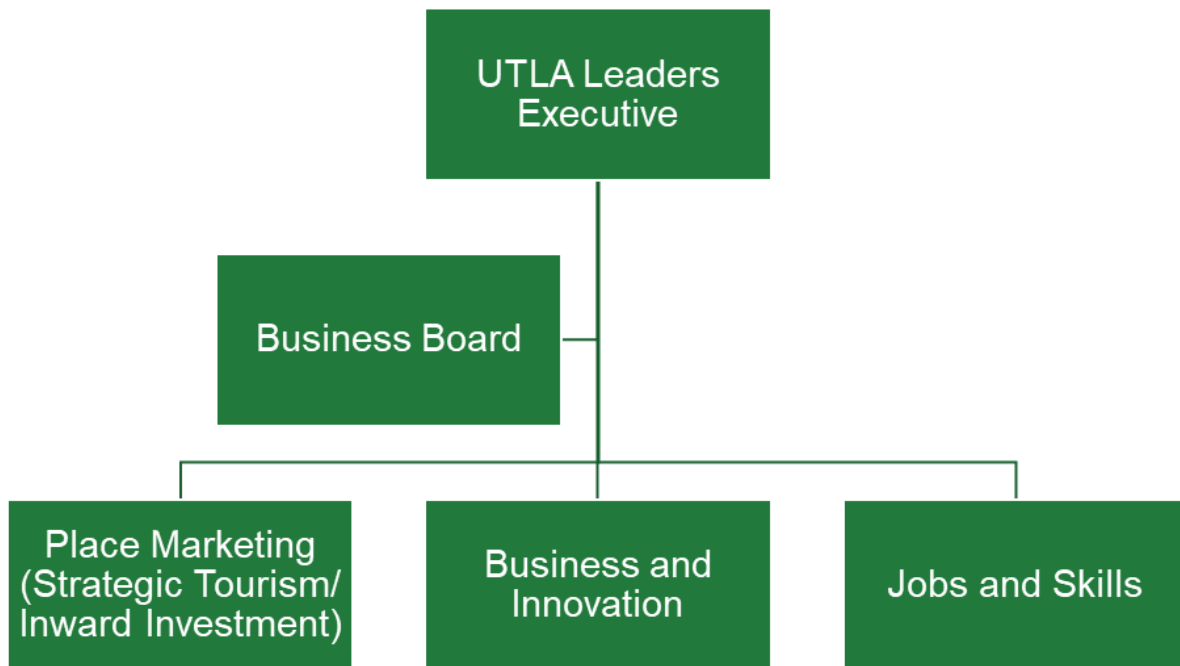
Background

4. In the Spring Budget of March 2023, the then Chancellor announced that the Government was "minded" to withdraw central core funding for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) starting in April 2024. This decision was officially confirmed in August 2023. The Government also indicated that funding for several key LEP functions - such as business representation, strategic economic planning, and the delivery of government programs (where directed) - would be transferred to Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs), where these functions are not already managed by combined authorities. The expectation was for UTLAs to collaborate across functional economic areas.
5. A Transition Board was subsequently established to manage the transition of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) to the County and City Councils, with the City Council remaining the accountable body. Responsibility for decision-making is now exercised jointly by the two UTLA, working collaboratively as appropriate.

6. In April 2024 the former LLEP team transitioned to the Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership (LLBSP), the purpose of which is to lead and drive economic prosperity across the Leicester and Leicestershire area.
7. During 2024/25 the government provided transition funding to support the establishment of the Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership Board (the Business Board, membership of which is shown in the Appendix to this report) and to continue with government funded priority programmes. These are as follows:
 - i) Supporting business representation through the establishment of a Business Board.
 - ii) Supporting the designated Enterprise Zones, which include sites in the County at MIRA Technology Park (MIRA) near Hinckley and at Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP) and Charnwood Campus in Loughborough.
 - iii) Skills and apprenticeships, including the work of the Leicester and Leicestershire Careers Hub.
 - iv) The Business Gateway Growth Hub which was formed to create a single point of contact for businesses to access information, advice, and support to help them start, grow, and scale.
 - v) Local economic growth planning.
8. Membership of the Business Board is drawn from the local business community (both local businesses and representative organisations), voluntary sector and local authorities (City Council, County Council, Rutland Council, and district councils).

Governance and Leadership

9. Overall governance of sub-regional economic development functions is via the LLR upper tier local authority (UTLA) Leaders Executive. This comprises the Leader of the County Council, the City Mayor, and the Leader of Rutland Council (as observer).
10. These are supported by advisory sub-groups for visitor economy, business support/ innovation, employment support, and skills. It has been agreed there will be a Joint Working Agreement put in place between Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council to align economic growth activity following these three broad areas.
11. The Business Board aims to work with businesses and stakeholders to drive economic growth and support the development of economic strategies. This includes developing a sub-regional Local Growth Plan.
12. More recently, Government has also encouraged joint working between the City and County Councils and Rutland Council on several new sub regional programmes including business support (Growth Hub) and employment support (Connect to Work and Get Britain Working). Future funding programmes may also be allocated across this broader LLR functional economic geography.



Place Marketing

13. There has been a Joint Working Agreement in place to deliver Place Marketing across Leicester and Leicestershire since 2017 (the subject of a separate report on the agenda for this meeting). Governance and stakeholder engagement arrangements are in place and working well across Strategic Tourism and Inward Investment. Development of a refreshed sub-regional tourism plan was launched on 16 March 2026 and sets a clear strategy for the next 5 years.

Business and Innovation

14. The Business and Innovation theme will lead strategy delivery, stakeholder engagement and coordinate service delivery.
15. This includes **Business support** (including managing the government funded Growth Hub service) and subregional sector support programmes such as Create Growth. Government funding for the **Growth Hub** has now been confirmed until March 2029 covering the whole LLR geography. Business **innovation**, working with local universities and businesses. Supporting the designated **Enterprise Zones**, which include MIRA and LUSEP and Charnwood Campus in Loughborough, and in the city at Leicester Waterside/ Space City and supporting business workspaces.

Jobs and Skills

16. The Jobs and Skills lead to deliver strategy, stakeholder engagement and coordinate service delivery to support this theme.
17. This includes **Employment Hub** - previously delivered a sub-regional offer across Leicester and Leicestershire with European funding. This team is currently focused

on the City, funded from the City's UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme which ends in March 2026, but it is being explored how this can work across LLR.

Connect to Work which is designed to help people with health conditions, disabilities, or complex barriers enter and retain employment. New teams have been established within the three UTLA to deliver the Connect to Work programme across LLR, which is fully funded by the DWP £17.2m from 2025/26 to 2029/30. Further funding is anticipated but not confirmed for this agenda. Skills and apprenticeship support is provided via the Leicester and Leicestershire **Careers Hub**.

Careers Hub

18. The Careers Hub engages with local schools and colleges, employers, and careers-education providers to improve careers education related outcomes for young people, especially the disadvantaged across LLR. It aligns this work against the Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Careers Guidance which define world class careers education. The Hub is above national average in seven of the eight benchmarks and has been acknowledged as progressive and leading the way on creating the national blueprint for careers education. The Hub provides training, support, and best practices in careers education and demonstrates the impact of this on career readiness, employment outcomes and "Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) reduction.
19. The Hub is funded through LLBSP with match funding in full or part for all staff. It operates through a grant funding agreement with the Careers and Enterprise Company which is the national body for careers education.
20. The strategic priorities of the Careers Hub are:
 - i) Raising the quality of careers provision in schools and colleges, against the Gatsby Benchmarks, through training for the education workforce, targeted support, and quality assurance.
 - ii) Driving positive experiences with employers by stimulating and providing more high-quality experiences with employers for students and teachers in the classroom and the workplace.
 - iii) Boosting Skills Pathways - amplifying apprenticeships, technical (T Level) and vocational routes and aligned to the knowledge, skills and behaviours, and engaging businesses to understand their current and future workforce needs.
 - iv) Tackling disadvantages through target interventions for economically disadvantaged young people (those in receipt of free school meals) and those who face barriers to education, employment, or training.
 - v) Connecting careers provision in schools and colleges to the needs of local economies as articulated through local growth plans the Local Skills Improvement Plan.
21. The Get Britain Working plan was launched in 2025. Governance and stakeholder engagement arrangements have been established to guide the development of sub-

regional Get LLR Working plan, which was published in December 2025. This work has been led by the City's Economic Regeneration team with input from the County's Economic Growth team and Adult Learning Service, and Rutland Council.

22. There has also been subregional commissioning with the 'skills bootcamp' programme led by the City Council's Economic Regeneration team, working with the LLBSP and the County Council Growth team. This includes confirmed Skills Bootcamps funding of £1.5m in 2026/27. Longer term funding is uncertain.

Resource Implications

23. The County Council has not provided funding to support the LLEP/LLBSP. In 2025/26 Government transition funding of £231,785 was received.
24. In the Autumn Statement 2024 the Government announced that it was minded to cease funding the functions delivered by the previous LEPs and Business Board Network from April 2025. The Government subsequently launched a consultation on this proposal, and a decision is anticipated imminently.
25. The LLBSP activity is funded through the City Council revenue and LLEP reserves. The County Council and Rutland Council do not provide any funding but do continue to align agendas across the sub-region. A Joint Working Agreement is being drafted to confirm this input.
26. Government funding for the Growth Hub has been confirmed until March 2029 covering the whole LLR geography. The confirmed amount from April 2026 to March 2029 £352,000 per annum of external funding.
27. During 2024/25 the government provided transition funding to support the establishment of a Business Board and to continue with government funded priority programmes. These are as follows:

Conclusions

28. The Commission is asked to note this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

29. None.

Equality Implications

30. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Human Rights Implications

31. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 26 March 2024 - Transition of Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) responsibilities to upper tier local authority control
[https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s182065/240326%20Cabinet%20LLEP%20Transition%20TP %20v4.pdf](https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s182065/240326%20Cabinet%20LLEP%20Transition%20TP%20v4.pdf)

Report to the Scrutiny Commission on 10 March 2025 - Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=7833&Ver=4>

Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership website
<https://lbsp.org.uk/>

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Appendix

Membership of the Business Board

Business Board Membership

Name	Representing
Sir Peter Soulsby	Leicester City Council
Mr. Dan Harrison CC	Leicestershire County Council
Andy Reed	Chair
Nick Owen	Private Sector - Mighty Creatives
Sarah Windrum	Private Sector - Horiba Mira
Erika Hardy	Private Sector - Everards
Rob Walker	Private Sector - Caterpillar
Jennifer Thomas	Federation of Small Businesses
Scott Knowles	East Midlands Chamber
Chris Corkan	Make UK
Neil Mchee	Leicester Business Voice
Kevin Allen-Khimani	Voluntary and Community Sector
Katie Normington	Higher Education Sector
Corrie Harris	Further Education Sector
Craig Bentley	Institute of Directors
Cllr. Jewel Miah	District Councils
Penny Sharp	Rutland Council
Cllr Christine Wise	Rutland Council

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SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 22ND APRIL 2026

PLACE MARKETING – LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE

REPORT OF THE DRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Scrutiny Commission on the work of the Place Marketing Team (PMT) for Leicester and Leicestershire.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The County Council's Strategic Plan emphasises the importance of enhancing Leicestershire's profile as a desirable location to visit, live, work, and do business. This strategy aims to stimulate investment and create a thriving environment for businesses to grow and prosper.
3. The Scrutiny Commission receives regular updates on the PMT's work, with the most recent report having been provided in January 2025.

Background

4. The PMT has been the primary vehicle for promoting Leicester and Leicestershire as a premier destination to visit, live, and invest in. The PMT is hosted by Leicester City Council and operates through a shared management, funding, and delivery model.
5. The PMT's work across the City and County focuses on three core pillars:
 - Strategic Tourism - Positioning Leicester and Leicestershire as a visitor destination through public and private sector partnerships. To steer this a Local Visitor Economy Partnership Board has been established comprising both public and private stakeholders, which shapes policy and ensures the PMT delivers on the Leicester and Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan 2026-2031.
 - Place Marketing - The central aim is to promote the profile of the region to attract residents and investors. A Place Marketing Coordination (officer) group brings together various stakeholders to develop and refine place-based strategies, ensuring marketing efforts are cohesive and impactful.
 - Inward Investment - A dedicated account management service to support both domestic and foreign businesses looking to relocate or expand within the

Leicestershire region. This also extends to developers and investors interested in bringing new sites to market. Beyond direct support, the PMT hosts a variety of events and promotional activities throughout the year to showcase the specific opportunities available across the City and County.

Strategic Tourism

Growth of the Visitor Economy

6. The 2024 “STEAM” report (a model used to measure the impact of visitors on the local economy) highlights a period of significant expansion for the tourism sector in Leicester and Leicestershire. The region’s economic contribution reached £2.4 billion, supported by a 2.4% increase in visitor numbers (totalling 32 million).
7. Notably, the duration of stays has lengthened, contributing to a total of 39.51 million visitor days. This upward trend in engagement has directly bolstered the local labour market; the visitor economy now accounts for 23,133 jobs, reflecting a steady growth of 201 roles since 2023.

Tourism Growth Plan

8. This year marks a milestone for the sub-regional strategy with the launch of the five-year Tourism Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire. This roadmap is the culmination of a 12-month consultation period, ensuring the strategic direction for the visitor economy is ambitious and developed using local insight and cross-county collaboration.
9. The five-year plan is structured around three core pillars designed to drive sustainable growth and long-term economic value:
 - Destination Promotion - Strengthening the brand identity of both the City and County to establish Leicester and Leicestershire as a premier ‘must-visit’ destination.
 - Leading the Visitor Economy - Developing a close, strategic alignment with Visit England to ensure local strengths are integrated into national tourism priorities.
 - Partnership for Prosperity - Creating a collaborative approach to ensure the visitor economy thrives. This includes a focus on enhancing sector skills, driving local employment, and increasing overall visitor numbers.
10. The strategy was officially launched during English Tourism Week in March 2026, featuring keynote speeches from the Chair of Visit England, the City Mayor, and the Chair of the Local Visitor Economy Partnership Board.

Place Marketing

Place Marketing Co-ordination Group

11. Governance for the PMT and activity continues with quarterly meetings of the Place Marketing Co-ordination Group which comprises representatives from the County Council, City Council, District Councils, Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership, and private sector businesses.
12. Terms of reference are in place to ensure the Group provides strategic direction, with reference to:
 - Confirming strategic priorities in relation to place marketing, tourism and inward investment, including approval of the annual delivery plan.
 - Aligning and prioritising public sector resources and wider policies / services to maximise the economic outcomes of place marketing, inward investment and tourism.
 - Identifying and exploiting collaborative opportunities to jointly deliver better outcomes for less.
 - Reviewing and commenting on quarterly progress reports detailing spend and outcomes.
 - Acting as champions for the Place Marketing Team and provide senior level representation of their organisation on the Board.

District Promotion

13. Partnership arrangements are in place with all of the county districts on a range of campaigns, particularly around promotion of key attractions. For example, the launch of the Bosworth 1485 trail working alongside Hinckley and Bosworth Council and Leicestershire Promotions.
14. Additional, paid, promotional activity was undertaken with Blaby District Council for the Victory Show and Christmas activities in the district. Additional campaigns with North West Leicestershire District Council and Melton Borough Council were also delivered and a successful UK Shared Prosperity Fund bid for ongoing work supporting Oadby and Wigston Borough Council with events, retail and town centre promotions.
15. Social media campaigns for the district councils reached more than 1.2 million people driving 65,000 views of key district pages on the Visit Leicester website. Feedback from district councils was overwhelmingly positive. Regular feedback was given throughout the campaigns which including live dashboards summarising key successes. These can be found in Appendix B.

Seasonal Campaigns and Content

16. The PMT has developed seasonal campaigns and content tailored to peak trading periods, including school holidays, major events, and festive seasons. The 'Summer in the County' campaign drove significant engagement from 17 May to 31 August, encompassing a diverse range of activities across the region including linking Wistow

Maze with the Great Central Railway, tying in with the Railway 200 national event, promotion of and Visit Leicester representation in the main arena of the Download music festival, and coverage of a special event to celebrate 60 years of East Midlands Airport. During this period, social media reach totalled 2.7 million views, while dedicated summer event pages surpassed 62,000 views.

17. Success continued with targeted campaigns for Halloween, Bonfire Night, and Christmas. These initiatives were equally effective, with top Leicestershire-related event blogs on the Visit Leicester website generating 60,000 views.

Regenerative Tourism

18. "Green Stays, Ways, and Days" was launched in Spring 2025, focused on promoting sustainable travel across Harborough, North West Leicestershire, and Blaby. The campaign featured 12 bespoke case studies and targeted multimedia content designed to drive regional engagement. To date, media efforts have achieved a total reach exceeding 678,000, securing over 21,200 high-intent visitors to the dedicated district landing pages on the Visit Leicester website. Further details are provided in Appendix B.

Commercial Activity

19. The Visit Leicester team has shifted toward a more commercial mindset by targeting new business leads, improving relationships with established partners, and collaborating with district leads to increase our collective reach.
20. The PMT has worked to improve long-term sustainability by generating independent revenue. This effort yielded tangible results in 2025, including seven private-sector agreements totalling £8,994. Combined with £38,227 from district partnership work, a net commercial total of £47,221 was achieved.
21. The PMT's commercial offer can be found in Appendix B. In summary, it offers 4 packages that aim to enhance visibility for businesses:
 - The Partnership Package - provides longer-term, high-impact digital promotion for major attractions and venues.
 - The Event Support Package - delivers targeted promotion through web listings, newsletters, and social media to drive ticket sales.
 - The Restaurant Promotion Package - focuses on high-quality content creation, including professional reels and a search optimised web page.
 - The Business Support Package - offers organic social media features and permanent search-optimised web listings to boost the audience reach for these businesses.

A presentation on the PMT's commercial offer will be given at the meeting.

Destination Management Website (www.visitleicester.info)

22. The Visit Leicester destination management website was launched in May 2025 after undergoing a comprehensive transformation that focuses on user experience, accessibility and a more modern, mobile-first approach. Alongside this, the website has had a 92% reduction in annual running costs, dropping from circa £25,000 to just £2,000. This overhaul also introduced high-impact features such as an AI chatbot, clearer trail and route mapping functionality and more intuitive navigation.
23. The analytics on the website are far more robust, allowing the tracking of users in a much clearer way. This has highlighted a 432% increase in traffic from organic social media, which now accounts for 15% of all site users. General site "actions" such as booking clicks and map views, have risen by 34.82% on the new site, proving that the new design successfully drives meaningful interactions. Additionally, the implementation of streamlined online forms has resulted in higher competition entry rates and an increase in newsletter sign-ups.
24. The site now has powerful data collected via Google Analytics, which allows for the capture of more accurate postcode data and the ability to monitor user interest trends in real-time, showing exactly where visitors are coming from and what they are interested in.

Audience Growth on Social Media

25. Views and visibility of Visit Leicester social media massively improved from 2024. Post impressions across Visit Leicester channels reached 18.4 million, up 558% from 2024. The follower count (across Facebook, Instagram, X and Threads) at the end of 2025 was 58,666, up 21.8% from 48,158 at the end of 2024. Traffic to the Visit Leicester website from social media went up to 15% of total traffic. This was thanks in part to a considerable improvement on engagement from Facebook, accounting for 138,354 clicks to the website (up 48%).

Media, PR and Influencers

26. A new media partner, FU Media was secured, delivering articles in the Guardian, Daily Mirror, Daily Express and Independent, plus local television coverage on BBC East Midlands and ITV Central. Between April and December, 34 pieces of County-related coverage were secured.
27. Influencer visits were arranged with Mr and Mrs Yorkshire giving wide coverage to Twycross Zoo and Ye Olde Pork Pie Shop. The aim of this collaborative working with influencers and wider media publications is to attract an audience from well outside the region, as well as outside the reach of the Visit Leicester team's digital communications channels. Examples from some of these partnerships and publications is available in Appendix B.

Group Travel

28. For the third year running Leicester and Leicestershire were finalists as Best UK Destination for Groups at the Group Leisure and Travel Awards 2025. Promotion was

secured in the Group Travel magazine, and a competition was run in conjunction with these awards. Additional promotion was undertaken to highlight Leicestershire being named a finalist through press releases and online content. Despite not winning the title, this is fantastic recognition by group travel organisers that Leicestershire is an interesting place to visit for group tours.

29. Following an enquiry from the Association for Group Travel Organisers (AGTO) for their annual showcase event, a familiarisation trip was arranged, and this resulted in a confirmed booking for up to 100 delegates for 27 February - 1 March 2026 worth approximately £24,000. Work began on the itinerary for the weekend and securing visits to top attractions across the City and County during the weekend, including Belvoir Castle and Great Central Railway. The primary objective of these trips is to provide a memorable experience for the group travel bookers, encouraging them to subsequently advertise and promote the participating attractions for future group and coach trips.
30. Visit Leicester supported King Richard III (KRIII) and Belvoir Castle at the Excursions Group Travel exhibition at Wembley on 1 February 2025, where 100 group travel guides were distributed. The PMT showcased a Visit Leicester Uncover the Story promotional video on the main video wall throughout the event. Arrangements were also made to distribute another 50 Group Travel guides at the British Tourism and Travel Show in March 2025.
31. Group travel itineraries for the County were distributed to several group travel publications and subsequently appeared in Group Leisure and Travel magazine, Group Travel World magazine, Group Travel today, and the British Guild of Travel Writers monthly newsletter.
32. The Visit Leicester quarterly group travel newsletter is distributed to over 600 subscribers and featured a review of the Harpenden Probus visit from October 2024, KRIII 10th Anniversary activities, Taste the Place experiences, and places to stay for groups. The newsletter continues with strong engagement from subscribers and a 25% open rate. It is an effective communication method for reaching the group travel audience.
33. With confirmation of the AGTO showcase event, the PMT began developing a new version of the group travel guide for Leicester and Leicestershire. A draft layout and new look and feel were developed that would put the top group friendly attractions at the forefront of the guide, together with suggested itineraries and accommodation listings. Previously Visit Leicester has 100% funded the design and print costs for the guide. This time engagement was undertaken with the attractions, businesses and hotels to book a paid for listing paying between £150-£200 for a half or full page. This generated £4650.00, so there was no cost to Visit Leicester, other than officer time needed to co-ordinate the project.
34. A stand space was booked at The British Tourism and Travel Show for 19 March 2026 at the NEC, following partnership enthusiasm to attend. A stand was secured in a prime location to maximise the opportunity for meeting with visitors. Partners included KRIII, Jewry Wall, GCR, Belvoir Castle, Discover Melton, and Visit

Harborough. Work has begun on the administration of the booking and advertising the PMT's attendance.

Inward Investment

35. As the primary point of contact for businesses, developers, and investors, the PMT's investment promotion brand, 'Invest in Leicester', provides a free, impartial, one-stop shop designed to simplify the expansion and relocation process across Leicester and Leicestershire.
36. By offering a dedicated account management service that bridges the gap between the public and private sectors, the team leverages its influence as an enabler and facilitator to promote development and regeneration opportunities. The service provides essential market, property, and site intelligence, while connecting businesses to council services, professional networks, and business support providers. Ultimately, Invest in Leicester aims to drive regional growth by attracting new investment and supporting the expansion plans of existing businesses.

Investment Enquiries and Successes

37. The PMT records key investment metrics for projects it supports to quantify their total impact on the local economy. For a comprehensive overview of the account management services delivered to each project success, please refer to the breakdown in Appendix B.

Investment Metric	Reporting Period: 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025
No. of Enquiries Converted into Investment Decisions	5
Capital Investment	£15.9 million
Business Rates Generated per annum	£1.58 million
Total Salary Value per annum	£21.2 million
Total Investment Value*	£39.5 million
New Jobs Created	371
Safeguarded Jobs	254
Average Salary (New / Safeguarded Jobs)	£33,400

*Total Investment Value = Capital Investment + Business Rates + Total Salary Value

NB the financial information provided is commercially confidential and has therefore been aggregated and rounded.

Department for Business and Trade (DBT) Funded Strategic Engagement and Investment Framework (SEIF)

38. In 2025, the PMT successfully secured funding from DBT to provide dedicated strategic account management support to existing foreign-owned businesses through the SEIF, which is a core component of the DBT's mission to drive economic growth.

39. To date, 8 foreign owned businesses within the County are being actively account managed. There has been 2 verified wins, creating a total of 80 jobs, and a financial investment totalling £22.9 million.
40. The SEIF programme ended on 31 March 2026. The PMT will continue to provide quarterly progress reports to the DBT, detailing all company interactions, new projects, investment wins, and job creation.

Active Inward Investment Enquiries

41. Appendix A provides examples of projects the PMT is actively supporting, which include -
 - The former Holwell Foundry Works in the Melton borough, which is a £100m advanced manufacturing facility. It is being developed by Saint-Gobain, and it is anticipated that the site will create 250 high-quality jobs in sustainable construction manufacturing.
 - The PMT has partnered with Loughborough University to provide place marketing and investment support to promote the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP). Key initiatives include creating new promotional materials, scheduled for launch in late 2026, and bespoke documentation for UKREiiF (more detail on which at paragraph 46 below) to unlock development land and drive interest from investors and occupiers.
 - Facilitated by the PMT, Pera and Leicester developer Obstrat are converting a former R&D workshop into a health and wellbeing facility. This re-purposing project will feature padel courts, yoga studios, co-working spaces, and a café, significantly boosting Pera Business Park's regional competitiveness and resilience as an employment destination.

A presentation on projects supported by the PMT will be given at the meeting.

Events Programme

42. The PMT drives regional investment by coordinating high-profile events, supported by the Team Leicester ambassador network. This private-sector scheme, where members contribute £2,000 annually, creates a pooled promotion fund. Recent PMT administrative support has further streamlined operations, ensuring a cohesive regional message and more efficient event management.
43. By leveraging the Team Leicester network and external sponsors, the PMT has increased business engagement and bolstered industry confidence. This collaboration has directly resulted in higher event attendance, increased property enquiries, and a stronger sense of regional pride.
44. The Invest in Leicester programme remains a vital platform for aligning local authority development plans with private-sector expertise. The financial impact is clear: in 2025/26, the PMT leveraged £45,400 in private funding from a £12,650 council

investment. This represents a 259% return on marketing and promotional spend, proving the model's efficiency and value.

45. Highlights from the 2025/26 events programme include:

UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) 2025

46. Representing the region at UKREiiF, a diverse delegation from Leicester and Leicestershire brought together local government, academia, and industry leaders. Participants included representatives from the City, County, and district councils, local universities, East Midlands Freeport, and MIRA Technology Park. This collaborative presence was highlighted by four interconnected events coordinated by the PMT.

Key Event Highlights

UKREiiF Pre-Launch Event

47. Hosted 90 delegates to align key ambassadors with core messaging and showcase regional development opportunities from the City and County Councils. The session featured a presentation from Leicestershire County Cricket Club on its regeneration masterplan. Notably, the event was 100% privately sponsored.

Growth Showcase Sessions

48. Conducted two high-impact sessions for 250 attendees, focusing on the roles of innovation, urban regeneration, and infrastructure in regional growth. Attendees were briefed on emerging development opportunities across the City and County, with a specific spotlight on Enterprise Zone sites.

Strategic Networking and Investment Launch

49. Facilitated a high-level networking forum for 95 industry directors and senior council officers. The PMT used this platform for French multinational Saint-Gobain to announce a £100m advanced manufacturing investment in the Melton district, alongside the launch of Melton Borough Council's inward investment strategy. This high-profile event was 100% privately sponsored.

50. The UKREiiF events generated several positive outcomes. Following the announcement, Saint-Gobain received numerous enquiries regarding supply chain opportunities, while Melton Borough Council engaged with several high-value inward investment leads. Furthermore, the event's success prompted the Commercial Director of Loughborough University to approach the PMT for place marketing and investment support for the Loughborough Science Park (LUSEP).

Leicester and Leicestershire Property and Construction Networking

51. In partnership with the private sector, the PMT coordinates bi-annual networking opportunities that connect senior local authority officers with private sector developers, agents, and architects. These strategic events showcase regional projects and local priorities to accelerate development.

52. In October 2025, 125 delegates received presentations from Harborough District Council and East Midlands Freeport. This directly resulted in new dialogue regarding a boutique cinema for Market Harborough.
53. Upcoming sessions will feature Charnwood and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Councils. Managed by a private operator, these events offer the County Council an excellent return on investment by minimising administrative costs while maintaining full control over the agenda and guest list.

Partner Engagement

54. The PMT utilises a collaborative network established with Leicestershire's district councils, County Council departments, and external partners to attract and support investment and information sharing. Key successes include:

Property Industry Focused Roundtable

55. The PMT coordinated the 'Adapting to the Evolving Office Requirements' roundtable, which took place in July 2025. A property market overview was provided by Leicester City Council and CBRE Group with roundtable discussion facilitated by the City and County Councils. A total of 32 stakeholders attended including land/property owners, office occupiers, commercial agents, architects, commercial developers, construction firms, local and national government and government agencies.

Business Insider East and West Midlands Property Awards

56. In September and November 2025, the PMT reinforced its industry presence by sponsoring and hosting key developers, commercial agents and landlords at major property awards. These events served as a showcase for the region's enterprise and innovation, offering an ideal platform to promote the team's services. The PMT also presented the "Regeneration and Restoration Project of the Year" award, celebrating the vision and skill driving the sector forward.

Built Environment Network

57. The PMT maintained a strong presence across the property and construction sectors with representation at the Built Environment Network. This event provided a platform to engage with industry leaders and stakeholders. The session focused on how the PMT is strategically showcasing Leicester and Leicestershire to attract high-value investment. A significant portion of the presentation was dedicated to localised opportunities, specifically highlighting the investment potential and development focus areas within the Harborough and Melton districts.

East Midlands Freeport (EMF)

58. The PMT has implemented a streamlined, two-way enquiry management system with the EMF team. By contributing Leicestershire-specific "place" insights into EMF marketing and hosting the EMF Chief Executive at major sector events, such as the bi-annual property and construction network, the PMT ensures that the region's interests are promoted.

Resource Implications

59. Leicestershire County Council provides a revenue contribution of £60,000 to the PMT.

Conclusions

60. The views of the Commission are sought on the report together with the presentations provided.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

61. None.

Equality Implications

62. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Human Rights Implications

63. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

Report to Scrutiny Commission on 27th January 2025 - Place Marketing – Leicester and Leicestershire

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/g7832/Public%20reports%20pack%20Monday%2027-Jan-2025%2010.00%20Scrutiny%20Commission.pdf?T=10>

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Appendices

Appendix A - Recent Achievements and Current Activities: Inward Investment
Appendix B - Recent Achievements and Current Activities: Strategic Tourism

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Recent Achievements and Current Activities: Inward Investment

Inward Investment Achievements Across Leicestershire

The Place Marketing Team, account managed projects:

Company: Navigator Tissue UK

Navigator Tissue UK is a leading manufacturer and supplier of private-label and branded tissue products, including toilet roll, kitchen towels, and wet wipes, for major UK retailers. Following its acquisition in 2024 by the Portuguese pulp and paper giant, The Navigator Company, the business required larger UK premises to facilitate growth and consolidate its manufacturing operations.

To meet these needs, Navigator Tissue secured a lease for a 277,475 sq ft unit at Optimus Point, Glenfield. This new facility enables the business to consolidate production from Thurmaston and north-west England. 50 new jobs will be created, predominately within manufacturing, engineering, and maintenance, while 100 existing jobs will be safeguarded from the Thurmaston site.

The PMT played a central role in retaining Navigator Tissue within Leicestershire and facilitating their expansion. Support included:

- Undertaking comprehensive site searches and providing property and labour market data to inform decision-making.
- Liaising with Blaby District Council's planning team regarding change-of-use requirements for manufacturing and guiding the business through the process to increase the unit's power capacity.
- Facilitating introductions to Blaby District Council's work and skills team, the Leicester Employment Hub and a peer employer for best-practice advice on volume recruitment. Consequently, Navigator Tissue will attend local job fairs and utilise partner channels to advertise vacancies throughout 2026.
- Supporting employee integration by connecting Navigator Tissue with Leicestershire Adult Learning Services for ESOL support and providing lifestyle information to encourage staff relocation.
- Coordinating a PR event to celebrate the opening of the new unit, promoting the investment in Leicestershire and showcasing the employment opportunities.

Company: YunExpress UK Ltd

YunExpress UK is a logistics firm that manages international shipping for e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, eBay, and AliExpress. The business handles international transport and UK customs clearance before transferring packages to local couriers, like Royal Mail, for final delivery.

To meet growing e-commerce demand, YunExpress UK required a second UK site near a major transport hub. They subsequently established operations at East Midlands Airport (EMA) in a 60,000 sq ft unit, creating 30 new jobs.

The PMT supported YunExpress UK by:

- Conducting comprehensive site searches and providing property data to identify suitable locations.
- Guiding the company through the application process for a business rates re-evaluation for their new premises.
- Introducing YunExpress UK to the East Midlands Freeport, aligning with the business's long-term UK expansion plans. As a result, they have formally registered interest in the emerging EMA southern site.

Company: Smith Brothers Stores Ltd

Smith Brothers Stores (SBS) is one of the UK's largest independent merchants specialising in the distribution of commercial heating, piping, and air conditioning equipment. Established in 1897, the Leicestershire-based, family-owned company operates a vast network of branches and remains committed to retaining its headquarters and distribution facilities within the county.

To support its expansion, SBS recently opened a new 75,000 sq ft distribution centre in Glenfield. This facility enhances UK-wide logistics, significantly increases stockholding capacity, and supports continued growth. The project has created 10 new jobs while safeguarding 150 existing roles.

The PMT supported SBS by:

- Conducting property searches, coordinating visits, and providing detailed commercial property insights.
- Recognising SBS's historic roots and status as a major local employer, the PMT coordinated meetings with Blaby District Council's senior leadership team to discuss specific business challenges.
- Utilising this initial collaboration to help SBS secure short-term accommodation within Council-owned units to meet immediate needs. To facilitate the transition to their permanent site, the PMT also coordinated discussions between SBS, their commercial agents, and the Council to identify a new tenant for the vacated space.
- Introducing SBS to Blaby District Council's Work and Skills team and the Leicester Employment Hub to explore recruitment and apprenticeship programs to support future growth.

Company: Geary's Bakeries

Geary's Bakeries is a premier Leicestershire-based craft bakery that successfully bridges the gap between traditional artisanal methods and high-volume production. As the innovators behind the "Jason's Sourdough" brand and a primary supplier of award-winning bread to major UK supermarkets, the company recently underwent a massive expansion.

Supported by a £36 million investment, Geary's established a 95,000 sq ft state-of-the-art manufacturing facility at Optimus Point in Glenfield, creating 280 local jobs.

The PMT and Blaby District Council, working in partnership, provided support through:

- Collaborating with the agents and developers of Optimus Point to maximise the promotion of the site.
- Securing public funding to acquire new equipment.
- Partnering with the Leicester Employment Hub and Jobcentre Plus to drive recruitment and explore apprenticeship opportunities. Geary's attended local job fairs and filled 8 roles as a result.

Looking ahead to financial year 2026/27, Geary's remains committed to workforce development, with plans to explore new apprenticeship and skills development initiatives with local partners.

Company: Bom Bom Patisserie

Bom Bom Patisserie is an independent, family-run bakery and specialty coffee shop. They are best known for their award-winning cookies, artisanal bakes, and high-quality coffee served across several community-focused locations in Leicestershire.

Bom Bom approached the PMT for support in acquiring a larger production kitchen facility to enable business growth. The business successfully acquired a lease for a 2,500 sq ft unit at Falcon Works in Loughborough, creating 1 new job and safeguarding 4.

The PMT supported the expansion by:

- Undertaking property searches, coordinating visits and providing detailed commercial property information.
- Introducing the business to local commercial agents to assist in finding a suitable unit.
- Providing guidance on financial and recruitment schemes.
- Connecting them with the Business Gateway Growth Hub to ensure Bom Bom has a long-term partner for accessing funding and growth advice.

Active Inward Investment Enquiries

The following are examples of projects the PMT is actively supporting:

Former Holwell Foundry Works in Melton District

A £100m advanced manufacturing facility is being developed by Saint-Gobain on the site of the former Holwell Foundry Works in Melton district, creating 250 high-quality jobs in sustainable construction manufacturing and bringing a large brownfield site back into use for modern manufacturing.

When Saint-Gobain was considering multiple locations, the PMT, in partnership with Melton Borough Council, engaged their senior leadership team to outline available support. This intervention was a key factor in securing Saint-Gobain's investment.

Since then, the PMT has provided platforms for Saint-Gobain to promote the project to the property and construction industry via UKREiiF and investment roundtables.

These efforts have encouraged local supply chain opportunities and showcased Leicestershire's collaborative environment to attract further investment. Additionally, the PMT is supporting Saint-Gobain's engagement with partners to deliver local employment opportunities as the project progresses.

Loughborough University Science & Enterprise Park in Charnwood District

The PMT has partnered with Loughborough University to provide place marketing and investment support to promote the Loughborough University Science & Enterprise Park. Key initiatives include creating new promotional materials, scheduled for launch in late 2026, and bespoke documentation for UKREiiF to unlock development land and drive interest from investors and occupiers.

By utilising relationships, including with the Department for Business and Trade, the Office for Investment and East Midlands Chamber, the PMT has secured high-quality lead referrals. Notably, a £30m vertical farming HQ, an advanced composite materials manufacturing facility and an anchor tenant for an amenity hub. These projects are projected to deliver over 50 high-value jobs and knowledge exchange projects.

Former Pera Innovation and R&D Workshop in Melton District

Facilitated by the PMT, Pera and Leicester developer Obstrat are converting a former R&D workshop into a health and wellbeing facility. This re-purposing project will feature padel courts, yoga studios, co-working spaces, and a café, significantly boosting Pera Business Park's regional competitiveness and resilience as an employment destination.

The PMT coordinated early engagement with Melton Borough Council, ensuring local integration and alignment with planning objectives and community needs. The planning application was submitted in January 2026. The PMT continues to support the project by fostering links with Active Together and the County Council's Healthy Workplaces scheme, as well as linking emerging employment opportunities with those most in need.

Recent Achievements and Current Activities: Place Marketing and Strategic Tourism

Paid District Activity

North West Leicestershire

The Visit Leicester team supported North West Leicestershire in a series of dedicated, targeted campaigns using UKSPF funding to develop a joined-up offer for the district and promote across the summer, autumn, and winter.

The summer campaign focused on attractions and experiences, then heritage to tie in with their Hello Heritage festival. This campaign **reached more than 473,000 people** and drove more than **31,500 quality views** of the target pages.

The autumn and winter campaigns covered the region's towns, Halloween events, and Christmas activities. These **reached more than 362,800 people**, with more than **15,000 quality views** of the target pages. All these phases of the campaign saw a cost per click which was lower than other similar campaigns.

Blaby District

Blaby District worked with the Visit Leicester team on two paid campaigns, firstly supporting the Victory Show with dedicated blogs, a paid social element and Influencer engagement from Cool As Leicester and Lauren in Leicester (combined reach of 31,900).

The paid element of the campaign **reached more than 112,000 people**, with **8,515 clicks to the Visit Leicester blog**. Thanks to extra organic promotion on the Visit Leicester Newsletter and website, the blog received 10,049 views and was the most popular page on the website during July and August.

The Show itself saw 18,000 visitors over the weekend and remains the UK's largest WWII recreation event.

Oadby & Wigston

The Visit Leicester team successfully bid for a UKSPF award from Oadby & Wigston District Council to support them with event promotion high streets and retail, plus a wrapped up marketing offer for the district.

A paid social media campaign was run throughout August to promote the Oadby Food Festival. This **reached 287,000 people resulting in 6,261 views of the target blog** on the Visit Leicester website. Thanks to extra promotion the blog received 7,021 views making it the second most popular page on the site, ranking above the Home Page and What's On page. The awareness campaign was incredibly successful with **the Oadby Food Festival registering 3,598 visitors with some businesses reporting a 3x increase in takings**.

During the 1.5 months of the campaign the increased focus helped to boost views of Oadby related pages on the Visit Leicester website by well over 250% on the previous 1.5 months.

A Second paid social campaign was run around Christmas events in the district, which reached more than 31,000 people. The Christmas events blog received 1,962 views.

Work with Oadby & Wigston on the Retail and green spaces element of their campaign continues into 2026.

Seasonal Campaigns and Content

For summer 2025 the Visit Leicester team created a sustained and successful campaign wrapping up key events across the county from June through to September. Summer in Leicestershire was a

fully organic campaign with no budget behind it. Idents were designed in house by the team, and all social media activity was organic.



- Key event pages on the website over the summer received more than 62,000 views.
- Facebook engagement over the summer was excellent with **organic views of 2.7 million** across July and August and a total of **20,336 content interactions** (likes, comments and shares), which included 13,633 from people who do not follow Visit Leicester
- Brand new 'what's on this weekend' Reels, mostly aimed at Instagram, but also used on other platforms were viewed by an average of 4,216 people per week, with the most popular being viewed more than 11,000 times.
- Posting on the [R/Leicester Reddit platform](#) gained great interaction and feedback from users of the platform with **average views of 6,525 people** per week

Autumn events were wrapped up similarly, with Halloween and Bonfire events a focus for the campaigns. The Leicestershire Fireworks blog received more than 16,000 views and Halloween events over 6,300 views.



Christmas activity

Wrap ups of key activities across the county and in the districts proved hugely successful



The top 5 blogs on the Visit Leicester website over the Christmas period were all Leicestershire focused, showing a real appetite for this type of content with nearly 33,000 views in total.

Most Viewed Blogs	
Blog Page	Views ▾
1. Meet Santa in Leicestershire - Visit Leicester	10,305
2. Christmas in Blaby District - Visit Leicester	9,246
3. Christmas in National Forest Leicestershire - Visit Leicester	7,519
4. A wonderful Christmas in Leicestershire - Visit Leicester	4,003
5. Christmas in Oadby & Wigston - Visit Leicester	1,812

Advertising was purchased in both the Guardian and Telegraph Christmas feature sections reaching a huge national audience and showcasing key attractions including the great Central Railway, Twycross Zoo and Belvoir Castle.

Date • Promotional Content Section title Newspaper Living360 1

Christmas magic in Leicestershire

This holiday season, prepare for a fantastic Christmas in a city and county brimming with festive cheer

Christmas in Leicester starts from 19 November, when the Christmas lights are turned on. You can get your skates on at the Real Ice Rink, see the city's sparkling Christmas lights from the Wheel of Light and explore the Christmas market. It's also a festive time on stage with an award-winning production of *The Sound of Music* at the Curve Theatre and *Dick Whittington* in panto at De Montfort Hall. With pop-up music performances and late-night shopping every Wednesday, Leicester should be on your destination list this Christmas.

The fun doesn't stop there, as a whole host of fantastic events and attractions get the festive season roaring in gear. And roars are the order of the day (or night) at Twycross Zoo, as the evenings will be illuminated by its Lanterns of the Wild event. Step into glowing animal worlds and habitats as you explore a mile of life-size animal lanterns and the world's first Gruffalo lantern experience.

Get in the mood at Belvoir Castle's Magical Night Before Christmas. The Regency castle, which doubled for Windsor Castle in Netflix's *The Crown*, will be transformed with stunning lights, beautifully decorated trees and themed decorations, alongside wonderful Christmas events and fun for all the family.

Hop onto the Santa Express at the Great Central Railway. Ride in a heritage steam train through the Leicestershire countryside for an enchanting meeting with Father Christmas and his elves. You can also enjoy a festive fine dining experience on the train to celebrate the season.

With a host of other experiences, including a Tudor Christmas at the 1620s House, a festive Tractor Run, Christmas fairs, concerts, pantos and a Winter Wonderland at the National Forest's Conkers attraction, Leicestershire should be your top choice for a Christmas break.

Head to visitleicester.info/christmas for all the info.





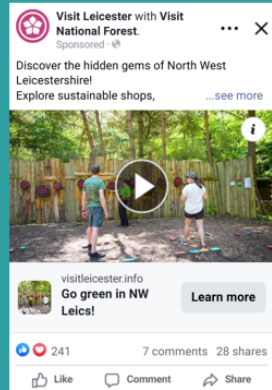
Regenerative Tourism Campaign

The Green Days, Green Ways, Green Stays campaign launched in Spring 2025, with 12 case studies across three districts. Paid social media campaigns were undertaken using UKSPF funding from Harborough, Blaby and North West Leicestershire district councils. The campaign **reached more than 678,000 people** through the paid campaigns, with **more than 21,200 quality views** of the Visit Leicester target webpages for the districts. Results are set out in the report screenshots below.

North West Leicestershire

North-West Leicestershire – UKSPF Sustainable Tourism Project

23 March – 21 April



Paid post utilised the North-West Leicestershire sustainable tourism video to maximise engagement.

All case study pages received increased viewership, with Field Sport UK and Cattows Farm performing best.

Campaign Stats:

Reach	Clicks
205,922	6,799
Impressions	Cost Per Click
443,702	£0.24

Landing Page Views

5,584

Post Reactions:

241 reactions

7 comments

28 shares

Meaningful Video Views (social media)

7,741

Views to Campaign Pages

7,922



Harborough

Harborough – UKSPF Regenerative Tourism Project

3 April – 3 May



Paid post utilised created assets in carousel post format.

All case study pages received increased viewership, with Cafe Ventoux page performing best.

Campaign Stats:

Reach	Clicks
203,669	9,555
Impressions	Cost Per Click
847,099	£0.17

Landing Page Views

8,653

Post Reactions:

241 reactions

7 comments

28 shares


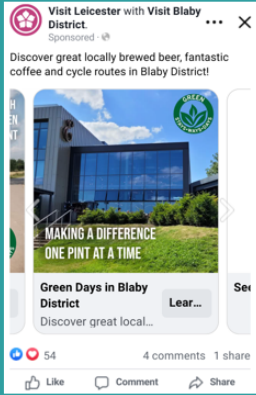
Views to Campaign Pages

12,815



Blaby

Blaby – UKSPF Regenerative Tourism Project 14 April – 10 May





Campaign Stats:

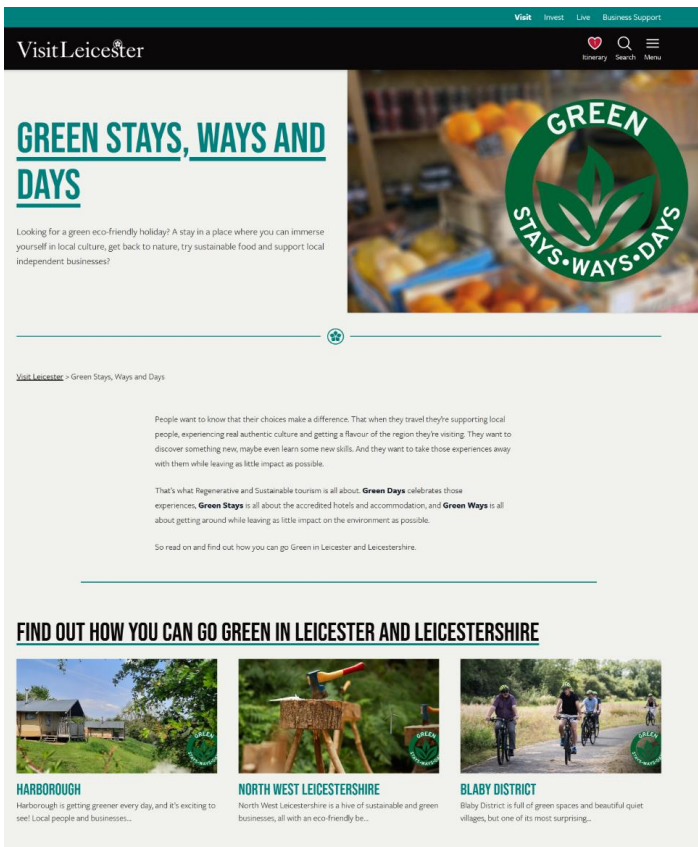
Reach	Clicks
268,734	7,681
Impressions	Cost Per Click
1,046,987	£0.21
Landing Page Views	
7,012	
Post Reactions:	
54 reactions	
4 comments	
1 shares	
Views to Campaign Pages	
7,810	

Paid post utilised created assets in carousel post format.

Both case study pages received increased viewership, with similar viewing and engagement time figures.



The content created for this campaign can be found on the Green Stays, Ways and Days section of the Visit Leicester website - <https://visitleicester.info/green/> Attached below is a screenshot of the page, to give an idea of the layout and campaign branding.



GREEN STAYS, WAYS AND DAYS

Looking for a green eco-friendly holiday? A stay in a place where you can immerse yourself in local culture, get back to nature, try sustainable food and support local independent businesses?

People want to know that their choices make a difference. That when they travel they're supporting local people, experiencing real authentic culture and getting a flavour of the region they're visiting. They want to discover something new, maybe even learn some new skills. And they want to take those experiences away with them while leaving as little impact as possible.

That's what Regenerative and Sustainable tourism is all about. **Green Days** celebrates those experiences, **Green Stays** is all about the accredited hotels and accommodation, and **Green Ways** is all about getting around while leaving as little impact on the environment as possible.

So read on and find out how you can go Green in Leicester and Leicestershire.

FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN GO GREEN IN LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE

- HARBOROUGH**
Harborough is getting greener every day, and it's exciting to see! Local people and businesses...
- NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE**
North West Leicestershire is a hive of sustainable and green businesses, all with an eco-friendly be...
- BLABY DISTRICT**
Blaby District is full of green spaces and beautiful quiet villages, but one of its most surprising...

Commercial Activity

Following the initial year of commercial activity in 2024/5, the team refined the commercial packages based on performance and insights from potential and existing customers. While several agreements were secured, certain options were less desired, which led to a review of the packages. These insights informed a new set of packages for businesses, which were officially relaunched in November. These are publicly available to view on the Business Support page on Visit Leicester - <https://visitleicester.info/business-support/>

Visit Leicester offers four commercial packages that aim to enhance visibility for businesses. The Partnership Package (£1,500+) provides longer-term, high-impact digital promotion for major attractions and venues. The Event Support Package (£500) delivers targeted promotion through web listings, newsletters, and social media to drive ticket sales.

The Restaurant Promotion Package (£300) focuses on high-quality content creation, including professional reels and a search optimised web page. Finally, the Business Support Package (£500, with a £275 small business discount) offers organic social media features and permanent search-optimised web listings to boost the audience reach for these businesses.

Destination Management Website

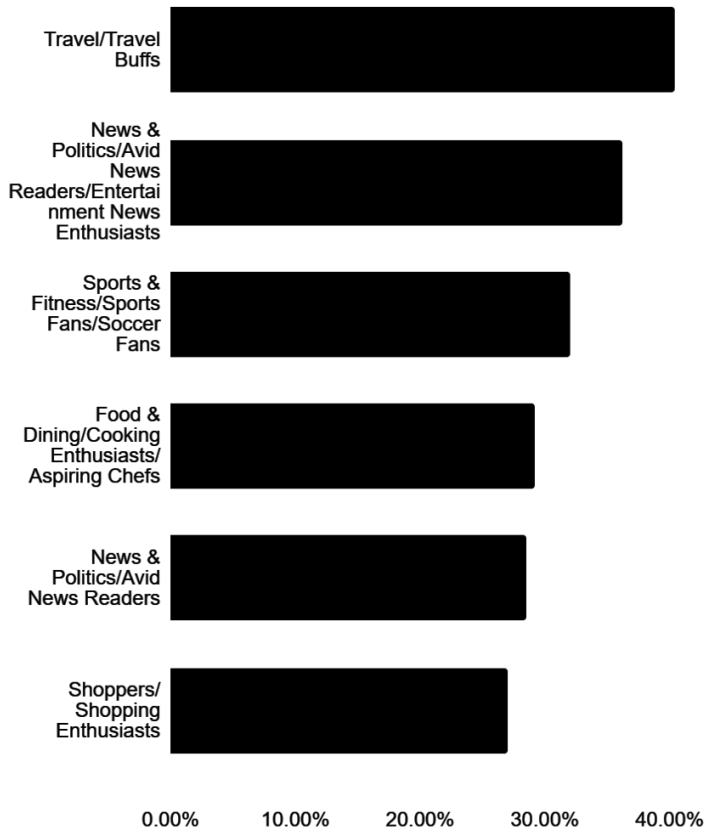
Following the website launch in May, a discrepancy in Google Analytics data occurred due to data not being collected on those who refused cookies, to comply with GDPR. Users who declined tracking cookies were not recorded, leading to a significant decrease in reported traffic compared to the previous site. This is a common challenge for modern websites that must prioritise privacy and user consent.

To address this gap, Google Analytics uses modelling that estimates missing data once certain thresholds are met. However, because these thresholds were not immediately active, user figures collected between 15 May, and 10 July were significantly under-reported. This period of measurement inaccuracy makes year-on-year performance comparisons difficult.

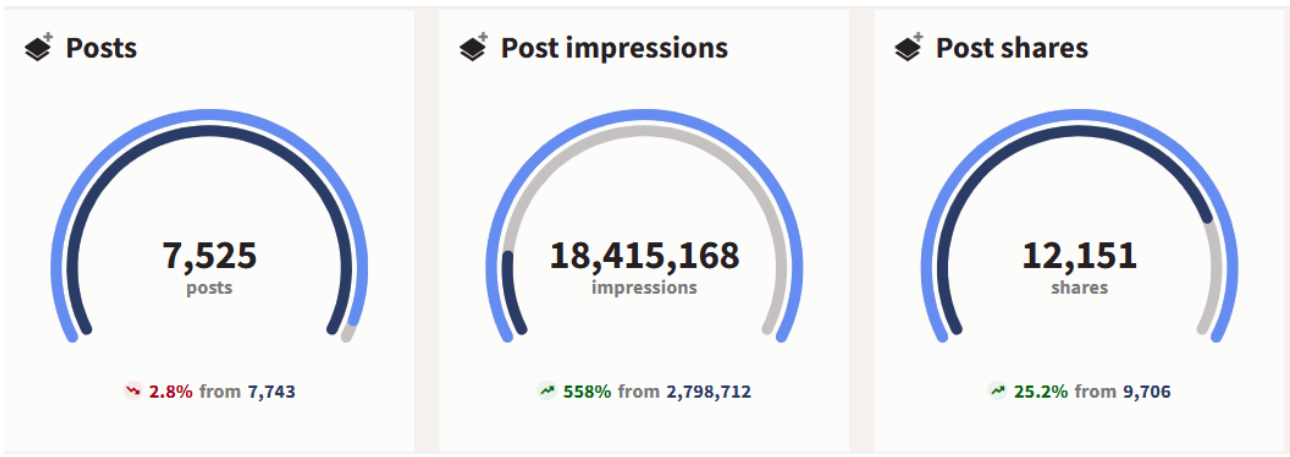
Despite the tracking discrepancies, the active user count remained consistent with previous performance levels. In 2023, the website recorded 731,506 users over the 12-month period. For the current year, the figure reached 719,685 users, demonstrating stable engagement even when accounting for the data collection gaps earlier in the year.

The Place Marketing Team uses Google Analytics to track geographical reach achieved across the country. The top ten locations for user engagement include Leicester, London, Birmingham, Bath, Norwich, Wolverhampton, Milton Keynes, Loughborough, Coventry, and Sheffield, in descending order of users.

New tracking tools within Google Analytics allow for a detailed analysis of user behaviour and audience demographics. As illustrated in the supporting data, the website is successfully attracting the intended target audience, specifically those interested in travel, entertainment, sport, food, and shopping. The team will continue to monitor these trends to ensure that content and marketing strategies are always aligned with these user interests.



Audience Growth on Social Media



Media & PR

Ten county related press releases were issued in 2025. Several journalist visits were arranged including features in the Guardian, Daily Express and Daily Mirror.



Jason Doyle and his family spent five days exploring Leicestershire and were amazed at the range on offer - from large-scale family attractions, to history and culture, and numerous free activities and events available throughout the summer.

VIEW By Jason Doyle

00, 23 Jun 2025 | UPDATED 13:20, 8 JUL 2025

The visits by influencers were a fantastic way to highlight Leicester and Leicestershire to a wider audience. Mr & Mrs Yorkshire's visit to Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe received 66,000 views on YouTube, with their visit to Twycross Zoo watched 11,000 times



I try a HUGE PORK PIE PLATTER!

Mr and Mrs Yorkshire 97.9K subscribers [Join](#) [3.5K](#) [Share](#) [Save](#) [Clip](#) [...](#)

Group Travel



For the third year running Leicester and Leicestershire were finalists as Best UK Destination for Groups at the Group Leisure and Travel Awards 2025.

We promoted Leicestershire and ran a competition in the Group Travel magazine and distributed a press release and online content to promote our status as finalists.

Leicester
visitleicester.info

PRESS RELEASE

13 March 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Leicester and Leicestershire shortlisted as best UK destination for groups

City and county voted by readers of Group Leisure & Travel magazine for major national group travel award

Please note this is an updated version of the story previously issued on 12.03.25

Visit Leicester, the organisation that promotes Leicester and Leicestershire as a tourism destination has been shortlisted as the 'Best UK Destination' in the Group Leisure & Travel Awards 2025. These are the only national awards for group travel that recognise the very best providers, attractions and destinations for groups.

Group Leisure & Travel magazine is the UK's number one magazine for group travel organisers and coach operators. The magazine's readers have been nominating the best attractions, destinations, suppliers and experiences for groups, and have shortlisted Leicester and Leicestershire as a finalist.



Leicester and Leicestershire are up against Bristol, County Durham, Isle of Wight, Liverpool, London and Wiltshire in the best UK Destination Category. The voting form is available from 5 March to 27 April for readers, group travel organisers and coach/tour operators to vote for their favourite destination at www.groupleisureandtravel.com/awards/vote

Belvoir Castle, near Melton Mowbray has also been shortlisted for Best Historic Attraction or Venue.

The results will be exclusively announced at the Group Leisure & Travel Awards black-tie dinner and ceremony on the evening of Thursday 26 June at the five-star Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington, London.

Mike Denby, Director of Inward investment and Place Marketing at Visit Leicester, said: "We are thrilled to be shortlisted for this prestigious award for a third year. Our team has worked hard over the last few years to raise awareness amongst group travel organisers about the fantastic experiences that await them when travelling to Leicester and Leicestershire. The area is filled with award winning attractions and is easily accessed by road or rail.

"We would encourage group travel organisers to visit Leicester and Leicestershire where they can discover a wealth of experiences from food and wine tours, heritage and history, shopping, culture and arts and the great outdoors, with over 70 miles of waterways and the 200 square mile National Forest. Leicester is also a coach friendly city with a number of drop off and parking locations."

You can download a copy of the group travel guide for Leicester and Leicestershire, find more group travel information, suggested itineraries and coach parking information on the Visit Leicester website.

Full size image of Visit Leicester team available [here](#).



Excursions Show 1 February 2025



Group Travel Adverts

12
Leicestershire 13

Regions Leicestershire

This month we visit the group-friendly destinations of Leicestershire, Seaside Resorts, Wales, Yorkshire and Tunbridge Wells

Bring your group to the birthplace of UK tourism. Travel pioneer Thomas Cook ran his first railway excursion in Leicestershire in 1841, positioning the destination as the birthplace of modern tourism.

The destination has continued to attract visitors from all over the UK and beyond. By bringing your group to Leicestershire, you can uncover the story of a city and county with over 2,000 years of history, a traditional 'taste' of England and a landscape of woodland and waterways perfect for gentle adventures.

Leicester and Leicestershire tell some of England's most unique and unusual stories. The area is famous for being connected to one of the bloodiest battles in English history and for the gravesite where, over 500 years later, King Richard III's remains were discovered beneath a city car park.

Leicestershire also offers an authentic taste of England. The ancient market town of Melton Mowbray claims the title of Rural Capital of Food through its association with pork pie and Stilton cheese. Through tours and activities like traditional pork pie making, you can experience the best of the region's food and drink and discover a little of its fascinating history.

With over 70 miles of waterways and a vast National Forest to explore, there are plenty of opportunities for gentle adventures and fresh air. On the following pages, we bring you two group travel-trade-themed itineraries, perfect for your next group visit to this stunning area of the East Midlands. So sit back, relax, and get planning your next memorable Leicestershire tour.

Did you know?
Leicester market is the largest outdoor covered market in Europe

INFORMATION

Coach Parking: For coach operators visiting Leicester, visit www.visitleicester.info/visitor-information/coach-parking info. For more group-friendly ideas and inspiration including accommodation choices, go to www.visitleicester.info

To request a copy of the Group Travel Guide for Leicester and Leicestershire, contact the Visit Leicester Information Centre on 0116 299 4444 or email info@visitleicester.info



Article supplied by Visit Leicester
AERIAL VIEW OF LEICESTER CATHEDRAL IN LEICESTER, A CITY IN ENGLAND'S EAST MIDLANDS REGION, UK. IMAGE BY ALEXEY FODOROVSKIY FROM SHUTTERSTOCK

LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE

A DESTINATION OF DISCOVERY FOR GROUPS

DISCOVER AN AREA WITH OVER 2,000 YEARS OF HISTORY THAT TELLS SOME OF ENGLAND'S MOST UNIQUE AND UNUSUAL STORIES



STATUE OF KING RICHARD III



CURVE THEATRE & ORTON SQUARE



LEICESTER GUILDHALL



KING RICHARD III VISITOR CENTRE



MAKE YOUR VISIT A PART OF HISTORY AT THE KING RICHARD III VISITOR CENTRE

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SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 22ND APRIL 2026

DRAFT YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 TO 2027

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 Scrutiny Commission (as the County Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee) on the draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026 to 2027, attached as Appendix A to this report. The draft Plan will be presented to the Cabinet on 28th April 2026 alongside any comments of the Commission and thereafter presented to full Council for approval on 13th May 2026. This is in accordance with Regulation 4 of the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000.'

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. There is a statutory requirement in section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for the County Council to produce a Youth Justice Plan which is linked to releasing the Youth Justice Grant from the Ministry of Justice.
3. In relation to Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026, the Youth Justice Plan and the work of the Youth and Justice Service contribute to the following strategic objectives:
 - a. Clean and Green – through direct and indirect education and reparation with children linked to the environment and green spaces. An example of this is the Nature4Nurture Project which is a gardening wellbeing project which is ran across three County Council sites, County Hall being one of them.
 - b. Great communities – the service is supported by a pool of committed volunteers who engage with children and support re-engagement within communities by being a trusted adult. The Service has since introduced "young volunteers" who are children who volunteer with the service as an exit-strategy from support and contribute to developing the service, the recruitment of staff, and voice and influence work.
 - c. Improved outcomes – The service remains committed to ensuring that the children who access the service have access to the relevant support and advocacy to ensure that their needs are met and risks are managed. The service has developed a strong offer of support for victim to ensure that they are heard, supported and can engage in restorative justice approaches.

- d. Safe and Well – The service remains committed to identifying and supporting children and victims where safeguarding approaches are required both inside and outside of the home.

Background

4. Youth Justice Services (formally Youth Offending Teams) were introduced nationally in 2002. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice, which is responsible for overseeing the youth justice system in England and Wales. It has provided the framework for the Youth Justice Plan nationally, and states that it is the duty of each local authority, in consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out and reviewing the priorities of the Service in that local authority area.
5. Leicestershire Youth Justice is commissioned by Rutland Council to deliver youth justice and prevention work. The current commission is being refreshed and is likely to be procured for a three-year period.

Youth and Justice Partnership Board

6. The guidance stipulates that the Youth and Justice Partnership Board should govern and own the process of producing the Youth Justice Plan so that it best meets the needs of the locality, children, families, victims and communities.
7. The Youth and Justice Partnership Board is the statutory body which oversees the performance of the Service as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The statutory members of this Board are officers from the County Council for Children's Social Care and Education, Probation Service, Leicestershire Police, Integrated Care Board, and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Board has accountability for the performance and delivery of Youth Justice provision across Leicestershire. The Board is chaired by the Director of Children and Family Services and the Vice-Chair is the Head of Leicestershire Probation.
8. The Youth and Justice Partnership Board meets quarterly. The Board is provided with a full suite of performance data and other associated reports to help discharge its statutory responsibilities. This approach enables the Board to be agile around its scrutiny of data, identifying trends and emerging themes and responding to them. The Youth Justice Plan provides strategic direction to the Service and Partnership and a partnership action plan will set out how priorities will be achieved. The papers for the Youth and Justice Partnership Board are not publicly available.
9. The quality of services delivered to children and victims and the strength of the Youth and Justice Partnership Board are independently scrutinised by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.

Changes to Youth Justice

10. The existing Youth Justice Plan covered the period 2023-2026. The new Plan is however a one-year plan as the Youth Justice landscape is in flux and a number of details remain to be clarified, namely:
 - a. There are several Youth Justice reforms due to be announced during 2026 by Central Government. In February 2026 it was announced that several statutory functions would move from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) into the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). The relationship between Youth Justice Services, the YJB, and the MOJ has not yet been defined, and it is expected to take a year for that to be designed. The YJB will be performing a role in supporting the development of practice across Youth Justice services.
 - b. A first announcement was made in March 2026 by Minister Jake Richards which focused on reforms to keep children out of prison. An opportunity was presented by the Minister to Youth Justice Services (YJS) to work in partnership with neighbouring YJS Services, across judiciary areas to strengthen the offer available to children as alternatives to custody. An expression of interest been submitted to the Ministry of Justice by Northamptonshire Children's Trust who are taking the lead for work across a proposed partnership between Leicestershire, Leicester City and Northamptonshire Youth Justice Services This work is in its infancy and will be managed through the Youth and Justice Partnership Board.
 - c. Further tightening to crime-related legislation are expected to be announced over the coming year, details of this have not yet been shared. The Knife Crime legislation being the first to be introduced on 1st April 2026 which places greater responsibility on Youth Justice Services to identify and manage knife-related risks, strengthen prevention and diversion work with children and young people, and work closely with police and partners to reduce access to weapons and prevent serious violence
 - d. The impact of Local Government Review/Reorganisation as it affects Leicestershire is not yet known.
11. It is unclear how the above will affect the strategic direction of Youth Justice Services at the current time. The opportunity to have a multi-year Plan remains available and will be considered for 2027 onwards.

Consultation/Engagement

12. Co-design of the Youth Justice Plan commenced on 5th December 2025 at the Youth and Justice Partnership Board, where Board Members commenced work on reviewing the progress of the service over the last year and identifying priorities for the year ahead. Meetings were held between Board Members, and the Head of Youth Justice throughout January and February 2026, following which a draft of the Youth Justice Plan was submitted to the Youth and Justice Board on 6th March 2026 for final approval by all statutory partners. This is in line with the statutory guidance on Youth Justice Plans.

13. The workforce was consulted in January 2026 for their contributions to the Plan and children, parents and carers contributed to the Plan through the post-intervention evaluation surveys.
14. There is no requirement for a public consultation exercise.

The Draft Youth Justice Plan

15. The Youth and Justice Service in Leicestershire has continued to perform strongly, with a low level of First Time Entrants compared with regional and national comparators, low longer-term reoffending, and very low use of remand and custody, whilst remaining compliant with all statutory returns to the Youth Justice Board.
16. Over 2025/26, achievements included strengthening Child First practice (guiding principles for the youth justice system; child-focused and based on the best contemporary evidence available) through targeted training for managers, practitioners and volunteers, and ongoing quality assurance activity to improve the consistency and impact of assessments and interventions. Health has been a priority area; progressing children's health outcomes through the Youth Justice Health Lead (the post is funded by Public Health) and wellbeing developments including Nature4Nurture and new trauma-informed groupwork offer for boys and girls separately, alongside work to secure speech and language therapy commissioning. There are some key notable developments which include strengthening links with the Council's SEND services, enhancing support for victims through investment in a Restorative Approaches Team, a clearer victim offer and referral pathways with a child victim pathway, and expanding out-of-court and diversion work with Leicestershire Police to develop pathways of support for children through Deferred Caution Schemes. A particular success has been 'Project Brake' which supports children to develop education around the road safety when they have been charged with a low-level motoring offence which has reduced the criminalisation of children following the successful engagement in interventions.
17. In 2026/27, the Youth and Justice Partnership will focus on five priorities: improving education, employment and training outcomes, strengthening children's health and wellbeing, improving support for victims, strengthening prevention pathways for children at risk of entering the criminal justice system, and ensuring a coordinated response for children at the highest risk of harm, exploitation and/or serious violence.
18. Statutory responsibilities have been placed upon Youth Justice Services and the Police in relation to new knife-crime legislation and the Partnership is fully compliant with these in line with the implementation date of 1st April 2026.
19. Across all priorities, the Youth and Justice Partnership Board will maintain a commitment on reducing groups of children who are disproportionately represented within the youth justice system such as looked after children, girls, Black, Asian and multi-ethnic children for example. This is achieved by sharing partnership data and appropriate challenging agencies and their approaches.

Resource Implications

20. The financial position of the core Youth Justice funding has been stable with the Service managing within its budget. The Youth and Justice Partnership Board receives a full financial report on the position of the pooled budget each quarter. The budget for 2025-26 was:

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Youth Justice Board			604,659	604,659
Local Authority			1,032,461	1,032,461
Police				0
Police and Crime Commissioner	91,847		77,934	169,781
Probation	73,764		37,806	111,570
Health	70,945		47,588	118,533
Welsh Government				0
Other			75,645	75,645
Total	236,556	0	1,876,093	2,112,649

21. The strategic partnership also provides staffing in-kind as part of their contribution and this equates to a full-time seconded Probation Officer, two warranted Police Constables and access to an Adverse Childhood Experiences Team from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Public Health supports a Youth Justice Health Lead post. The Team is further supported by a young people's substance misuse offer from Turning Point. All these specialist workers are fully embedded within the Service and support the direct delivery of interventions with children whilst retaining positive relationships with their parent organisation.
22. In terms of the 2026-27 budget, the MOJ (previously the YJB) has yet to confirm the grant allocation, and this is expected to be announced in late April. Heads of Youth Justice have been advised that the grant will be a three-year settlement, for the first time. Confirmation has also been received of additional three-year funding for prevention work, but the amount is not yet confirmed. Partner contributions remain the same. The budget should remain relatively similar to 2025-26. A multi-year settlement does provide the opportunity to plan the service and establishment better.

Timetable for Decisions

23. The draft Plan will be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 28th April 2026, prior to submission to the YJB in advance of 30th June 2026.
24. The final Plan will be considered by the County Council on 13th May 2026.

Background Papers

Report to the Scrutiny Commission on 12 April 2023 "Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2026

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=137&MIId=7100&Ver=>

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-2026

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/LCC-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

Equality Implications

25. Inequality is inherent within in the criminal justice system and there is substantive research to support this. To this end, an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and attached as Appendix B.

Human Rights Implications

26. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Officers to Contact

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Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026-27
Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment

Youth Justice Plan 2026/27

Leicestershire Youth and Justice Service

Leicestershire County Council

Foreword from the Chair of the Board

Welcome to our annual Youth Justice Strategy for 2026/27.

It is with great pride and a strong sense of shared purpose that we introduce the Leicestershire Youth Justice Strategy for 2026/27. This strategy reflects the collaborative efforts of our partners, the voices of children and families, and our commitment to building a safer, fairer community for all.

This strategy builds upon the achievements realised under the Leicestershire Youth Justice Plan 2023/26 and establishes both ongoing and new priorities for the forthcoming year. These priorities have been developed collaboratively with members of the Leicestershire Youth Justice Partnership Board, ensuring clear strategic leadership, direction, and robust governance of the plan. Key partners involved in this process include Leicestershire Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Violence Reduction Network, the Integrated Care Board, Public Health, the Youth Justice Service, Probation, Children's Social Care, and Education.

The engagement of the workforce has played an important role in the development of this plan, with valuable feedback from young people, parents and carers participating in our evaluation project helping to shape strategic priorities and focus areas for children.

In addition to enabling the Youth Justice Service to fulfil its statutory responsibilities and achieve its principal objectives, this strategy also underpins the efforts of the Leicestershire Youth and Justice Partnership Board (YJPB) towards its established strategic goals. The annual strategy is complemented by a collection of service and project plans, each providing greater detail on the specific actions we will undertake to realise the overarching ambitions set out within this strategy within the Board and across the wider partnership.

Sharon Cooke

Chair of the Leicestershire Youth Justice Partnership Board

Interim Director of Children and Family Services - Leicestershire County Council

Aims of the Youth Justice System

The youth justice system aims to prevent children from entering the criminal justice system, reduce reoffending, and ensure custody is used only when necessary. These aims reflect a clear commitment to safeguarding children's welfare and supporting safer communities by addressing the underlying factors that contribute to offending and ensuring responses remain proportionate, child-centred, and aligned with national expectations.

Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

The Youth Justice Service in Leicestershire meets all the statutory requirements of a Youth Justice Service set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The service has seconded staff from Police, Probation and Health. Financial contributions are made by all statutory partners in line with national and local agreements.

The service has access to CAMHS Adverse Childhood Experiences Team, Turning Point (substance misuse), Liaison and Diversion and Care Navigators who sit within the wider Health partnership. The Service is integrated into Children and Families Services at Leicestershire County Council and has full access to Children's Social Care and Education Services.

Alongside multi-agency teams, the service contracts with external providers to support the delivery of essential statutory functions, such as appropriate adult services (The Appropriate Adult Service) and speech and language therapy. Rutland County Council commissions the service to fulfil statutory responsibilities related to youth justice and prevention initiatives.

The activities of the Youth and Justice Service are monitored and directed by the Leicestershire Youth and Justice Partnership Board, which is chaired by the Director for Children and Families Services, who provides independent oversight and scrutiny to the Board. The Board are provided with quarterly national and local data which is scrutinised. The Service continues to perform well; having a low number of children who are First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice System and low numbers of children remanded or sentenced to custody.

In addition to its statutory partners, Leicestershire Youth and Justice Partnership Board benefits from having representatives from Education Services, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Turning Point, Youth Magistrate and a representative from the Voluntary Sector, along with the Youth Justice Board. The

Partnership Board meets on a quarterly basis with good attendance from all key partners who are represented at the appropriate senior level.

The Youth and Justice Service is part of Children and Family Services at Leicestershire County Council (see appendix 1). Appendix 2 outlines the service structure and its range, while appendix 3 details staff by ethnicity and gender, where disclosed.

The Head of Youth Justice role oversees both strategic and operational aspects of Youth Justice within the Local Authority. They are accountable to the Youth and Justice Management Board, as well as various Partnership Boards. As Head of Youth Justice, they fully coordinate board activities with members and the Chair. Their additional duties include managing youth work, supporting young carers, handling cases involving low or medium risk missing children, leading youth voices, overseeing grants and funded projects related to the Service, addressing anti-social behavior, and serving as a MAPPA Panel Member for all under-18s in the county. The current post-holder also serves as the regional representative for the Association of YOT Managers.

The development of Board Members and staff is overseen through a structured training plan that prioritises child-centered practice, incorporates insights from quality assurance activities, and includes targeted training initiatives to promote consistent and high-quality standards and builds a confident and skilled workforce.

Progress and Priorities – 2025/26

Over the past year four priority areas were given focus and activity was driven across the partnership.

1. Ensuring children are receiving a high-quality personalised and meaningful service.

In 2025/26, the Leicestershire Youth Justice Service organised a series of training sessions aimed at enhancing Child First practice among managers, practitioners, and volunteers. These sessions centered on the four foundational principles of child-first practice: recognising children as children, fostering pro-social identity, engaging collaboratively with children, and minimising stigma. This framework emphasises addressing the developmental needs of children ahead of their offending behaviour to achieve improved outcomes for children, victims, and communities. This represents an ongoing cultural evolution within the service and broader sector towards more trauma-informed and relationship-focused methodologies.

Within the Service, anyone under 18 is referred to as a child when speaking with professionals. Records are written directly to the child, using plain English, free of acronyms, and focused on analysis, so children can understand their journey, actions

taken, reasons, and outcomes. The Service uses communication passports to detail how a child prefers to be addressed and communicate, key information for adults, and the child's needs. Initially launched in collaboration with Youth Magistrates, communication passports are now standard at induction for every child. Practitioners introduce themselves through staff biographies, helping children learn about those supporting them. This approach is expanding to include details about projects and venues across the Service. Each child's Youth Justice record should feature either their photo or an image they select to bring that child to life. This is part of the journey around purposeful practice.

There has been a focus on improving the quality of assessments and interventions as part of child-first practice. In relation to assessments, this is ensuring that the assessment reflects the lived experiences of the child and portrays a rounded view of their life including the factors that contribute to their offending, the protective factors within their lives and a balance with the risks and vulnerabilities within their lives, within communities and towards victims. The intervention plan for the child should focus on addressing the needs identified within their assessment and prioritising the safety of victims, communities and the child.

The journey around improvement has been supported by quality assurance work, improvement cycle meetings and moderation meetings across the management team. This is overseen by the Youth and Justice Management Board. This work will continue to develop into the future with a focus on achieving consistency and adaptability across the workforce.

2. Improving health outcomes for children who are working with the Youth and Justice Service

Many children in the YJS have unmet health and wellbeing needs such as mental health and wellbeing worries, learning needs, substance misuse and neurodiversity, all of which are structural drivers of offending related behaviour. Addressing these needs is a crucial component in supporting children to live healthy lives.

Public Health at Leicestershire County Council have funded a Youth Justice Health Lead post to strengthen health outcomes for children, following detailed Health Needs Assessment. The role has focused on sourcing training and support for the workforce around health, for example around condom distribution, substance misuse training and specialist autism training. The Youth Justice Health Lead has connected the Service with the Liaison and Diversion Team, the introduction of Care Navigator information into the service upon every allocation and has been a specialist point of contact for involvement with the CAMHS ACES Team. This role is involved in engaging in panels

focused on supporting children who are assessed as posing a high risk and providing a view on health-related support and advice that could be provided.

Over the last year, progress has been made with the Nature4Nurture Project; a wellbeing project for children linked to gardening and sustainability. The project deliberately creates a quiet, reflective safe space which contributes positively to emotional regulation and mental wellness. Children have expressed feelings of pride in their efforts in nurturing the plans and the spaces, have appreciated learning to care and then giving back to the community when gifting their produce.

Work has been undertaken in collaboration with girls to develop a structured, therapeutic and empowering groupwork programme called 'EmpowerHer'. The focus of the programme is on emotional and mental health, healthy relationships, improving self-esteem and developing identity. Each session has an activity to help with empowerment and self-regulation such as cooking, mindfulness and creativity. The programme has a partnership focus with contributions during sessions from CAMHS, Everyone Active and Turning Point. The girls who have attended the group have shared that they have learnt to manage their emotions, feel calmer through learning new activities and share feeling safe in the group. A programme has also been developed for and with boys which provides a safe space where they can explore identity, emotions and understand masculinity and during this year this has run once so far, with positive feedback.

This year has focused on securing funding for speech and language therapy (SALT), and the commissioning process has commenced for a three-year programme. Joint working and strengthening relationship work has been undertaken between Youth and Justice and SEND services and developing data around Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). 80% of the children involved with Youth Justice have speech, language and communication needs. These actions will continue into 2026/27.

3. Ensuring victims are receiving high-quality and personalised service

Significant developments have happened during 2025/26 in relation to the work that the Service undertaken with Victims. This is to ensure that the Service is compliant with statutory responsibility with the Victim's Code and in line with the focus on victims by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

The main development has been an investment in creating a Restorative Approaches Team which includes the Volunteer Development Officer, Restorative Approaches Coordinator and a new Restorative Approaches Worker Youth Worker Post. The Team is led by a Senior Youth Worker.

The Team have created a full victim offer for child victims and a referral pathway to support services for both adult victims and child victims for ongoing support. The victim

impact statement (VIS) has been redesigned to enable the victim to express emotional impact, describe the ongoing effects for them, identify what they need to feel safer and enable their voice to be better represented in decision making. This document, and the screening tool, help identify the ongoing support needs for victims and gain consent for referrals to onward services where appropriate.

The data element of understanding the demographics of the victims engaged in the Service has taken a considerable amount of work. This has involved the reconfiguration of Core+, our case management system, and the building of tableau dashboards, which present the data extracted from Core+. Partnership work is underway with the Police to improve the process around gaining consent from the Leicestershire Police and improved demographic data for victims. Wider partnership work has commenced around the offer to victims across Leicestershire, including practice sharing opportunities.

This is an area of practice that will continue to be developed to ensure that the best services are provided to victims.

4. Developing the process and offer around out of court and diversion

During 2025/26, considerable work has been undertaken in collaboration with Leicestershire Police to avoid the unnecessary criminalisation of children, where appropriate.

A significant change was the introduction of a Leicestershire Joint Decision and Resolution Panel (JDRP), from the previous panel which was a collaboration with a neighboring Youth Justice Service. The JDRP is jointly held with the Police and attendance is secured from Children's Social Care and the Restorative Approaches Team, on behalf of victims. The JDRP is held weekly to ensure the timely hearing of children who meet the criteria. All children who are heard at the JDRP have a full YJB approved assessment completed with them and the allocated practitioner attends panel to introduce their child and provide a brief overview of their assessment findings and plan of work.

In collaboration with Leicestershire Police, the Panel can utilise Outcome 22 as part of a Deferred Caution Scheme (DCS), this means that if a child engages with intervention well, their agreed outcome is resulted as no further action (NFA). During 2025/26, a Deferred Prosecution Scheme (DPS) was introduced enabling children who had committed low level driving offences to receive intervention and for their offences to be categorised as no further where they engaged well in sessions. Prior to this development, children would have attended Court and received penalty points and a fine with no statutory involvement with Youth Justice Services. This outcome would mean that children were classified as First Time Entrants (FTE) in the criminal justice

system and research identifies that children who are FTEs are more likely to have increased contact with the CJS, have their education, employment and future opportunities impacted negatively and face increased stigma and labelling.

During this year, the Service has been involved in the Whole Area Model Pilot which is a Youth Endowment Fund project focused on developing consistency and rigor around this area of work, including measuring impact. This Project and area of focus will continue into 2026/27.

In relation to performance for 2025/26, when compared to the national average, Leicestershire Youth Justice Service (YJS) consistently performs well against the three main performance indicators, having a lower number of first-time entrants, a lower reoffending rate taking over the long term and a lower number of custodial sentences and remands. Risks, issues and performance are monitored quarterly by the Youth and Justice Partnership Board.

The YJS is compliant with all statutory returns to the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

Voice of children, parents and carers

The Service recognises that building strong relationships helps children develop resilience and reach their potential. Feedback from all interventions consistently shows that relationship building is a valued strength among children, parents, and carers. Voice work and participation work within the Service is underpinned by the Lundy Model of Participation.

During 2025/26, new processes were introduced to capture voice and feedback more consistently and a forum developed to evaluate the impact of the feedback received.

Children have commented:

“My worker helped improve things at school”

“I had someone to listen to me”

“They helped with my anger”

“Eco-map helped me know which people support me”

“Get to talk about everything”

“My Dad says I’ve grown up”

“My worker put a police marker on me so the police were aware I had a learning disability”

“Its helped me think about my actions”

“I needed help and help was there and I was supported through it all”

“Helped me find my own place”

“Helping me know what options I have for after school and getting me on a college course”

“Silver lining”

“So I didn’t get a charge and a chance for education”

“It’s Improved my mental wellbeing and my family noticed this”

“Listened and cared. Provided me with easy-to-understand education and I was able to reflect. The support my worker provided means I am prepared for the future and have a deeper understanding.”

“I felt comfortable with the team, and they helped me with everything”

“She treated me like an adult and respected my thoughts”

“Talked about relationships with parents and friends. Talked about my emotions. What makes a good healthy relationship. How my mental health impacts on me. Help with education. I identified my insecurities and how I can work towards being a better version of myself.”

Parents and carers have commented:

“Made my daughter feel confident and able to talk again”

“The support brought us closer”

“Supported our child through a time that he needed it and we appreciate that thanks”

“Just reflecting as a family and looking how to deal with difficult situations in a different manor”

“Giving us knowledge and supportive tools to prevent another situation from happening.”

“I think this is a good service to help children learn from any mistakes they might make and give them better options rather than just punishment this will help guide them in the right direction.”

“My daughter’s worker has made my daughter think about her future and want a better life for herself and helped guide her back on to the right path.”

“His worker was personable and genuinely caring about our circumstances and difficulties. She worked quickly to understand my son and used appropriate methods to engage him in often sensitive conversations.”

“Understanding his needs and getting the assessment and support he needed”

“All of my son’s workers have gone above and beyond”

“Just wanted to say a huge thank you to my son’s worker for her support. She is a real credit to the service. We really valued her sessions with my son. From the first meeting it was so easy to see just how passionate she is in supporting young people and their families. We valued her commitment and her input. We couldn’t think of a more suitable person to have worked with our child. The worker made my son and us, feel listened to and heard.”

During 2026/27, the Service will be developing the feedback and evaluation offer to include 3 and 6 monthly follow up calls where parents and carers have provided consent.

Priorities and Developments for 2026/27

This year the partnership has chosen to focus on the five key priority areas:

➤ **Improving education, employment and training outcomes for children involved in Youth and Justice.**

This year the partnership will drive robust oversight and scrutiny around educational performance of the children engaged in Youth Justice. Consideration will be given to data that is available across the partnership to help improve outcomes for children. The Board will ensure that practitioners and children have access to timely specialist support based on the needs of children. During 2026/27, a project will be undertaken considering the feasibility of developing a social enterprise focused on supporting children in to education, training and employment.

➤ **Strengthening the support for children concerning their health and wellbeing involved within the Youth and Justice Service.**

This year, the partnership will assess health needs to measure progress and set future priorities. Board Members will ensure children in diversion programs have the same access to health services as those in police custody or court. In 2026/27, the

Service will introduce a social prescribing model for youth justice participants and seek ongoing funding.

- **Improve support for victims in Youth and Justice Service through coordinated partnerships, better access to tailored resources, and regular evaluations to meet their specific needs.**

This year, the partnership will focus on driving improvement around consent rates for victims and improved data sharing to support the Board confidence that the offer for victims meets their needs. The Board will understand the voice of victims and use this insight to inform service and strategic delivery, ensuring that feedback and lived experiences directly shape support pathways.

- **Ensure children who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system have appropriate pathways to support.**

The Youth and Justice Partnership Board will ensure that there are robust pathways and offers in place for children who are at risk of contact with the youth justice system with a focus on prevention. The partnership will work with the Violence Reduction Network to embed Young Futures Prevention Panels as part of this approach. During 2026/27, the Service will develop a triage process for all children who have had contact with Leicestershire Police. There will be an increased focus on the vulnerabilities which propel children into the youth justice system, such as anti-social behaviour and the Service response to this.

- **Ensure a coordinated partnership response to children at the highest risk of harm and exploitation, and/or serious violence.**

The Partnership Board will oversee compliance with the new knife crime duties placed on Youth Justice and the partners during 2026/27. The Board will ensure that the services available to children work operate a joined up and child first approach to reducing harm both strategically and operationally. This will focus on prevention offers of support and early identification. The Partnership will be fully compliant with the new knife crime legislation when it is launched on 1st April 2026, and Board will monitor compliance and record any reasoning against any cases that depart from the guidance.

Throughout the five priorities and all other business covered by the Partnership Board, Members will focus on reducing the over-representation and disproportionality of children in the Youth Justice System by strengthening partnership data to ensure fair

and equitable responses across all agencies and challenge, where this is not happening.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Departmental Structure

Appendix 2: Youth and Justice Service Structure

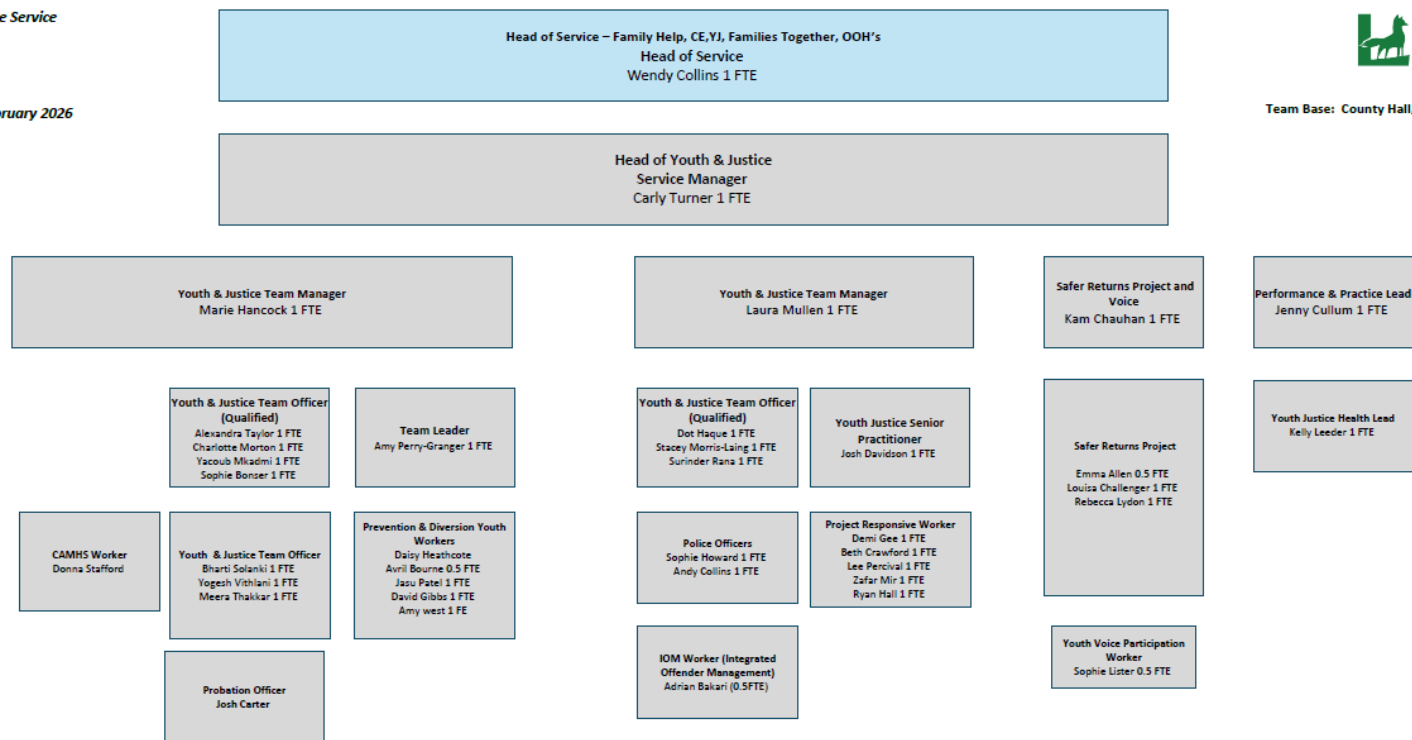
Appendix 3: Breakdown of Youth and Justice Service by role and demographics

Appendix 2: Youth and Justice Service Structure

Youth & Justice Service
Headcount:
FTE:
Vacant:
Agency:
Reviewed: February 2026
Page 2 of 2



Team Base: County Hall, Glenfield LE3 8RF.

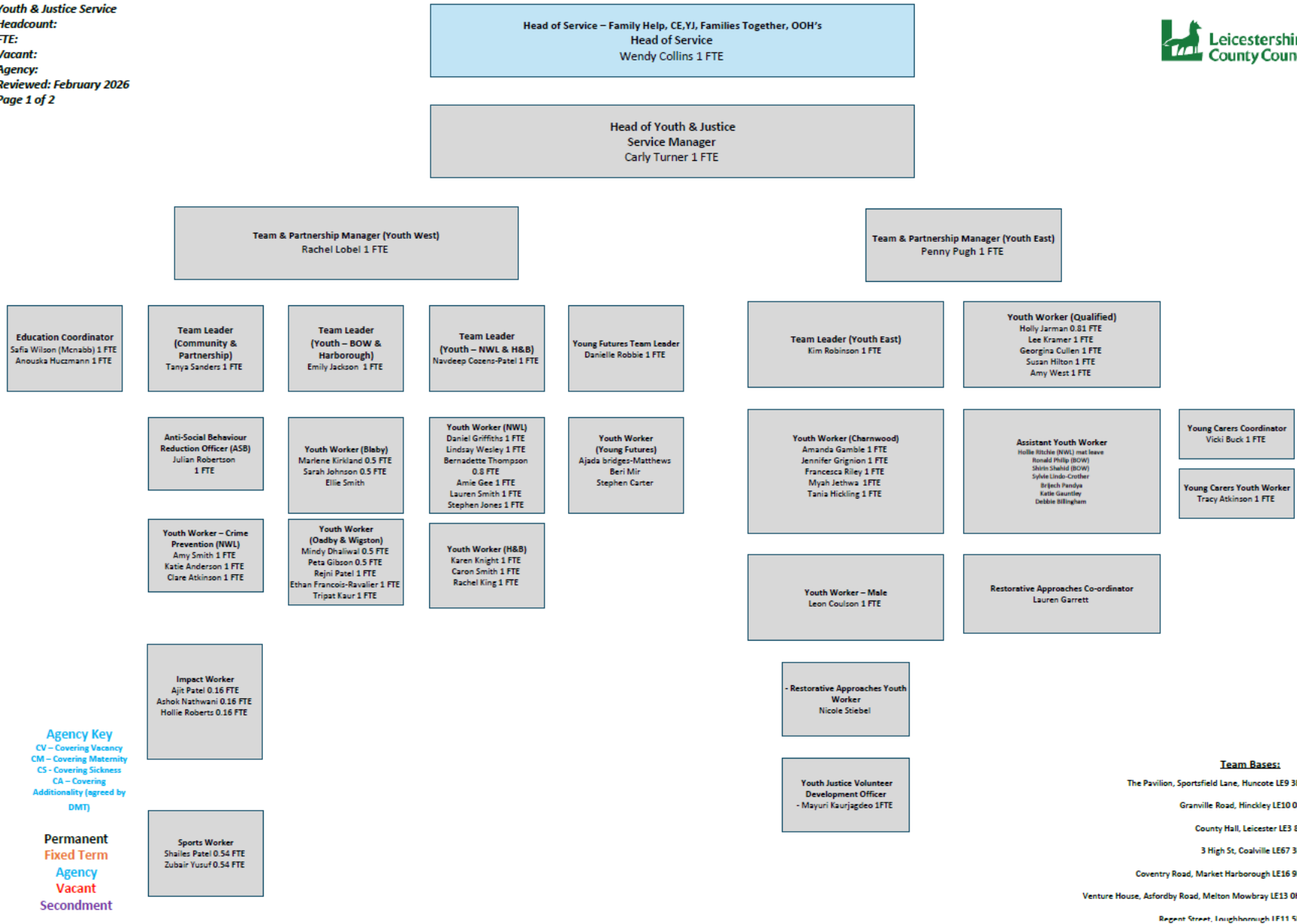


Agency Key
 CV – Covering Vacancy
 CM – Covering Maternity
 CS - Covering Sickness
 CA – Covering
 Additionality (agreed by
 DMT)

Permanent
 Fixed Term
 Agency
 Vacant
 Secondment

Team Bases:

- The Pavilion, Sportsfield Lane, Huncote LE9 3BN.
- Granville Road, Hinckley LE10 0PP.
- County Hall Leicester LE3 8RA
- 3 High St, Coalville LE67 3EA.
- Coventry Road, Market Harborough LE16 9BX.
- Venture House, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray LE13 0HN.
- Regent Street, Loughborough LE11 5BA.



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Appendix 3: Breakdown of Youth and Justice Service by role and demographics

Type of Contract	Strategic Manager (PT)	Strategic Manager (FT)	Operational Manager (PT)	Operational Manager (FT)	Practitioners (PT)	Practitioners (FT)	Administration (PT)	Administration (FT)	Sessional	Students/trainees	Referral Order Panel Volunteer	Other Volunteer	Total
Permanent		1		4	12.1	65					0	0	82.1
Fixed-term											0	0	0
Outsourced											0	0	0
Temporary											0	0	0
Vacant					6.51	5					0	0	11.51
Seconded Children's Services						1					0	0	1
Seconded Probation						1					0	0	1
Seconded Police						2					0	0	2
Seconded Health (Substance misuse)											0	0	0
Seconded Health (Mental health)						1					0	0	1
Seconded Health (Physical health)											0	0	0
Seconded Health (Speech/language)											0	0	0
Other/Unspecified Seconded Health						1					0	0	1
Seconded Education											0	0	0
Seconded Connexions											0	0	0
Seconded Other											0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	4	18.61	76	0	0	0	0	0	0	99.61
Disabled (self-classified)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Ethnicity	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Sessional		Student		Referral Order Panel Volunteer		Other Volunteer		Total		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Asian					5	12												5	12
Black				1	2	3												2	4
Mixed					1													1	0
White		1		3	11	56												11	60
Any other ethnic group																		0	0
Not known													15		29	16		44	16
Total	0	1	0	4	19	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	29	16	63	92	
Welsh Speakers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Before completing this form, please refer to [the supporting guidance document](#)

The purpose of this form is to aid the Council in meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in the Equality Act 2010. This requires the Council to have “due regard” of the impact of its actions on the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The assessment is used to identify and record any concerns and potential risks. The following actions can then be taken to address these issues.

- Remove risks: abandon the proposed policy or practice
- Mitigate risks – amend the proposed policy or practice so that risks are reduced
- Justify policy or practice in terms of other objectives

Once the EIA has been approved by the Senior Responsible Officer, please ensure that a copy is placed on the SharePoint folder: “Equalities Board, EIAs”

1- Policy details	
Name of policy	Youth Justice Plan 2026–27
Department and service	Children and Family Services – Youth and Justice Service
Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment?	Strategic Manager (Youth Justice), in consultation with the Youth and Justice Partnership Board, Youth Justice Service managers, and partner agencies including Police, Health, Education and the Voluntary Sector.
Contact numbers	0116 305 0030

Date of completion	March 2026
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<p>2- Objectives and background of policy or practice change</p> <p>Use this section to describe the policy or practice change What is the purpose, expected outcomes and rationale? Include the background information and context</p>	
<p>What is the proposal?</p> <p>What change and impact is intended by the proposal?</p>	<p>The Youth Justice Plan 2026–27 sets out the strategic priorities and partnership commitments for the delivery of youth justice services in Leicestershire. The Plan moves to an annual cycle to reflect the pace of national youth justice reform and increased assurance requirements, while strengthening a Child First, preventative and trauma-informed approach.</p> <p>The Plan prioritises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention and diversion for children at risk of entering the criminal justice system • Reducing reoffending and unnecessary criminalisation • Strengthening responses to serious violence, exploitation and vulnerability • Improving access to health, wellbeing and education, including social prescribing • Enhancing the offer and voice of victims <p>A core intended impact is to reduce inequality and disproportionality by ensuring that services are responsive to the needs of children who experience multiple and intersecting disadvantages, and that partnership responses do not exacerbate existing inequalities.</p>

	<p>This plan is a renewal of the three-year plan from 2023-2026. It is a one-year plan due to a period of reform announcements that are being made by the Ministry of Justice in relation to Youth Justice, and particularly the Youth Justice Board, who currently provide our governance.</p>
<p>What is the rationale for this proposal?</p>	<p>Children known to the youth justice system are disproportionately affected by adverse childhood experiences, unmet health needs, special educational needs, exploitation, and social inequality. The Plan recognises that these vulnerabilities are not evenly distributed across the population and that some groups of children are more likely to experience criminalisation and poorer outcomes.</p> <p>The rationale is therefore to embed equality, prevention and inclusion at a strategic level, ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways into the system are minimised • Responses are proportionate and tailored • Services are accessible, culturally competent and trauma-informed • Partnership governance actively scrutinises inequality and impact <p>This approach aligns with statutory duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p>

3- Evidence gathered on equality implications - Data and engagement

What evidence about potential equality impacts is already available?

This could come from research, service analysis, questionnaires, and engagement with protected characteristics groups

What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?

What does it show?

The Youth Justice Plan draws on:

- Service performance and assurance data reported to the Youth Justice Partnership Board
- Evidence of vulnerabilities linked to youth justice involvement, including exploitation, anti-social behaviour and health needs
- Learning from prevention, diversion and victim work
- National and local expectations around Child First practice and disproportionality

The evidence highlights that children entering or known to the youth justice system often face multiple disadvantages, reinforcing the need for early intervention, coordinated support and equality-focused service design.

Inequalities and disproportionality in Youth Justice System

Evidence nationally and locally indicates that contact with the youth justice system is not evenly distributed across the child population. Some groups of children experience a higher likelihood of being stopped, reported, criminalised, prosecuted and receiving more intensive statutory intervention, and may also experience poorer outcomes (for example, higher rates of remand, custodial sentences, breach and reoffending). These differences can arise from structural inequality, cumulative disadvantage, unmet need, and the way services and decision-making thresholds operate across the partnership.

- **Race and ethnicity:** children from some ethnic minority backgrounds can be disproportionately represented at key points (police contact, out-of-court disposals, court outcomes and remand). This may also intersect with place, deprivation and perceptions of risk.
- **Disability, neurodiversity and mental health:** children with SEND, speech/language needs, learning disability, autism/ADHD and mental ill-health may face barriers to understanding

processes, communicating effectively and complying with conditions, increasing risk of escalation or breach.

- **Sex and gendered pathways:** boys and girls can have different routes into offending and different patterns of harm. Girls known to youth justice services are more likely to have experienced exploitation, trauma and domestic abuse, and may have needs that are missed within generic provision.
- **Care experience and safeguarding vulnerability:** children looked after or with care experience are over-represented in youth justice and are more likely to experience instability, exploitation, missing episodes and criminalisation linked to placement context.
- **Socio-economic disadvantage:** deprivation, exclusion from school, unmet health needs, and limited access to positive activities are associated with higher risk of entry to the youth justice system and reduced ability to access support.

The Youth Justice Plan 2026–27 responds to these inequalities by strengthening prevention and diversion, promoting Child First and trauma-informed practice, and requiring partnership scrutiny of decision-making and outcomes.

The Partnership Board will use assurance and performance reporting to monitor disproportionality (including intersections between protected characteristics and vulnerability factors), review the effectiveness of diversion and intervention pathways, and agree actions where differences cannot be explained by need or risk. This EIA will be kept under review as delivery progresses and as new intelligence or feedback from children, families and communities is gathered.

The Youth and Justice Partnership Board are provided with a comprehensive performance report which includes a full breakdown of the demographics of the children who are supported through the service. We are in the process of developing this further to show trends.

<p>What engagement has been undertaken so far?</p> <p>What does it show?</p>	<p>Engagement has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from children and families through evaluation activity • Input from victims to inform improvements to the victim offer • Multi-agency collaboration through the Youth and Justice Partnership Board • Access to children’s records based on their interaction with the service detailing their needs. <p>This engagement demonstrates the importance of listening to lived experience and ensuring that services are shaped by the voices of those most affected by the youth justice system.</p> <p>The Youth Justice Plan does not require any formal</p>
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4- Benefits, concerns and mitigating action

Please specify if any individuals or community groups who identify with any of the ‘[protected characteristics](#)’ may *potentially* be affected by the policy and describe any benefits and concerns including any barriers. Use this section to demonstrate how risks would be mitigated for each affected group. If a group will not be affected by the proposal please state so.

Group	What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	What are the concerns identified and how will these affect those from the following groups?	How will the known concerns be mitigated?
Age	The Plan is specifically designed for children and young people, prioritising	Children aged 15-17 are most likely to be represented within the Service.	Ensure that children have access to early help and prevention services,

	<p>prevention, diversion and developmentally appropriate responses.</p>	<p>The Service has a statutory obligation to work with some children as they transition into young adulthood and with others who will be have a considered transition to the Young Adults Team in Probation.</p> <p>Risk of younger children being drawn into formal processes where early help may be more appropriate.</p>	<p>such as Teen Health who are based within schools.</p> <p>Close working relationships with Leicestershire Probation utilising the dedicated Senior Probation Officer SPOC and the seconded Probation Officer within Youth Justice.</p> <p>Strengthened triage, diversion pathways and prevention panels to ensure proportionate responses. Engagement with District Councils Joint Action Groups to identify children engaging in Anti-Social Behaviour and an offer of support at this early stage.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>There is a high prevalence of children with the Youth Justice System with disabilities, specifically SEND needs. . The benefit of the plan is to ensure that the health and education needs of children are understood, addressed and support is in place for children to</p>	<p>Children with SEND or neurodiversity may experience barriers to engagement or understanding processes.</p>	<p>Partnership working with Health, Education and specialist services, and use of tailored interventions.</p> <p>Strategic representation on the Youth and Justice Partnership Board</p>

	<p>achieve their potential and have ambition.</p>	<p>Require improved access to health support, including mental health and neurodevelopmental needs, and a trauma-informed approach.</p>	<p>from Education Leads and Health Leads.</p> <p>During 2026-27 a specialist Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) provision will be implemented to work across the YJS children and the partnership to improve support and understanding around communication needs.</p> <p>All children who require support from the Youth and Justice Service have a Communication Passport completed with them so that their needs are better understood.</p> <p>Currently exploring opportunities to ensure access to health services when diverted away from Court and police custody.</p>
Race	<p>Black, Asian and multi-ethnic children and adults are over-represented in the Criminal Justice System as a whole.</p>	<p>Risk of racial disproportionality in contact with policing and youth justice pathways. This group of children are at more risk of entering into youth justice and the prison estate.</p>	<p>Ongoing scrutiny through partnership governance structure and rigor of quarterly data.</p>

	The Plan is set to address disproportionality by race as a key thread across priorities and within the partnership, Child First principles and prevention activity aim to reduce unnecessary criminalisation and escalation of children.		Development of a disproportionality action plan supported by the Race Equity Lead from the Youth Endowment Fund.
Sex	The plan recognises the need for differing pathways and vulnerabilities for boys and girls, including exploitation and victimisation.	The over-representation of girls in YJS is a concern. Work has identified that girls are likely to have higher levels of trauma and vulnerability and are likely to have experienced victimisation.	Strategic work across LLR is underway concerning girls and women in CJS. #EmpowerHer has been developed in collaboration with girls to offer practical support and emotional wellbeing. Work has been undertaken on developing a pathway for boys to address positive relationships and talking openly about mental health and emotional wellbeing.
Gender Reassignment	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people in YJS.	None identified.	Not required.

Marriage and Civil Partnership	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people in YJS.	None identified.	Not required.
Sexual Orientation	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people in YJS.	None identified.	Not required.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people in YJS.	None identified.	Not required.
Religion or Belief	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people in YJS.	None identified.	Not required.
Armed Forces (including veterans)	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people in YJS..	None identified.	Not required.

<p>People with lived care experience</p>	<p>The plan acknowledges that children with lived care experience can be over-represented within the Criminal Justice System.</p>	<p>Children who have lived care experience have a higher vulnerability to criminalisation and exploitation.</p>	<p>Strong relationships with the Children in Care Service and Care Leavers Service.</p> <p>Data reported quarterly to the Youth and Justice Partnership Board who scrutinise data and will respond to any over-representation.</p>
<p>Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities</p>	<p>No additional direct impacts identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people within Youth Justice.</p> <p>Above addresses children with care experience and care leavers.</p>	<p>None identified currently.</p>	<p>Robust performance monitoring through the Youth and Justice Partnership Board around cohort data and any response needed.</p>

5- Action Plan			
Produce a framework to outline how identified risks/concerns identified in section 4 will be mitigated.			
What action is planned?	Who is responsible for the action?	Timescale	Expected outcome
Monitor equality impacts through Partnership Board reporting	Youth and Justice Partnership Board	Ongoing 2026–27	Improved oversight of disproportionality and equality impact and robust plans in place that show positive outcomes.
Embed Child First and trauma-informed practice across delivery	Youth Justice Service Management Team	Ongoing 2026–27	More equitable and proportionate outcomes for children
Strengthen prevention and diversion pathways for vulnerable groups	Multi-agency partners	Ongoing 2026–27	Reduced escalation and unnecessary criminalisation
Improve access to health and wellbeing support including social prescribing	Health partners and Youth Justice Service	Ongoing 2026–27	Reduction in unmet health needs and inequality

6- Approval Process	
Departmental Equalities Group	13/04/2026
Corporate Policy Team	Please set out comments from the Corporate Policy Team
Sign off by the Senior Responsible Officer for the Project.	



SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 22 APRIL 2026

SAFER COMMUNITIES ANNUAL UPDATE AND DRAFT DOMESTIC ABUSE REDUCTION STRATEGY 2026-2029

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Scrutiny Committee of the work of the Safer Communities Team over the past year and to seek the views of the Committee on the draft Domestic Abuse (DA) Reduction Strategy 2026 – 2029 as part of the consultation.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The work of the Safer Communities Team supports three of the five corporate strategic outcomes: great communities, improved opportunities and safe and well. The Team further supports the Public Health Service Plan, particularly relating to protecting communities and individuals from harm and providing services that meet community needs.
3. Specifically, the Team ensures the Council discharges its corporate duties relating to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and other statutes pertaining to Safer Communities such as producing numerous strategies and policies including the Community Safety Agreement; Domestic Abuse (DA) Reduction Strategy; Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy and Hate Reduction Strategy, complying with the Prevent guidelines and the Government's Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan.

Safer Communities - Background

4. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent legislation place a duty on responsible authorities (including local police bodies and local district, and county councils) to work together to reduce crime and disorder.
5. The Community Safety Team works to create safer, stronger and more resilient communities across Leicestershire. The Team helps prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, supports vulnerable people and strengthens partnerships between the council, police, fire service, health services and local voluntary organisations.

Service Priorities

6. The Team manage a number of workstreams across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) as well as corporately within the Council, leading the response to and coordinating the work of numerous partner organisations on issues relating to Crime and ASB Prevention, DA, Hate Crime, community tensions, and Prevent. The Team develops and delivers strategies to reduce crime, disorder and ASB and support the development of Action Plans which are delivered at the locality.
7. Partnerships are an integral part to the Team's success; working closely with statutory, voluntary and community sector services including Leicestershire Police and district councils, Leicester City Council, Rutland Council and Health Services to address local issues and support vulnerable people, protect victims and support early interventions. Also working across the Council to ensure the Council discharges its statutory duties, for example through the corporate Prevent Group and the corporate DA Strategy Group.
8. The work of the Team is data and intelligence led, sharing examples of good practice to partners to recognise emerging threats and issues and support joint problem solving. Furthermore support is given to local responses when incidents threaten community safety for example through the Venue Hire Policy and Martyn's Law in relation to counter terrorism.

Counter Terrorism

9. Prevent is a UK government, multi-agency programme designed to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. As part of the CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy, it focuses on early intervention and safeguarding vulnerable individuals from radicalisation, dealing with all forms of extremism. The County Council works with City Council, Police partners and community organisations to help find solutions and work to support and protect vulnerable people.

Government CONTEST Strategy

10. CONTEST is the UK's Counter Terrorism strategy. Its aim is to reduce the risk of terrorism to the UK, its citizens and interest overseas so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.
11. The Framework for CONTEST is made up of 4 'PS':
 - 1) Prevent - to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
 - 2) Pursue - to stop terrorist attacks.
 - 3) Protect - to strengthen our protection against terrorist attack.
 - 4) Prepare - to mitigate the implications of a terrorist attack.
12. The Home Office provides guidance on Prevent, Prepare, and Protect to Local Authorities. It recognises that Local Authorities in conjunction with partner agencies have a core role to play in countering terrorism at a local level and help safeguard individuals at risk of radicalisation. The Pursue element of the strategy is focused on police enforcement, and the Protect and Prepare involve the Home Office and law

enforcement agencies working with and providing guidance to local agencies including Local Authorities.

Prevent

13. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a legal duty on specified authorities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”; local authorities and their partners therefore have a core role to play in countering terrorism at a local level and helping to safeguard individuals at risk of radicalisation.

The Approach to Dealing with Prevent

14. LLR has a robust multi-agency structure that is embedded to ensure the sub-regional partnership programme for prevent delivery is well governed at all appropriate levels. For example, the County Council has a lead officer who sits on all strategic groups and an operational lead for taking forward relevant actions across the County.
15. The Corporate Prevent Steering Group meets quarterly to oversee all key actions on prevent delivery for the Authority including monitoring the Prevent Action Plan.
16. The Council has a standalone Prevent web page where information and support to reduce the threat of terrorism and extremism is published, including the local Police Prevent Teams referral pathway.
17. A training session on Prevent awareness is available to staff and currently one webinar is delivered monthly; Prevent Awareness Training for County Council’s elected members took place on 5th January 2026, jointly delivered with input from Counter Terrorism Police. Training is also delivered to County schools to share good practice with designated safeguarding leads within maintained schools and a training offer of a commissioned service which Academies can buy into. The Council also has training available for staff who take bookings from the public for local authority owned buildings.
18. The Council’s Venue Hire Policy and Responsible Event Booking Guidance has been in place since 2024 and good practice on this shared with all local authority partners across the county. This is to ensure that no designated group is able to hire a council building for extremist purposes.
19. The Council’s IT Firewall continues to meet the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) list requirement to know which groups it should block. The Council’s firewall meets the current CTIRU criterion.
20. The Council submitted a bid to the 2025/26 Radicalisation Fund which was successful, and Groundswell (a homeless health charity) was awarded the grant by the Home Office to provide a series of workshops on Safeguarding Neurodivergent young people. There has been a positive take on these online webinar sessions and Groundswell will be presenting an update report to the East Midlands Prevent

network in the Autumn with outcomes of the delivery and evaluation of these workshops.

21. The former annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) produced by the East Midlands Counter Terrorism Policing is now shared quarterly. The CTLP is an important document used by all partners in informing their risk assessments.

Channel Panel

22. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people, sits outside of the criminal space, and engagement with Channel is voluntary. The Channel Panel meets quarterly and the County Council officer representative is one of the Deputy Chairs for the LLR Channel Panel.
23. Following the tragic events in Southport in December 2025 (the knife attack which led to the deaths of three young girls) the Home Secretary announced the launch of a pilot to test new approaches to monitoring and supporting those cases that are referred to Prevent, which do not meet the threshold for Channel support, but where there are residual vulnerabilities warranting onward referral for support. The LLR local authorities were approached by the Home Office to take part in the pilot due to the strong partnership and good practice around Prevent. The Home Office is currently in the process of compiling the results from the pilot.

Home Office Annual Benchmarking

24. The 2025/26 Prevent Duty Annual Assurance Process took place with the Home Office on 12th February 2026. The Home Office will be sending a letter to the Council's Chief Executive in May informing it of the outcomes of the assurance exercise against the local authority Prevent duty benchmarking process.
25. The 2024/25 Prevent Duty Annual Assurance Process took place on 12th March 2025, the Council exceeded all but one of the 8 benchmarks which it met (Communication and Engagement); the reason for this is that Prevent is such a contentious issue amongst communities that very little proactive communication is undertaken. The Home Office are aware of this national issue.

Hate Crime

26. The County Council is represented on the LLR Hate Strategy Group which meets quarterly and plays an active role in delivering actions within the partnership Hate Delivery Plan; Partners have worked together and the Police launched the [Speak Out Space - Act together against hate crime](#), an online hub created to educate the communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland about what hate crimes are and the support available for anyone impacted.
27. Corporately, the Team designed and introduced the process of reporting hate incidents through the AssessNet system (used to report health and safety incidents,

near misses, and breaches of procedure). Its aim is to support a safer workplace by ensuring all safety-related events are logged accurately and acted upon promptly.

28. Furthermore, the hate Incident Report Form for communities to use has been embedded within the new ECINS case management system.

Anti-Social Behaviour

29. ASB is conduct that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress to others, encompassing both criminal acts (like vandalism) and non-criminal nuisances (like persistent noise), affecting community well-being by disregarding societal norms. Reporting is mostly handled by district councils and police for issues like [drug use](#), [graffiti](#), [aggressive begging](#), or [nuisance neighbours](#).
30. The ASB Partnership (made up of the County Council, Rutland Council, Leicester City Council, the 7 district councils and the Police) recognise that residents are entitled to live free from ASB and hate incidents. For the majority of residents, ASB is not a problem but where it does occur it can have a devastating effect on the quality of life for communities if not dealt with.
28. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, defines ASB as:
- (a) *conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to any person;*
 - (b) *conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or*
 - (c) *conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.*

Types of anti-social behaviour are wide-ranging and can take many forms.

The Partnership Approach to Dealing with ASB

29. The Partnership adopts an Incremental Approach when dealing with ASB; the purpose being to manage ASB in a consistent and proportionate manner.
30. The decision on the range of tools, powers and action used will be based on the circumstances of each case and will be proportionate to the behaviour exhibited and risk of harm, taking into account any vulnerabilities. Officers use their discretion to decide, on a risk-centred basis, at what stage they enter the incremental approach and to what extent each incremental step should be followed in turn. The rationale for such decisions will be recorded ECINS, the partnership case management system.
31. All hate-related cases will be treated as 'high risk' at the point a report is received. Cases which, on subsequent practitioner assessment, remain or become high risk will be referred to the Partnership's Joint Action Group (JAG) for multi-agency problem solving. Hate-related graffiti will be removed within 24 hours of receiving the report.

32. The Partnership will aim to resolve most ASB cases through non-legal means and may use a range of early intervention tools and techniques to prevent ASB from escalating and to resolve cases quickly. The police and the relevant council will decide who should take the lead in any case; for example, where there is a criminal element the police will be best placed to lead. The council will support its partners in their investigation and action in these instances.
33. The LLR ASB Strategy Group (chaired by the Council's Community Safety Manager) sets the strategic direction for the ASB Partnership, the ASB Delivery Group (chaired by the Council's Community Safety Officer) is the operational group leading the work across LLR on ASB. Whilst there is local variance, the County Council leads the work to ensure all victims receive a good standard of service wherever they live across LLR.
34. The Council leads the Partnership response to ASB with good processes and strong referral pathways, including victim support services, ensuring visible outcomes and better support for victims and for the most vulnerable in communities. The Team leads the continued delivery of bi-annual cross-partnership ASB Training for all front line ASB professionals to continue to raise awareness and encourage consistent usage of the LLR Incremental Approach. The Team has also developed Easy Read ASB documentation to support the understanding/awareness for those who may struggle to read/ understand standard documents or have language barriers. Further developments are planned following the success of this work.

Joint Action Groups

34. JAGS are multi-agency intelligence led local partnerships focussed on anti-social behaviour and related crime and disorder, dealing with the threat, risk and harm to local communities and local people, identifying and safeguarding vulnerable individuals through collaborative problem solving.
35. The purpose of JAGs are to:
 - a) Manage cases of ASB, including hate incidents and local crime issues through a multi-agency approach..
 - b) Deal with perpetrators of ASB through the incremental approach .
 - c) Support victims of ASB and related crime, particularly vulnerable victims.
 - d) Identify and refer offenders to Integrated Offender Management.
 - e) Focus on ASB hotspots across LLR.
36. The JAGs are an integral part of the management of ASB in the LLR area. A key element of their work is the management of high risk ASB cases, dealing with perpetrators through the incremental approach, and supporting victims, particularly those most vulnerable. The JAGS also focus on ASB hotspots within districts and so through a multi-agency, holistic approach will case-manage both people and places.
37. The County Council is leading a piece of work to undertake a review of all JAGs across LLR to ensure they are operating in a standardised way; a new set of

minimum operating standards will be drawn up by September 2026, and implemented in October after final consultation with partners.

ASB Case Review (formerly known as the Community Trigger)

38. Introduced through the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the ASB case review is a process that gives victims and communities the right to request a review of actions taken, where they believe an ongoing problem has not been adequately addressed.
39. The ASB case review is only to be used if the complainant believes that there has been a failure by the agencies concerned to respond adequately to their reports of anti-social behaviour. The threshold to be met is one hate incident reported in a six-month period or three reported incidents of ASB within a six-month period.
40. Whilst the national recommendation is three reported incidents of ASB within a six-month period, locally partners have also agreed to the further threshold of one hate incident reported in a six-month period due to the significant detrimental impact these incidents have on victims.
41. The County Council leads the work to establish the processes and minimum standards to govern the reviews.

ASB Case Management System - ECINS

42. In 2025 the ASB Partnership agreed to the procurement of a new case management system, with the County Council leading on its procurement.
43. The system is now running well and its further development, using Home Office funding, is being discussed; this will enable the partnership to use “hot spot mapping” to identify significant clusters/ concentrations of ASB as well as further improvement in data collation and analysis.
44. The Partnership shares information in line with legislation between partners to adopt a multi-agency approach to tackling ASB, to identify vulnerability and reduce risk, threat and harm to individuals and communities, whilst ensuring that requirements of data protection legislation are strictly complied with.

Domestic Abuse

45. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has allocated grant funding to each local authority for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation duty under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This duty requires local authorities in England to assess the need for, and provide, support within safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children. It focuses on providing specialised, supported refuge spaces, not just housing
46. Tier-one local authorities (such as the County and City Councils) have received the following funding, whilst each district council (tier-two authorities) has received approximately £33,000 for each year:

- i. DA duty 2021-2022 allocation: £1,127,205
- ii. DA duty 2022-2023 allocation: £1,130,326
- iii. DA duty 2023-2024 allocation: £1,152,936
- iv. DA duty 2024-2025 allocation: £1,174,689
- v. DA duty 2025 – 2026/ 2026-2027 allocation: £ 1,463,965 – this, and all future funding has now moved from a grant fund allocation to local government financial settlement.

Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment (SANA)

- 47. The purpose of the SANA was to review safe accommodation across Leicestershire, identify gaps in provision and service to vulnerable victims of DA to enable the County Council to gain a clearer understanding of local need and help to inform its Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy (2026) and future commissioning.
- 48. The SANA looked at the DA support offer across the system in the County, including the offer through partner agencies. The SANA demonstrates that the services the County Council has commissioned to date to support victims of DA (including children) are having a positive impact and increasing confidence in reporting.

Funding Allocation

- 49. The SANA identifies areas in greatest need of support. Resources are concentrated on high vulnerability, high need and high risk situations. The Council also commissioned specialist voluntary sector services, subject matter experts in their field, to provide highly tailored, wrap-around holistic recovery and support that address the victims' and survivors' full range of needs.
- 50. Services commissioned to date from the funding discussed in paragraph 45 includes support for families experiencing DA, therapy for children and adults, community-based support offering advice and signposting as well as advocacy and support within DA refuges. The Council established an Extended Domestic Abuse team in year 2 (2022-2023) to provide specialist support and assistance to victims of domestic abuse.
- 51. The procurement process for the Safe Accommodation has also been undertaken as is required under the DA Act in order to provide safe accommodation to victims of DA. The safe accommodation units now provide housing and deliver support; they have added 19 additional units to the housing support across Leicestershire. The SANA highlighted the continued lack of Safe Accommodation; there is a severe lack of property for refuge or dispersed accommodation and all of the Safe Accommodation is currently located in the Charnwood and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council areas where there is available housing stock. Further work will be undertaken in an attempt to locate properties in other districts.
- 52. There is a significant shortage of therapeutic support for children and young people who are victims of DA. The DA Act 2021 recognises that children and young people who live in a household where DA is present are victims (rather than witnesses); much research has been conducted on the negative impact of DA on children and the effect this has on them throughout their childhood and into adulthood. The

Council will seek to increase therapeutic support for vulnerable children and young people.

53. The SANA highlights the rise in the number of older victims, which is reflected in increasing Domestic Homicide Reviews and through research undertaken by Durham University. Work is currently underway to establish how best to support older victims and survivors of DA.
54. Far reaching communication campaigns will be undertaken to target specific groups (for example victims living in rural areas), to raise awareness of DA and the services available. Furthermore officers from the County Council and partner organisations will also be advised of services available to their service users.

Consultation on the draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026 – 2029

55. On 24th March 2026 the Cabinet approved the draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026–2029 for public, partner and stakeholder consultation, engaging with residents, partners, survivors, young people, commissioned services and community organisations. This consultation is taking place from 2 April to 17 May through on line meetings, face to face meetings, an on line link, paper copies and communications through the Council’s social media channels.
56. The draft Strategy sets out a three-year programme shaped by survivors, partners and data and is a statutory requirement under the DA Act 2021. It also supports delivery of the Council’s Strategic Plan 2022–26, particularly the outcomes relating to keeping people safe, improving wellbeing, and supporting strong communities.
57. The Strategy will be delivered through existing domestic abuse funding, including central government allocations for safe accommodation duties.

Statutory Context

58. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places duties on Tier One authorities, including:
 - assessing local need and commissioning support in safe accommodation
 - recognising children as victims in their own right
 - ensuring multi-agency coordination across police, health, housing, education and specialist provision
 - embedding a whole-system trauma-informed approach.

The Draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026–2029

59. The Strategy (attached as Appendix A to this report) sets out a three-year programme shaped by survivors, partners and data. Its four priorities are:
 - (i) Improving Data Quality and Information Sharing
 - (ii) Early Intervention, Prevention and Communication
 - (iii) Targeted Support and Safe Accommodation (statutory duties)
 - (iv) Strong Partnerships.

Needs Assessment:

60. In 2024, the Council commissioned SafeLives (a UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse) to undertake a comprehensive Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (attached as Appendix B to this report). Findings highlight rising demand, increased numbers of under-18s experiencing domestic abuse, high levels of hidden harm, gaps in data quality and consistency, a shortfall in safe accommodation capacity, and opportunities to improve early identification, public awareness and trauma-informed practice.

Resource Implications

61. Consultation costs will be met within existing budgets.
62. The Strategy will be delivered through existing domestic abuse funding, including central government allocations for safe accommodation duties. A full financial breakdown will be included in the Cabinet report to be presented in July 2026.
63. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Public Health, Law and Governance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Timetable for Decisions

64. A 6-week consultation including a public online survey, focus groups with survivors of domestic abuse (including young people, men and older people) and engagement with schools, Family Hubs and specialist providers, partner forums, and accessible materials for marginalised communities.
65. It is intended that a report on the outcome of the consultation (including comments of the Scrutiny Commission) and presenting the final Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy will be submitted to the Cabinet at its meeting on 21 July 2026.

Recommendation for the Scrutiny Commission

66. And concluded no It is recommended that the Commission:
- a) To note the Safer Communities annual update;
 - b) Comment on the draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026 – 2029 appended to this report.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 24 March 2026 and minutes of that meeting
<https://cexmodgov01/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=135&MIId=8305>

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Statutory Guidance)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62c6df068fa8f54e855dfe31/Domestic_Abuse_Act_2021_Statutory_Guidance.pdf

Equality Implications

67. The SANA has looked at the specific needs of marginalised communities. As result of this, specialised services have been commissioned through “by and for organisations” offering targeted support. For example the Council is the first authority to commission support for the Gypsy and Traveller Community and Leicestershire has the only Independent Domestic Violence Advocate in the country.
68. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on the draft Strategy and concluded that there are no adverse implications for any marginalised community as protected characteristics have been specifically considered and targeted services for these communities are being commissioned.

Human Rights Implications

69. Due regard has been paid in respect for human rights through the Equality Impact Assessment; no implications have arisen as protected characteristics have been specifically considered and targeted services for these communities are being commissioned.

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Appendices

- Appendix A - Draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026–2029
Appendix B - Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (Safe Lives, 2024)

Draft

Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026-29

Introduction

Domestic Abuse continues to present a significant and complex challenge for many, including adults from marginalised communities, men, children, young people and families across Leicestershire. In 2024, Leicestershire County Council commissioned SafeLives, the UK-wide domestic abuse charity, to undertake a comprehensive needs assessment to support the Council in meeting its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and to strengthen local responses for adults and children affected by abuse.

The SafeLives Needs Assessment highlights that domestic abuse in Leicestershire is widespread and often hidden, with many victims experiencing long-term patterns of harm before receiving support. It reinforces that abuse is not limited to physical violence and frequently includes controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional abuse and economic abuse forms of harm that are not always recognised by victims themselves, their families, or wider communities. This lack of recognition contributes to delayed disclosure and missed opportunities for Early Help.

Crucially, the assessment reflects the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 in recognising children as victims in their own right when they see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse. SafeLives' findings underline the profound impact domestic abuse has on children's safety, emotional wellbeing, development and educational outcomes, and the importance of safeguarding responses that fully understand and address this harm.

The needs assessment also identifies the importance of joined-up, trauma-informed systems. Survivors and professionals described how fragmented responses, unclear pathways and the need to repeat experiences across services can re-traumatise families and undermine safety. Where agencies worked together effectively - particularly across Children and Families services, early help, housing, health, police and specialist domestic abuse provision - families were more likely to receive timely and appropriate support.

SafeLives further emphasised the critical role of early intervention and communication. Many survivors reported that friends, family members and even professionals did not recognise abuse or were unsure how to respond. The assessment highlights the need for clearer, consistent communication across communities and services about what domestic abuse looks like, how it affects children, and how and where to seek help safely.

This Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy responds directly to the findings of the SafeLives Needs Assessment and to the insights survivors gave. It sets out how Leicestershire County Council, working through Children and Families Services and in partnership with local agencies, will strengthen prevention, improve early recognition, protect victim and survivors, and provide coordinated, trauma-informed support.

It describes how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse (DA) victims and survivors will be provided over the next three years and outlines four objectives that will be the focus of delivery:

- 1. Improve the quality of data and information sharing**
- 2. Early Intervention and Prevention, including detailed communication campaigns**
- 3. Targeted Support**
- 4. Strong Partnerships**

Background

Domestic Abuse causes significant harm to individuals, children, families, and communities.

The scale and impact is vast. The SafeLives prevalence tool shows that 98,000 adults in Leicestershire have experienced DA at some point since the age of 16, with approximately 15% experiencing both partner and family abuse. Furthermore 30,500 adult victims have experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year with approximately 8% experiencing both partner and family abuse. 73,500 (68%) are estimated to be female and 35,000 (32%) are estimated to be male. It is further estimated that 6,000 were young victims (16-24 years old) and 6,000 were older victims (60+ years old); the overall number of victims has increased year on year.

A Survivor's Perspective

The following statement reflects the voices and experiences of survivors who have contributed to the development of this strategy. It is shared anonymously, with gratitude for their courage and insight:

“Domestic abuse doesn’t always start with violence. For many of us, it begins with control, fear, isolation and the slow loss of confidence. It can happen behind closed doors, while outwardly life appears normal. Speaking out is one of the hardest steps to take — often because you don’t know who to trust, whether you’ll be believed, or what will happen next.”

“When I finally asked for help, what mattered most was being listened to without judgement. I needed professionals who understood that leaving isn’t a single moment, but a process, and that fear doesn’t end just because the abuse has stopped. Practical support — with housing, finances, and my children — made the difference between surviving and being able to rebuild my life.”

“This strategy matters because it recognises that survivors are not all the same. We need services that are accessible, trauma-informed, culturally sensitive and joined-up, so we don’t have to repeat our story again and again. We need responses that focus on safety, dignity and choice.”

“Most importantly, I want others experiencing abuse to know this: you are not alone, the abuse is not your fault, and help should be there when you are ready — not just when you are at crisis point.”

Informed by lived experience, this strategy commits to:

- Putting adult and child survivors’ voices at the heart of decision-making, service design and evaluation
- Believing and validating disclosures of abuse, without blame or judgement
- Providing consistent, trauma-informed support, recognising the long-term impact of abuse
- Reducing barriers to help, including for those facing additional inequalities or risks
- Ensuring safety, choice and control remain central to all interventions

Survivors’ experiences remind us that effective domestic abuse responses are not defined solely by policies or processes, but by how safe, supported and empowered people feel when they seek help. This strategy is grounded in that understanding and will continue to be shaped by the voices of those with lived experience.

Many survivors told us that neither they, nor the people around them, recognised what was happening as domestic abuse. Friends, family members and even professionals often saw behaviour as ‘relationship problems’ or ‘stress at home’, rather than abuse. This meant that warning signs were missed and support was delayed.

Survivors spoke about how controlling behaviour, emotional harm and financial abuse were normalised or minimised — not only by the perpetrator, but sometimes by those closest to them. Some said that when they tried to talk about what was happening, they were advised to ‘work it out’, ‘stay for the children’, or were not believed, as was the case for a male survivor. This left survivors feeling isolated and unsure where to turn.

Parents shared that fear of judgement, particularly around their parenting, made it even harder to seek help. What helped was when professionals clearly named abuse, explained the impact on children, and reassured survivors that asking for help was a protective step.

Children and young people also described not having the words to explain what they were experiencing. Survivors welcomed the recognition in the Domestic Abuse Act that children are recognised as victims but said that this needs to be matched by clear communication in schools, services and communities about what abuse looks like and how to get help.

Survivors consistently said that better communication - clear, consistent and accessible - could have helped them and those around them recognise abuse earlier. Knowing what domestic abuse is, where to get support, and that help is available without judgement was seen as critical to keeping victims safe.

Survivors' voices are central to this strategy; their experiences remind us that legislation alone is not enough — it must be translated into compassionate, coordinated and effective local action.

DA Act 2021

The DA Act places a statutory duty on Tier One local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse including children within refuges and other safe accommodation.

The Act strengthens protection and support for victims and survivors by:

- Defining domestic abuse in law, including physical, sexual, emotional, economic and controlling or coercive behaviour
- Recognising children as victims of domestic abuse if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse
- Placing duties on local authorities to assess need and provide support for victims and their children in safe accommodation
- Requiring partnership working between councils, police, health services and other relevant agencies
- Embedding a survivor-centred approach, focused on safety, choice, dignity and long-term recovery

The Priorities

1. Improve the quality of data and information sharing

High-quality data and effective information sharing are essential to understanding the scale and nature of domestic abuse in Leicestershire, identifying risk earlier, protecting children, and delivering coordinated, trauma-informed responses. Current learning highlights variation in how domestic abuse is recorded, shared and used across services, which can limit our ability to respond effectively and to evidence impact.

The Needs Assessment has highlighted that within the datasets across the partnership, data capture for certain categories is lacking. This includes:

- **Ethnicity:** Different ethnic groups have different experiences of services and experience different barriers. It is important to ensure that ethnicity is captured appropriately to fully understand the demographic and needs of Leicestershire.
- **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:** Those in LGBT+ relationships face additional barriers to reporting and accessing services. It is important to ensure that this information is asked and captured in order to fully understand the demographics and needs of Leicestershire.
- **Socio Economic status:** Research in the UK has consistently found vulnerability to DA to be associated with low income, economic strain, and benefit receipt.

There have been significant improvements in the level and accuracy of the data collected compared to the previous needs assessment particularly around age, gender and ethnicity.

It is important to ensure that this information is asked and captured in order to fully understand the demographics and intersecting needs of victims and survivors within Leicestershire.

There were challenges in the collection and the consistency of data provided including some partners being unable to provide any data at all.

A concern is that by not capturing the demographic data of the whole family, we cannot understand the needs of the whole family and provide appropriate support.

We will strengthen how domestic abuse data is collected, shared and used across Children and Families services and partner agencies, ensuring that information supports timely decision-making, safeguards children, reduces repeat harm and drives continuous improvement.

We will:

- Improve the consistency and quality of domestic abuse recording, including non-physical abuse and the lived experience of children and adults, across Early Help, safeguarding and commissioned services
- Strengthen information-sharing arrangements between Children and Families, Community Safety, Police, Health, Housing, Education and specialist domestic abuse services, in line with statutory guidance
- Reduce duplication and gaps by ensuring families do not have to repeat their experiences unnecessarily
- Develop shared data standards, definitions and pathways, enabling clearer tracking of journeys and outcomes
- Use data intelligently to identify risk earlier, target prevention activity and inform commissioning and service design
- Work with commissioned services to ensure there is a shared understanding of the requirements embedding data requirements into contracts

Intended Outcomes

- Targeted and appropriate support services for all communities both in terms of need and geography
- A clear understanding of victim's characteristics, areas of multiple disadvantage and complex needs
- A clearer, shared understanding of domestic abuse prevention and support need and patterns across Leicestershire
- Earlier identification of risk
- More coordinated, timely and proportionate responses across agencies
- Improved ability to evidence impact, outcomes and value for money
- Greater accountability and learning across the partnership

Performance Measures and Success Indicators

- Percentage of cases where the impact on children is explicitly captured
- Reduction in missing or incomplete domestic abuse fields across systems
- Percentage of relevant cases with evidence of timely multi-agency information sharing
- Reduction in the number of times survivors report having to repeat their experiences across services

- MARAC and multi-agency meeting records demonstrating improved data completeness and action tracking
- Regular publication of a multi-agency domestic abuse dashboard to inform strategic oversight
- Evidence that data is used to identify trends, target early help and improve service access for under-represented groups
- Annual reporting demonstrating how learning from data, audits and reviews has informed service improvement

Strategic Commitment

By improving the quality of data and information sharing, we will ensure that domestic abuse responses in Leicestershire are better informed, better connected and more effective. This priority underpins all others in the strategy and is critical to delivering safer outcomes for victims and survivors including children and families.

2. Early Intervention and Prevention including Communication

Early intervention and prevention are essential to reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse and improving outcomes for victims and survivors. Evidence from the local needs assessment and survivor engagement shows that opportunities to identify abuse earlier are often missed, particularly within universal services where families have regular contact but concerns may not yet meet statutory thresholds.

We will strengthen early intervention and prevention by embedding a clear, consistent domestic abuse response across Family Hubs, Early Help and education settings, ensuring that abuse is recognised early, responded to proportionately, and addressed before risk escalates.

We will:

- Embed domestic abuse awareness, safe enquiry and response within Family Hub services, including health visiting, midwifery, perinatal mental health, early years and parenting support
- Ensure Family Hubs act as trusted access points for advice, information and early help for parents and carers experiencing domestic abuse
- Provide clear pathways from Family Hubs into Early Help, specialist domestic abuse support and safeguarding services where required
- Embed domestic abuse consistently within Early Help assessment, planning and review processes, ensuring non-physical abuse and coercive control are recognised
- Ensure Early Help pathways clearly distinguish between healthy relationships, parental conflict and domestic abuse, enabling the right response at the right level
- Strengthen step-up and step-down arrangements so families experience continuity of support as needs change
- Strengthen the role of schools and colleges as key partners in early identification and prevention, recognising the impact of domestic abuse on attendance, behaviour and emotional wellbeing
- Support Designated Safeguarding Leads and school staff to recognise signs of domestic abuse affecting children and families, including where abuse occurs at home

- Ensure schools and colleges have clear routes into safeguarding services and support from specialist providers, and understand how to respond safely to disclosures
- Promote preventative education, including healthy relationships, safety and resilience, using age-appropriate approaches

Intended Outcomes

- Domestic abuse is identified earlier across universal and early help services
- Families receive timely, proportionate support before harm escalates
- Children affected by domestic abuse are recognised and supported sooner
- Improved confidence among professionals to act at the earliest opportunity
- Reduced escalation to crisis, statutory intervention and repeat harm

Performance Measures and Success Indicators

- Increase in identification of victims and perpetrators at an early stage
- Percentage of people signposted or referred to support soon after early signs are detected
- Proportion of practitioners trained in domestic abuse-informed practice
- Increase in timely engagement with services following first contact
- Reduction in repeat victimisation or repeat police callouts
- Improvements in survivor coping skills, confidence, and self-efficacy
- Reduction in stress, anxiety, and trauma symptoms
- Increased access to housing, financial support, legal advice, and social networks
- Changes in community attitudes toward domestic abuse
- Increase in help-seeking behaviours

Strategic Commitment

By embedding domestic abuse awareness into early intervention and prevention within Family Hubs, Early Help and schools, we will ensure that victims in Leicestershire receive the right support at the earliest opportunity. This approach shifts the system from crisis response to earlier, safer and more effective intervention, reducing harm and improving long-term outcomes.

Communication

Through engagement in Leicestershire, survivors highlighted the need for:

- Greater public understanding of domestic abuse, including non-physical and controlling behaviours
- Clearer information for friends, family and whole communities, so they can recognise abuse and respond safely
- Consistent messages across services, reducing confusion about thresholds, roles and support available
- Early conversations with parents and children, using accessible, age-appropriate language
- Visible, trusted routes to help, so survivors know where to turn when they are ready

- Survivors' engagement has made clear that earlier recognition and better communication can change outcomes for victims; we shall work tirelessly to raise awareness amongst the public and professionals through various routes including:
 - Face to face engagement eg community meetings and forums
 - Digital and on line channels eg Local authority website updates and news pages
 - Printed communications eg newsletter and posters in GP surgeries
 - Media engagement eg press releases and radio interviews
 - Community partnerships eg working through faith/community leaders and schools

3. DA Act (Part 4) – Safe Accommodation

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a statutory duty on local authorities to assess the need for, and commission, support for victims and their children within relevant safe accommodation. This includes refuges, dispersed accommodation, sanctuary schemes and other forms of safe housing, alongside the specialist support required to help families remain safe and begin recovery.

There are currently 21 safe accommodation spaces in Leicestershire. The Council of Europe recommendation is 1 family place per 10,000 population. The population of Leicestershire is 706,155 therefore the recommended number is 70 spaces. The current provision available in Leicestershire is significantly below the recommended level furthermore, referrals for Safe Accommodation have increased significantly as have homelessness presentations

We will continue to strengthen our duties under Part 4 of the Act by ensuring that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access safe, appropriate accommodation and high-quality, trauma-informed support, regardless of their circumstances. This priority recognises that safe accommodation is not only about housing, but about safety, stability, dignity and long-term outcomes for families.

We will:

- Fulfil our statutory responsibilities by maintaining a robust local needs assessment, regularly reviewed and informed by data, lived experience and partnership intelligence
- Commission and coordinate a range of safe accommodation options, including refuge, dispersed and sanctuary provision, to meet diverse needs
- Ensure victims and their children receive specialist, trauma-informed support while in safe accommodation, recognising children as victims in their own right
- Strengthen pathways into and out of safe accommodation, including planned move-on, housing sustainment and community-based support
- Work through the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to provide strong governance, oversight and accountability for Part 4 delivery
- Reduce barriers to access, including for victims with additional needs or facing disadvantage, ensuring services are accessible and inclusive
- Ensure effective joint working with Children and Families services, safeguarding partners, housing providers and specialist domestic abuse services

Intended Outcomes

- Victims are able to access safe accommodation when needed
- Children in safe accommodation are recognised and supported as victims of domestic abuse
- Families experience coordinated, trauma-informed support that promotes safety and recovery
- Improved move-on outcomes, reducing repeat homelessness and repeat abuse
- Clear accountability and assurance in meeting statutory duties

Performance Measures and Success Indicators

- Availability and utilisation of safe accommodation aligned to identified need
- Reduced waiting times for access to appropriate safe accommodation
- Range of provision meeting the needs of families, including those with additional or complex needs, men and marginalised communities
- Percentage of adults and children in safe accommodation receiving specialist support
- Improved safety, wellbeing and stability reported by survivors and children
- Successful planned move-on from safe accommodation into stable housing
- Effective operation of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board
- Regular reporting against Part 4 duties, needs assessment findings and commissioning outcomes
- Evidence that survivor feedback and learning inform service improvement

Strategic Commitment

Through this priority, we will ensure that Leicestershire County Council continues to meet its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Part 4 while striving to go beyond minimum requirements. By working in partnership and keeping victims and survivors at the centre of our approach, we will deliver safe accommodation and support that not only protects from immediate harm, but helps them build safer, more stable futures.

Leicestershire and Rutland Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board provides strategic leadership, governance and accountability for the delivery of domestic abuse priorities across Leicestershire and Rutland, with a specific statutory role in overseeing duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 relating to support in safe accommodation. The Board brings together key partners to ensure a coordinated, survivor-centred and evidence-led response to domestic abuse, with a strong focus on safeguarding children and supporting families affected by abuse.

The Local Partnership Board:

- Provides strategic oversight of the Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy and associated delivery plans
- Supports the Council to meet its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, particularly Part 4

- Oversees the development, review and implementation of the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment
- Agrees priorities for commissioning and service development, informed by data, lived experience and local need
- Champions a whole-system, partnership approach, ensuring alignment across Children and Families, Community Safety, Health, Housing, Police, Education and the voluntary sector
- Promotes trauma-informed, survivor-centred practice, recognising children as victims in their own right
- Ensures learning from survivor engagement, audits, Domestic Homicide Reviews and performance data informs continuous improvement

Membership of the Local Partnership Board reflects statutory guidance and local need and includes representation from across Leicestershire and Rutland, furthermore the Board ensures that survivor and lived experience voices are meaningfully embedded within its work through a Survivor Advisory Group.

The Local Partnership Board is accountable for:

- Ensuring clear lines of responsibility for the delivery of Part 4 duties and wider strategy priorities
- Agreeing and monitoring performance measures and outcomes, including access to safe accommodation and support for children
- Holding partners to account for their contributions to agreed actions and outcomes
- Escalating risks, gaps or system pressures to senior leadership and relevant governance bodies
- Ensuring decisions are evidence-based, transparent and focused on improving safety and outcomes

The Board operates with clear terms of reference, decision-making processes and reporting arrangements.

To ensure effective delivery, the Local Partnership Board:

- Receives regular performance reports against the Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy and Part 4 delivery plan
- Monitors trends in demand, access, outcomes and equality of service provision
- Uses a multi-agency domestic abuse performance dashboard to support oversight and decision-making
- Commissions or request audits, reviews and deep-dives where concerns are identified
- Ensures actions are taken in response to learning from data, survivor feedback and statutory reviews

4.Strong Partnerships

Domestic Abuse cannot be prevented or reduced by any single organisation working alone. Strong, effective partnerships are essential to identifying risk early, safeguarding children, supporting survivors, holding perpetrators to account and delivering coordinated, trauma-informed responses. Local evidence and survivor

feedback consistently show that where agencies work well together, families experience safer, more timely and more effective support.

Leicestershire has strong partnership arrangements in place to share information and develop joint plans to protect victims and survivors and hold perpetrators to account – the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings continue to take a joint approach to risk assessment and safety planning for victims living in Leicestershire. A review of the MARAC has been undertaken by SafeLives and recommendations are being implemented across the partnership.

We will continue to strengthen and sustain partnerships across statutory, voluntary, community and faith sectors to ensure a shared understanding of domestic abuse, clear roles and responsibilities, and joined-up action at every stage of a victims journey.

We will:

- Strengthen multi-agency collaboration across Children and Families, Community Safety, Health, Police, Housing, Education, Probation and specialist domestic abuse services
- Ensure partners share a common vision and shared priorities, grounded in safeguarding children and supporting survivors
- Clarify roles, responsibilities and pathways, so survivors experience coordinated support rather than fragmented responses
- Value and support the role of the voluntary and community sector, recognising their expertise, trusted relationships and reach into communities
- Embed domestic abuse as a shared priority across strategic boards, partnerships and governance arrangements
- Promote a culture of mutual challenge, learning and accountability, using data, audits and lived experience to drive improvement

Intended Outcomes

- Consistent, joined-up responses to domestic abuse across agencies
- Clear and timely pathways for children, survivors and families
- Reduced duplication and fewer gaps between services
- Improved safety, experience and outcomes for families affected by domestic abuse
- Stronger system resilience and shared ownership of risk

Performance Measures and Success Indicators

- Regular attendance and engagement from key partners at strategic and operational forums
- Clear, agreed pathways and protocols in place and consistently used
- Partner feedback indicating improved clarity of roles and joint working
- Evidence of coordinated multi-agency plans for families affected by domestic abuse
- Reduction in delays caused by hand-offs or unclear responsibilities
- Improved timeliness of referrals and access to support
- Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, audits and case reviews shared and acted upon across partners
- Joint training and development activity delivered and evaluated

- Evidence that partnership learning informs service design and commissioning
- Domestic Homicide Review recommendations are actioned across the system

Strategic Commitment

By investing in strong partnerships, we will ensure that domestic abuse responses are coordinated, consistent and effective, and that no single service carries risk alone. This priority underpins the whole strategy and reflects our commitment to working together to safeguard children, support survivors and reduce domestic abuse across our communities.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a statutory, multi-agency review that must be carried out when the death of a person aged 16 or over has resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a current or former intimate partner, or a family member. The purpose of a DHR is not to apportion blame, but to identify learning that can improve future responses to domestic abuse and reduce the risk of further deaths. DHRs consider the contact that victims, perpetrators and their families had with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and other services, and examine how agencies worked both individually and together.

Domestic Homicide Reviews are, by their nature, a partnership responsibility. Effective DHRs depend on the active engagement, openness and accountability of all relevant agencies, including local authorities, police, health, housing, probation, education and specialist domestic abuse services.

Within Leicestershire, DHRs are overseen through established governance arrangements within the Safeguarding Partnerships Board Office, with learning shared across strategic and operational partnerships, including the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, Children and Families Partnership, Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board and Community Safety Partnerships.

Partnerships play a critical role in ensuring that:

- Reviews are conducted thoroughly, independently and within statutory timescales
- Agencies contribute openly and reflectively to the review process
- Learning is translated into practical, system-wide improvements, rather than remaining a paper exercise
- The victim and their family remain central to the process

Learning and System Improvement

Domestic Homicide Reviews provide vital insight into:

- Missed opportunities for early identification and intervention
- How information was shared, or not shared, between agencies
- The impact of domestic abuse on children and families
- Barriers faced by victims in accessing support
- How risk was assessed, managed and escalated
- Gaps in services and support available within the local community / across the service area

A key responsibility of local partnerships is to ensure that learning from DHRs is embedded across the system, not confined to the agencies directly involved in a specific case. This includes identifying recurring themes, systemic issues and workforce development needs.

Partnership Responsibilities for DHR Learning

Through this strategy, partners commit to:

- Treating DHRs as a collective learning process, with shared responsibility for improvement
- Ensuring that recommendations are owned, tracked and delivered through appropriate governance structures
- Sharing learning across Children and Families services, safeguarding arrangements, MARAC, Early Help, Family Hubs, schools and frontline practitioners
- Using DHR findings to inform policy, practice, commissioning, training and communication activity
- Considering the specific learning relating to children's lived experience, non-physical abuse, coercive control, and information sharing
- Reviewing progress regularly and challenging where change is not being achieved

The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board provides strategic oversight of DHR learning in relation to domestic abuse and ensures alignment with the Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy. The Board will:

- Receive regular updates on DHR progress, themes and actions
- Monitor delivery of agreed actions and escalate concerns where required
- Ensure learning is reflected in strategy priorities, delivery plans and performance frameworks
- Work alongside safeguarding and community safety partnerships to ensure coherent and coordinated responses

Domestic Homicide Reviews remind us of the serious consequences of domestic abuse and the importance of getting responses right. As partners, we commit to approaching DHRs with professional curiosity, humility and a shared determination to improve.

By learning together, challenging constructively and acting decisively, partnerships in Leicestershire will use DHRs to strengthen early intervention, improve information sharing, safeguard children and ultimately reduce the risk of future harm and loss of life.

How This Strategy Will Be Delivered

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy will be delivered through a whole-system, partnership-led approach, recognising that reducing domestic abuse and improving outcomes for victims and survivors requires coordinated action across statutory, voluntary and community partners.

Delivery will be underpinned by strong governance, clear accountability, effective partnership working, robust data and continuous learning.

Overall leadership and accountability for delivery of this strategy will sit with the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. The Board will provide strategic direction, oversight and challenge, ensuring that the priorities of this strategy are delivered and that statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including Part 4, are met.

Each strategic priority within this strategy will be supported by:

- A defined set of delivery actions
- Named lead agencies and partners
- Clear outcomes and performance measures
- Timescales for delivery

A detailed delivery plan will be maintained and reviewed regularly to ensure progress is tracked, actions remain relevant, and resources are targeted effectively.

Conclusion

The strategy will be delivered through a confident, skilled and supported workforce.

This will include:

- Multi-agency training and development aligned to strategy priorities
- Strengthening understanding of domestic abuse, including non-physical abuse and coercive control
- Embedding trauma-informed, strengths-based practice across services
- Supporting professionals to identify abuse early and respond appropriately

Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, audits, MARAC and survivor feedback will be used to continuously improve practice.

Delivery will be informed by high-quality data and shared intelligence. A multi-agency approach to data and information sharing will support:

- Early identification of risk
- Monitoring demand, access and outcomes
- Identifying inequalities and unmet need
- Evidence-based decision-making and commissioning

Performance will be monitored through agreed indicators and reported regularly to the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and relevant governance structures.

Survivors, children and families will remain central to delivery of the strategy.

This will be achieved by:

- Ongoing engagement with survivors and young people
- Using lived experience to inform service design, commissioning and communication
- Gathering feedback on service experience and outcomes
- Ensuring survivor voice informs review and improvement activity

This strategy is a living document. Progress will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains responsive to emerging need, learning and changes in the local or national context.

We will:

- Publish regular progress updates and annual reports
- Review and refresh delivery actions as required

- Track and deliver actions arising from reviews and learning
- Hold partners to account for agreed commitments

Our Commitment

Through strong leadership, shared accountability and effective partnership working, this strategy will be delivered in a way that is coordinated, evidence-led and focused on improving safety and outcomes. By working together, we will reduce harm, strengthen early intervention, support recovery and ensure that children and families affected by domestic abuse receive the help they need, when they need it.

For further information about this Strategy please contact:

communitysafety@leics.gov.uk

Glossary

Commissioned

specialised providers formally chosen by public bodies to deliver specific services to vulnerable citizens following a rigorous commissioning process

Domestic Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between anyone aged 16+ who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional.

DHR (Domestic Homicide Review)

A review into the circumstances around a death of an individual following domestic abuse. Public bodies (police, councils, social services, etc) come together to understand and learn from the circumstances and help raise awareness in local communities of how to help victims in order to prevent further loss of life. Home Office Guidance is expected to change DHRs to **DArDR (Domestic Abuse related Death Review)** and will include deaths by suicide where there was domestic abuse.

Early Intervention

An integrated public body approach, to support people to recover faster and live healthier and more independent lives.

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

A meeting bringing agencies together to undertake a comprehensive assessment of a victim's needs including any children, and link them, and the perpetrator to appropriate services.

Marginalised communities

Those excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life including ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, people with physical and mental disabilities, LGBTQ+, and older people.

Multi-agency

Professionals from different agencies working together to reduce duplication and improve services, whilst saving money.

Perpetrators

People who use abusive behaviours and actions to cause harm.

Prevention

Not all problems can be prevented, but for those that can, by providing people with the early support it reduces the need for crisis intervention.

Trauma Informed

A practice of recognising the widespread impact of trauma increasing professional's awareness of how trauma can impact individuals and delivering support in a personal way.

Victims/survivors

Someone who has been subjected to domestic abuse, including adults, children and young people.

Whole System

Local stakeholders come together, share an understanding of the reality of the challenges and consider how the local system operates bringing change through shared activities in an integrated way with long term benefit.

DRAFT



Leicestershire County Council

Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

November 2024

About SafeLives

We are SafeLives, the UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.

We work with organisations across the UK to transform the response to domestic abuse. We want what you would want for your best friend. We listen to survivors, putting their voices at the heart of our thinking. We look at the whole picture for each individual and family to get the right help at the right time to make families everywhere safe and well. And we challenge perpetrators to change, asking 'why doesn't he stop?' rather than 'why doesn't she leave?' This applies whatever the gender of the victim or perpetrator and whatever the nature of their relationship.

Last year alone, nearly 11,000 professionals working on the frontline received our training. Over 65,000 adults at risk of serious harm or murder and more than 85,000 children received support through dedicated multi-agency support designed by us and delivered with partners. In the last three years, over 1,000 perpetrators have been challenged and supported to change by interventions we created with partners, and that's just the start. Together we can end domestic abuse. Forever. For everyone.

Glossary

DA – Domestic Abuse

Dash – Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-Based Violence

DHR – Domestic Homicide Review

HBV – Honour Based Violence

Idva- Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

IPV – Intimate Partner Violence

LA – Local Authorities

LPB – Local Partnership Board

Marac – Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

MSF – Most Similar Force (Police)

NRPF – No Recourse to Public Funds

VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls

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About this project

Context

SafeLives have been commissioned to provide support and coordination to Leicestershire County Council in carrying out the Safe Accommodation needs assessment in line with their statutory duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

This report outlines our findings, following review and analysis of data provided by agencies and organisations across Leicestershire, and from hearing the voice and experiences of victims and survivors.

We are very grateful to everyone who participated in this needs assessment. Their willingness to share information and expertise helped us immensely with drawing together the detail in this report.

Project aims and objectives

The project aims were to support the Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership in gaining an understanding of the current landscape for safe accommodation to enable effective planning and commissioning.

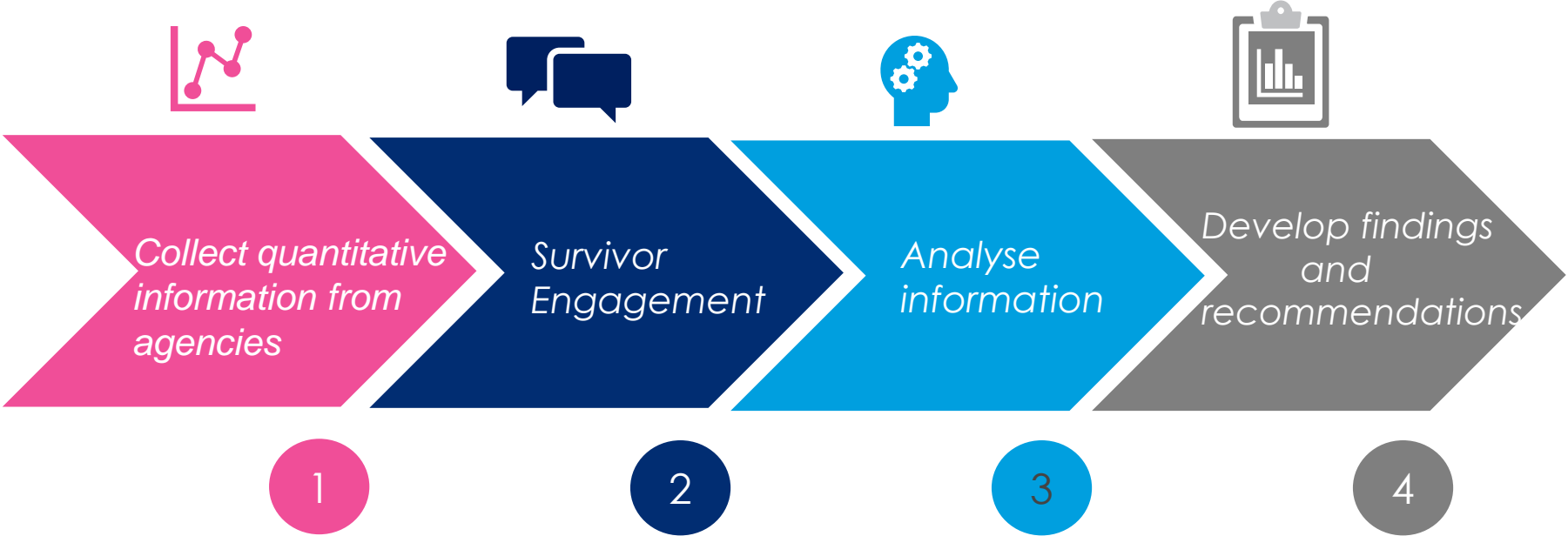
Key objectives were:

- Carry out a needs assessment of safe accommodation across Leicestershire County
- A review of safe accommodation provision
- Identify gaps and needs in safe accommodation provision
- Review and assess implementation of recommendations from the previous needs assessment

Data was collated using the MHCLG needs assessment tool. Comparative data from SafeLives national data sets was used and analysed using a number of SafeLives tools including the prevalence tool.

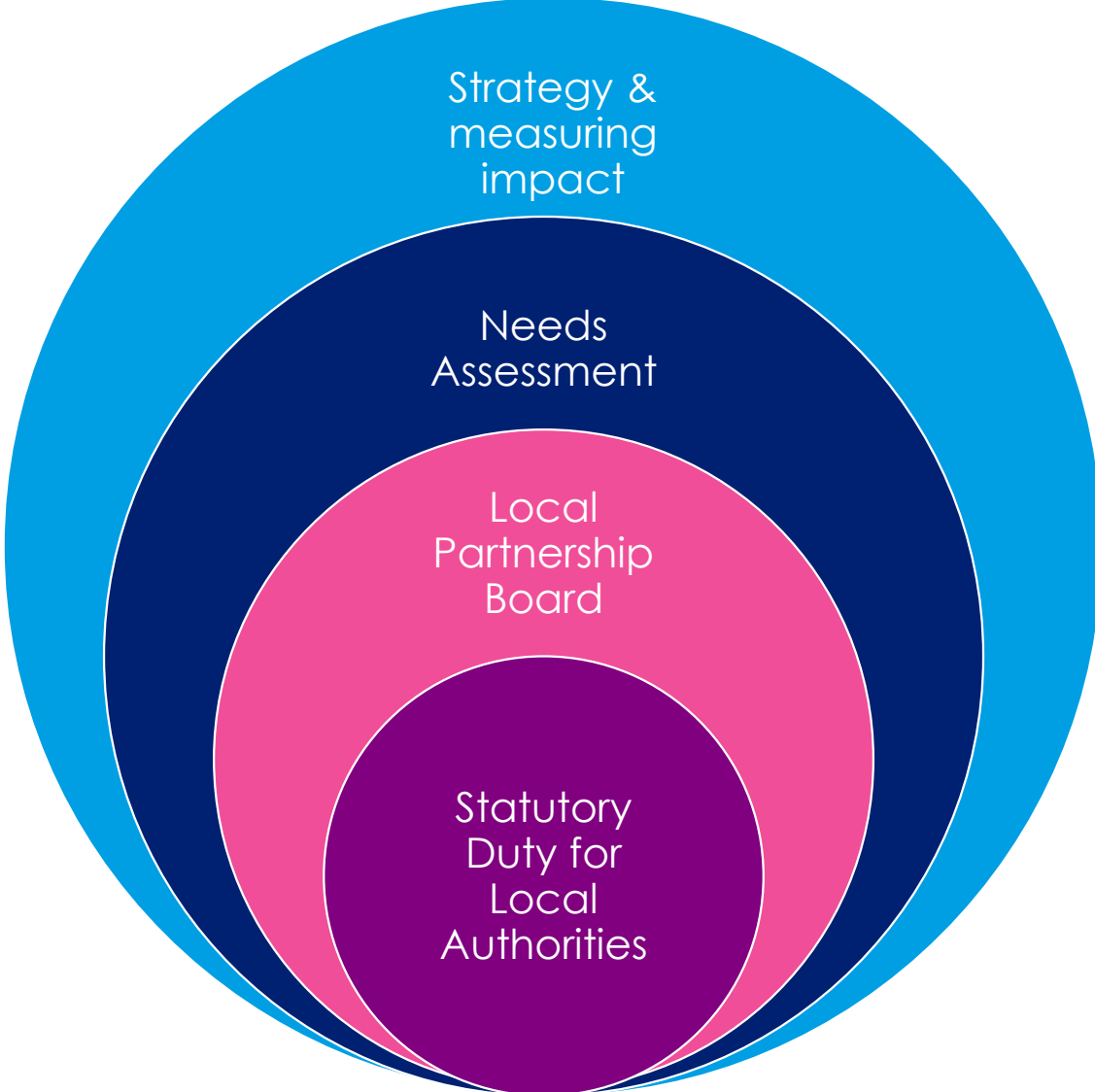
This work will enable Leicestershire County Council to gain a clearer understanding of local need in relation to safe accommodation and will help to inform their domestic abuse strategy and any subsequent commissioning.

Our Approach



A full list of agencies providing data is in Appendix A

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Duty



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Duty



Statutory Duty for Local Authorities

Statutory duty on Tier One local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation.

A four-part statutory framework for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation and provides clarity over governance and accountability.

Local Authorities will be required to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which will carry out a governance and consultative role as it performs certain specified function.



Provide advice to Area about its functions under Section 55 of the DA Act

Core membership as set out in the DA Act and statutory guidance with Authentic Voice for both adult and child victims essential.

Responsibilities are

- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross-border support
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment
- Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions)
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy



Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in Leicestershire County, including those who require cross-border support

When - every three years

How - Using the template provided gather data from local sources

Who - Tier 1 LA to carry out through DA Local Partnership Boards, others who must co-operate are Tier 2 LA, DA services, refuge services

What - Mapping current provision for safe accommodation and support

- Mapping current need, who and how much need for safe accommodation and support



Develop and publish: a strategy for provision of support, using the needs assessment

Develop a domestic abuse strategy encompassing the provision of support, informed by the needs assessment

- Implement the strategy through commissioning
- Tier 1 LAs in England must send an annual report to the Secretary of State on how it is realising the strategy
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.





Local Partnership Board

Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Membership

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets out a core membership of the Domestic Abuse Partnership board.

Since the previous needs assessment there have been changes made to the board and its membership. The Leicestershire Local Partnership Board has joined with Rutland Council to form the Leicestershire and Rutland Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board.

Having reviewed membership of the boards, there are opportunities to strengthen. It is noted that work to include the Survivor Advisory Board within the Partnership Boards is ongoing.

It is positive to see the inclusion of a specific post to represent the interests of adult victims of domestic abuse. There are opportunities to strengthen the role of the representative of the interests of child victims of domestic abuse which currently sits with one of the local domestic abuse services.

The Echo Project will support with the strengthening of both the adult and child victim representative role, amplifying the authentic voice of victims and survivors within the partnership board.

Another positive is the inclusion of a number of domestic abuse and specialist by and for services. This shows a clear commitment to understanding the differing and intersecting needs of victims and survivors, and the vital role specialist by and for services have in this.



Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

The Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment is a comprehensive tool that enables you to capture data covering a range of themes relating to safe accommodation.

This needs assessment will inform your strategy, not only for safe accommodation but for the domestic abuse system as a whole. It is important to view this in the context of a whole picture approach, not only doing what is necessary but thinking of the art of the possible.

Survivor voice is an essential component of this needs assessment and throughout the requirements of the Statutory Duty. By listening to the authentic, unmediated voice of victims and survivors, we truly understand the barriers, challenges and good practice they experience.

What can we learn, what are our gaps and how can we build on our success.

Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

Within this section we present the assessment for all victims accessing services. This is not inclusive of those accessing safe accommodation as this will be addressed further in the document.

Alongside the Tier 1 data provided by Leicestershire Children and Adult Services, the assessment utilises data submitted from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC), Oadby & Wigston Borough Council (OWBC), North-West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC), Melton Borough Council (MBC), Harborough District Council (HDC). Blaby District Council (BDC) did provide limited data. Due to queries with the data which we were not able to resolve by the time of writing, we have been unable to use their homelessness data within the needs assessment. Their Domestic Abuse service data has been included. Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) were unable to provide a data return for this assessment.

It is likely that there are further victims about whom we have not been provided information of, and it is important to note that the figures included here only reflect those victims included in the data provided and the ones we are aware of. The data may also include duplicate counting as victims may have approached or been in contact with multiple services/agencies.

Where there are anomalies in the data, these are detailed within the relevant section of the report.

A full list of agencies who supplied data can be found in **Appendix A**

Throughout this work we have used our Prevalence Tool. These figures are estimates calculated with the site's prevalence data and have been rounded down to reflect that they are approximations. The joint prevalence figures for Area were calculated using combined data from two areas. There may be small differences between the joint prevalence figures and the combined totals of prevalence areas from the two areas due to the rounding process.

Further information regarding the Prevalence Tool can be found in the next section of this report.

Prevalence of Domestic Abuse

The Prevalence Tool

What is the prevalence tool?

The SafeLives prevalence tool estimates the prevalence of domestic abuse within local areas. This includes an estimation for the number of victims, perpetrators of abuse, and children in households with partner abuse. It also breaks down the victim estimations into visible victims only, Adult Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) victims only, and marginalised groups of people such as racially minoritised people, LGBT+ people, and disabled people.

How does it work?

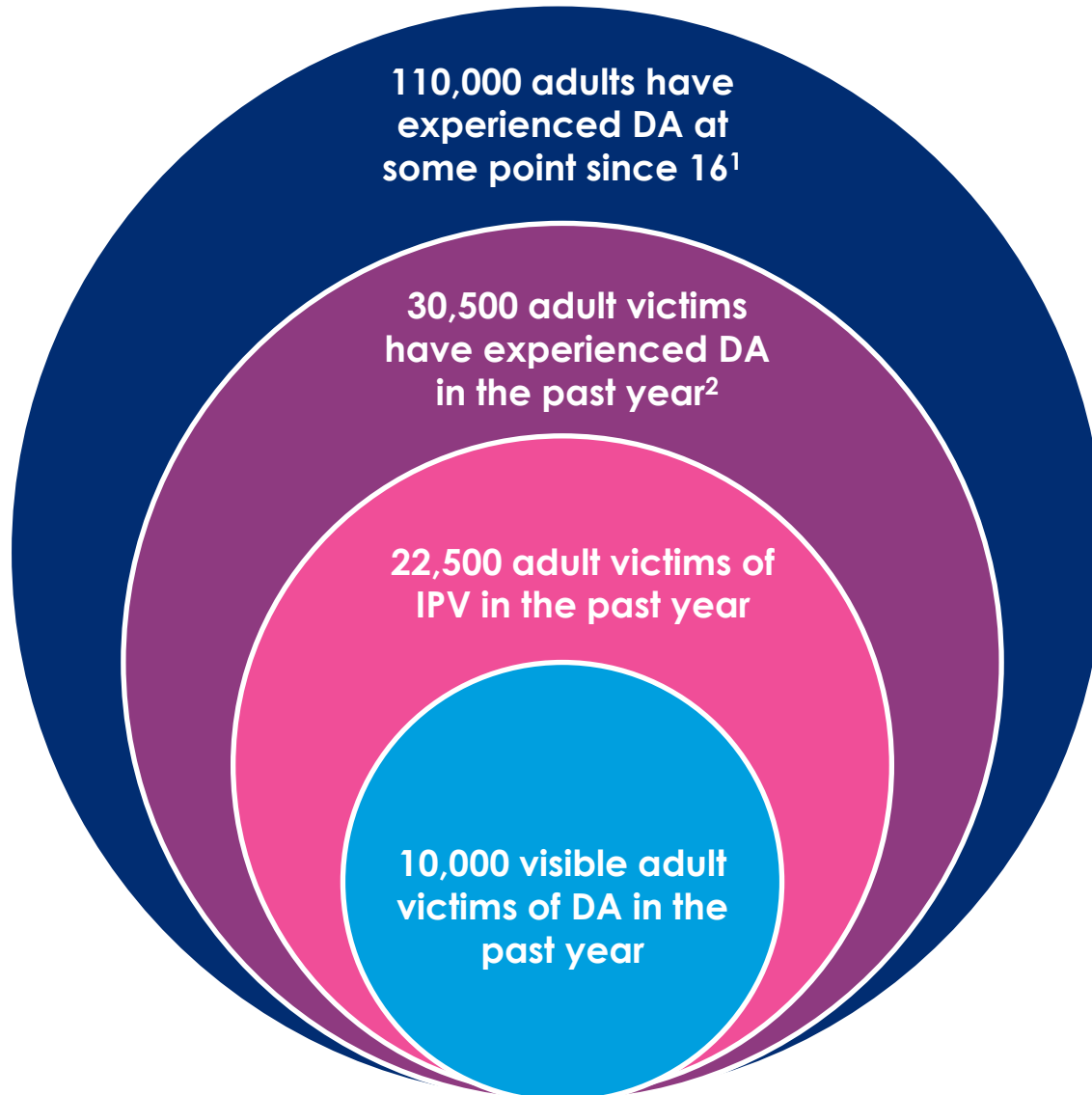
The tool calculates the figures by using several external and internal data sources for estimations of domestic abuse amongst different groups of people. This includes both 'set figures' which are consistent across all local areas, as well as 'local specific data'. The 'set figures' include data from the ONS (Office for National Statistics) including the 'Crime Survey for England and Wales' (2020) and the 'Family Resources Survey', Stonewall data, and SafeLives estimations such as the number of children experiencing abuse in their household. 'Local specific data' includes population data for each area on gender, age and ethnicity taken from the latest Census (2021) survey, as well as data on those at the highest risk of serious harm or homicide taken from the latest Marac dataset.

Please note:

The numbers provided are estimations and have been rounded down. All calculations are based on population data from the 2021 Census. The tool uses the 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), we decided not to use the more recent CSEW version due to various data collection issues which means they have not been defined as national statistics.

Number of victims: Overview

Leicestershire



The SafeLives prevalence tool uses data from the Crime Survey England and Wales (CSEW) merged with local population data. It is in the ONS domestic abuse bulletin and more specifically the prevalence and trends paper. We also use Marac data to capture a true understanding of the prevalence of domestic abuse in a local area.

This details the estimated number of victims who have experienced domestic abuse (DA), not the number of victims who have accessed services. **134**

¹Around 15% will have experienced both partner abuse and family abuse

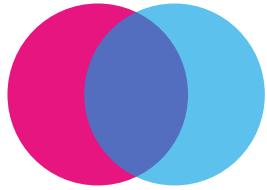
²Around 8% will have experienced both partner abuse and family abuse

Caveat: The CSEW dataset used is for the year ending in March 2020. This is due to a period of suspended data collection during Covid resulting in the March 2022 dataset which has much lower response rates and highly suppressed figures affecting the quality of estimates. CSEW data is to be updated with the July 2023 dataset when available.

Prevalence of adult victims – since the age of 16



We estimate there are **98,000** adult victims in Leicestershire who have experienced domestic abuse at **some point in their lives since the age of 16**



An estimated **15%** of these adult victims will have experienced **both partner and family abuse**

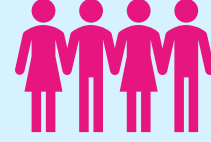


Of the total estimated adult victims **73,500 (68%)** are estimated to be **female**

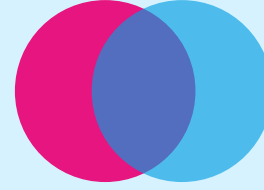


Of the total estimated adult victims **35,000 (32%)** are estimated to be **male**

Prevalence of adult victims – in the past year



We estimate there are **30,000** adult victims in Leicestershire who have experienced domestic abuse at **some point in the last year**



We estimate that around **8%** of those adult victims will have experienced **both partner and family abuse**



Of the total estimated adult victims in the past year, **20,500 (68%)** are estimated to be **female**



Of the total estimated adult victims in the past year, **9,500 (32%)** are estimated to be **male**

Caveat: Older (75+) victim prevalence rates are based on a proxy rate from the CSEW for abuse in the past year only for those aged 60-74. This is because there is no CSEW prevalence rate data for the year ending in March 2020 for those aged 75+.

The sum of females and males may not add up to the total due to rounding.



Prevalence of adult victims – in the past year – visible victims



■ Visible victims in past year ■ Non-visible victims in past year

Visible victims = the estimated number of adult victims in the local area who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year and who could be considered as wishing to access services. This is as they reported in the CSEW that they had “told other support professional or organisation”. This calculation uses a combination of Marac data to show visible high-risk victims and CSEW data for visible non-high risk victims.

Non-visible victims = the estimated number of adult victims in the local area who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year and who could be considered as not wishing to access service / not visible to services.

Caveat: Marac data recording can vary amongst local areas depending on their Marac processes, for instance some have triaging systems where not all the initial referrals are recorded. These differences will impact on the prevalence estimations for visible high-risk victims.

This shows the estimated number of **visible** adult victims in the local area in the past year. We estimate that a **third (34%) of female victims** and a **quarter (24%) of male victims** in the past year were visible. This calculation uses a combination of Marac data to show visible high-risk victims and data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for visible non-high risk victims as they reported in the CSEW that they had “told other support professional or organisation”.

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Prevalence of adult victims – in the past year – marginalised groups



We estimate that there were **6,000 Young victims** aged 16-24¹

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Young People and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **6,000 Older victims** aged 60+²

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Older People and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **1,500 Black, Asian and racially minoritised victims** who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year³.

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on 'Honour'-based Violence and Forced marriage and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **7,500 Disabled victims** of domestic abuse in the past year

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Disabled people and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **5,500 LGB+ victims** of domestic abuse in the past year⁴

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on LGB+ people and DA](#)

1. The CSEW only provides prevalence rates for 16-19 and 20-24 year olds, therefore an average of these two was calculated for the 18-24 group.

2. Older (75+) victim prevalence rates are based on a proxy rate from the CSEW for abuse in the past year only for those aged 60-74. This is because there is no CSEW prevalence rate data for the year ending in March 2020 for those aged 75+.

3. The CSEW does not accurately reflect the impact of domestic abuse on Black Asian and racially minoritised people, thus, we multiply the number of victims with the Black Asian and racially minoritised proportion of the area including the following: 'Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh', 'Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African', 'Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups', 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller', 'White: Roma', and 'Other ethnic group' (data obtained from the ONS census 2021)

4 The prevalence statistic for LGB+ people is based on the CSEW aggregate for Gay and Lesbian people. It does not include trans people as the sample size is too small

Prevalence – in the past year – partner abuse (IPV)



We estimate that there were **22,500** adult victims in the local area who have experienced partner abuse in the past year¹.



We estimate that there were **17,000 children living in a household with partner abuse** in the past year²

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Parenting and DA](#) and our [Spotlights on Young People and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **18,000 people using abusive behaviours** in their intimate partner relationships in the past year in the local area



Of those **20%** are estimated to be **serial perpetrators of domestic abuse**³

1. Older (75+) victim prevalence rates are based on a proxy rate from the CSEW dataset for the year ending March 2020 for those aged 60-74 only. This is because there is no CSEW prevalence rate data for the year ending in March 2020 for those aged 75+.

2. Uses estimations of 41% of households with partner abuse having children in with an average of 1.85 children per household – this data comes from the ONS, with details in SafeLives '[A safe fund' report](#).

3. Robinson, A.L., Clancy, A. and Hanks, S., 2014. Prevalence and characteristics of serial domestic abuse perpetrators: Multi-agency evidence from Wales.

Overview of Data

Overview 2021 – 2022

15,019

 Total number of
 adult & child victims

Of these 15,019 records



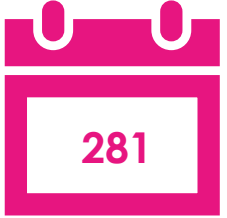
Age 18 - 64



Under 18



Over 65



Unknown Age

Female	76.9%
Male	19.9%
Non Binary	0.05%
Trans*	0.02%
Other	0.03%
Unknown	0.2%



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1. Those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV.
 2. Adult Victims only

Overview 2022 – 2023

14,815



Total number of adult & child victims

Of these 14,815 records



Age 18 - 64



Under 18



Over 65



Unknown Age

Female	78.1%
Male	20.3%
Non Binary	0.03%
Trans*	0.04%
Other	0.04%
Unknown	1.5%



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1. Those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV.
 2. Adult Victims only

Overview 2023 – 2024

16,738

 Total number of
 adult & child victims

Of these 16,738 records



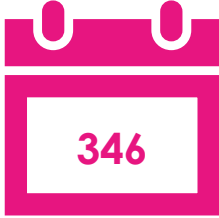
Age 18 - 64



Under 18



Over 65



Unknown Age

Female	77.3%
Male	20.6%
Non Binary	0.06%
Trans*	0.04%
Other	0.04%
Unknown	1.6%



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1. Those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV.
 2. Adult Victims only

Number of Victims

The SafeLives Prevalence Tool, developed in line with our research, estimates that **110,000 adults** in Leicestershire have experienced Domestic Abuse at some point in their lives since the age of 16, with around **15%** experiencing both partner and family abuse.

It also estimates that **30,500 adult victims** have experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year, with around **8%** experiencing both partner and family abuse and **17,000 children** living in a household with partner abuse in the last year.

The total number of adult and child victims identified in the data sets provided by services/agencies in Leicestershire in each of the 3 years the needs assessment covers are:

2021-22



15,019

2022-23



14,815

2023-24



16,738

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The overall number of victims has **decreased by 1.4%** from years **2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23**. However, there was a **13% increase** from years **2022 – 23 to 2023 – 24**.

There has been a significant increase in the number of victims identified by agencies since the previous needs assessment. An overall increase of **68%** from the end of the previous assessment to the end of this assessment period. There will be many reasons for this increase including improved identification of domestic abuse, improved or new ways of recording on systems, an increased number of services working with victims such as the housing link workers and more agencies contributing to this assessment.

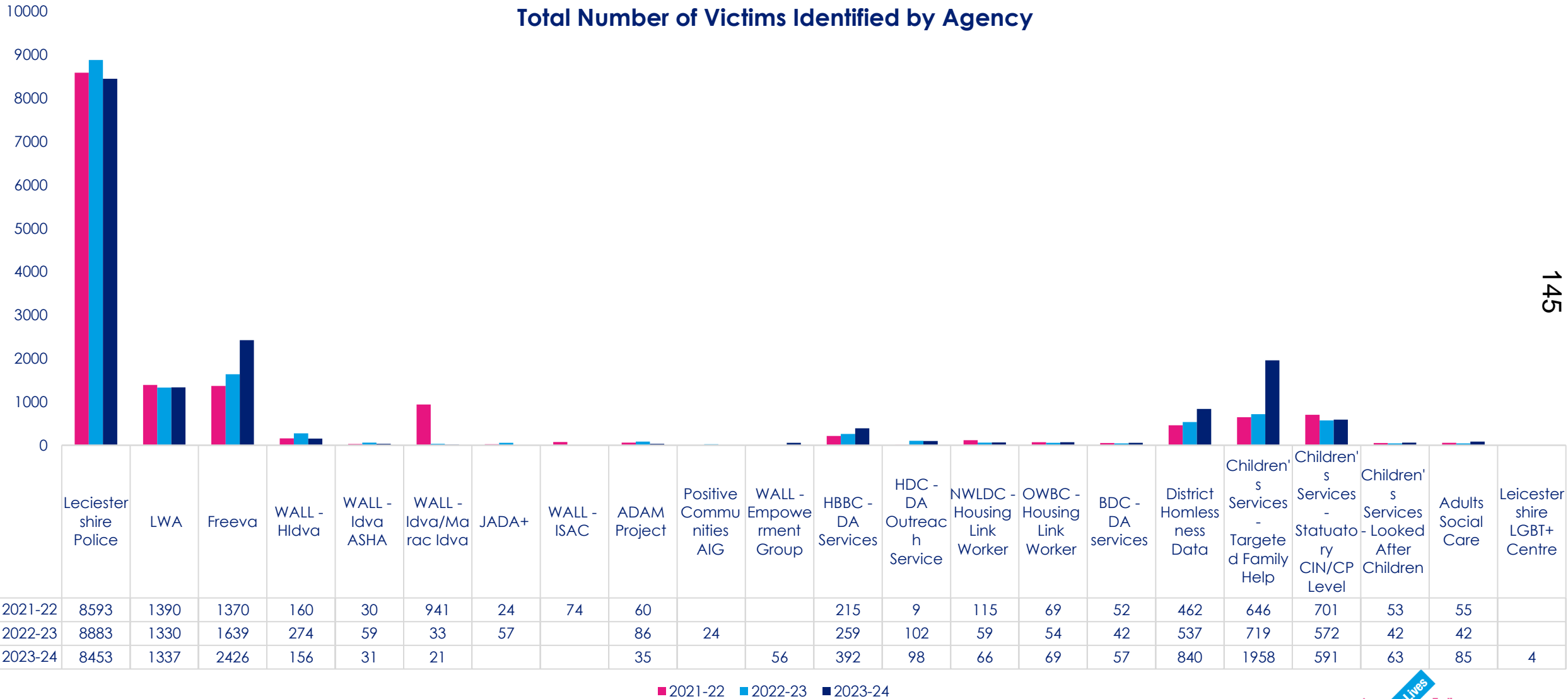
However, it should be noted that there may be an element of duplicate recording i.e. the helpline and the DALs service may both record a victim's details.

*These figures are estimates calculated with the site's prevalence data and so have been rounded down to reflect that they are approximations

Data Trends

Identification by Agency

Total Number of Victims Identified by Agency



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■ 2021-22 ■ 2022-23 ■ 2023-24



Identification by Agency

This table on the previous page details the number of victims identified broken down by agency.

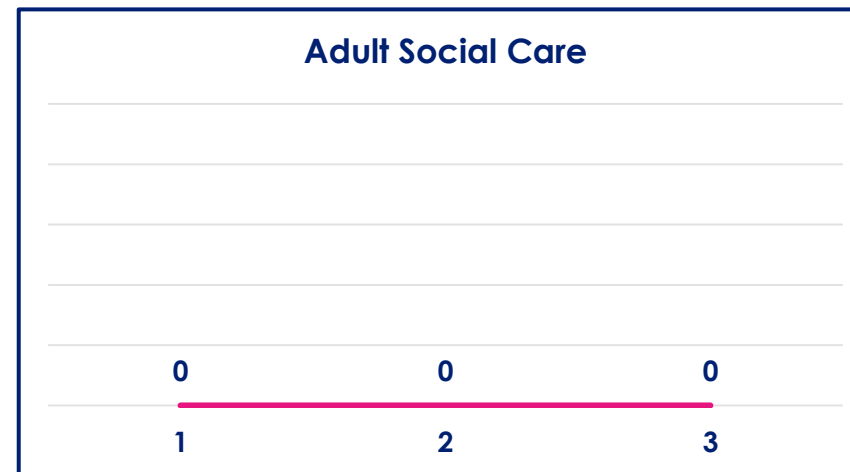
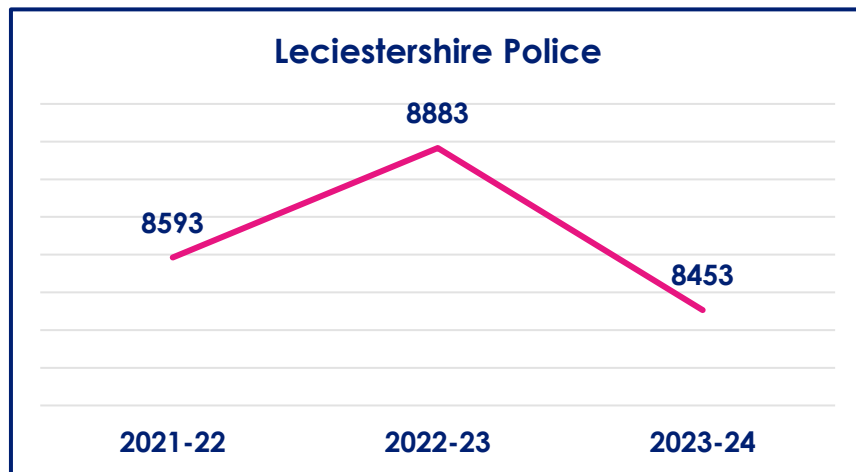
Leicestershire Police, LWA and Freeva have the highest levels of identification of victims in the first two years. Leicestershire Police, Freeva and Targeted Family Help have the highest identification for the final year.

We have been advised that a new system was implemented within Targeted Family Help in the year 2023 – 24 and therefore a new recording a collection system which may account for some of the increase.

The following section will look at the data trends for individual agencies in more detail.

Trends

Victims identified by Service



The number of victims identified by Leicestershire Police increased by **3.4%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 – 23. It then decreased by **4.8%** in 2023 – 24, which is **1.6%** fewer victims being identified than in 2021 – 22.

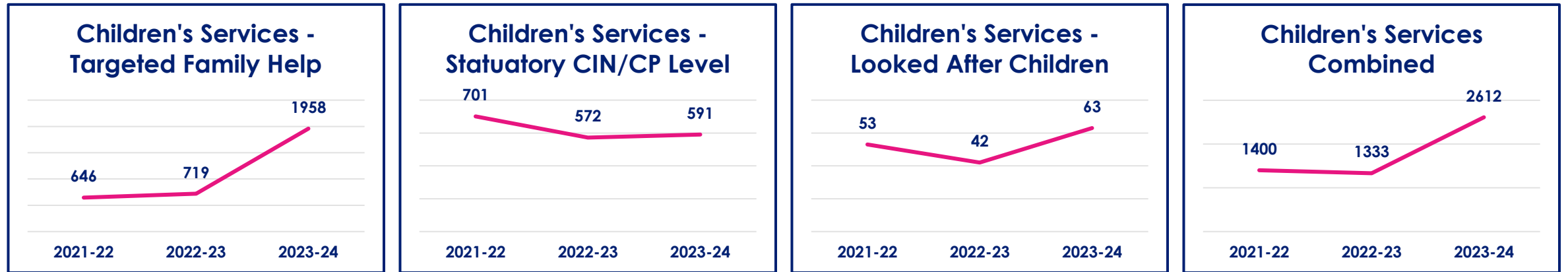
However, when we consider the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, the number of victims identified by Leicestershire Police was **6979** in 2020 – 21, meaning there has been an increase of **23.1%** from the end of the previous assessment to the first year of this assessment, and an increase **21.1%** victims being identified to the final year of this assessment.

Adult Social Care also saw a decrease in the number of victims identified by **23.6%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23. it then increased significantly by **102.4%** in 2023 – 24.

When we consider the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, the number of victims identified by Adult Social Care was **41** in 2020 – 21, meaning there has been an increase of **35.1%** from the end of the previous assessment to the first year of this assessment, before returning to a similar level in 2022 – 23, with an increase **107.3%** victims being identified to the final year of this assessment.

Trends

Victims identified by Children's Services



In the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, Children's Services provided SafeLives with their first response data (Contacts and Referrals), where the primary reason for contact is Domestic Abuse and Children's Social Care Assessments where domestic abuse is a factor. This data only provided information regarding the children identified.

Within this assessment we have been provided with data sets for victims identified by

- Targeted Family Help Service, which provides information on both the adult and child
- Statutory Child in Need and Child Protection Assessments, which provides information for only the children
- Looked after Children, which provides information for only the children

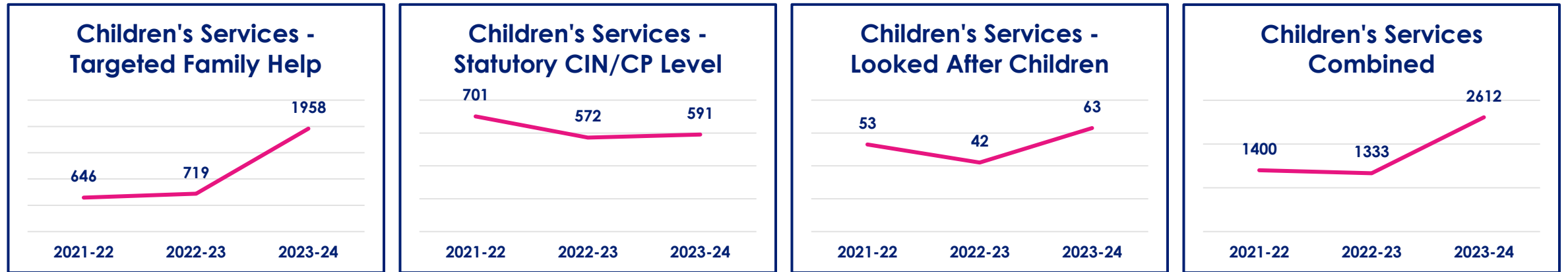
For the Targeted Family Help Service, we can see that the number of victims identified increased by **11.3%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It increased again by **172.3%** in 2023 - 24 with the number of children identified increasing from **363** on 2021 - 22 to **393** in 2022 - 23 and **1299** in 2023 - 24.

For those children receiving statutory Child in Need and Child Protection Assessments, this figure decreased from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23 by **18.4%** before increasing slightly by **3.32%**. This provides an overall decrease of **15.7%**.

For Looked after Children, there is a decrease of **20.8%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It then increased by **50%** in 2023 - 24.

Trends

Victims identified by Children's Services



We can see that overall there has been a significant increase of **86.6%** in the number of victims identified across the time period of this assessment, most of which can be attributed to the increase in those identified by Targeted Family Help. However, this is lower than the number identified in the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment with **6754 children** identified within the first response data and **1011** Children's Social Care Assessments where domestic abuse is a factor completed in 2020 - 21. It should be noted that during that year there was a change in practice by the Children's Social Care assessment team to 'including other children in the family' as part of their case management records.

Due to the different ways of providing the data, it is difficult to fully determine how or why there is a significant difference and we would recommend exploring this further and aligning the data sets provided.

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Trends

Victims identified by Domestic Abuse Service

Service Offer

Victim's services has undergone a period of change across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland with a new service contract starting on the 1st April 2022.

There is now a Helpline and Engagement service managed by Freeva which is the Front Door for all referrals and attend Marac, a Domestic Abuse Locality service consisting of a Complex Need service, and an Outreach service managed by LWA and the Safe Accommodation provision managed by WALL. Due to the set up and referral pathway, there may be an element of double counting.

While the traditional Idva provision ended with WALL at that time, there continues to be a small team of specialist Idvas available such as a Marac Idva, Hospital Idva and Idva (ASHA) for those from Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised communities within WALL however it should be noted that these contracts ended with WALL in September 2023. The Marac Idva and Health Idva roles transferred to Freeva and the ASHA Idva role funding ceased in 2023.

The JADA+ project provided by WALL ran during the first two years of this needs assessment however, this funding also ended in 2022 – 23.

The Adam Project is a male only support service provided by WALL.

Data Collection

LWA have provided data regarding both adult and child victims. Freeva have provided limited data regarding children (n. 6 in 2021 – 22, n. 9 in 2022 – 23 and n. 21 in 2023 – 24) and it is unclear if they relate to children who have been referred as a victim in their own relationship or as a children experiencing domestic abuse within the household. In addition, the data has not been separated by service – ie Helpline, Marac Idva, Health Idva etc where applicable.

Other than for the JADA+ project, WALL have not been able to provide data regarding children. The exception of two 16 – 17-year-olds in 2022 – 23 and six in 2023 – 24, one age 12 – 15-year-old and 5 16 – 17-year-olds. They were supported by the Health and Marac Idvas.

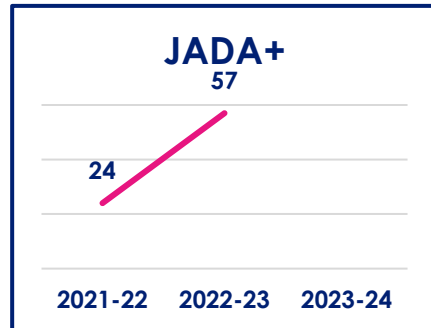
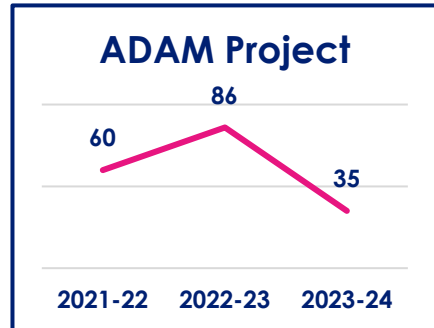
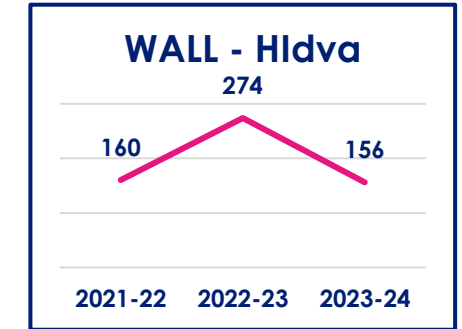
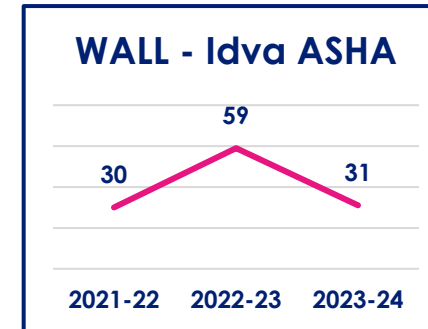
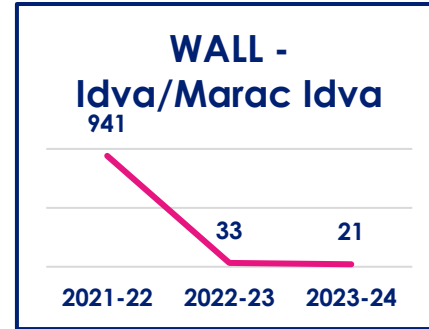
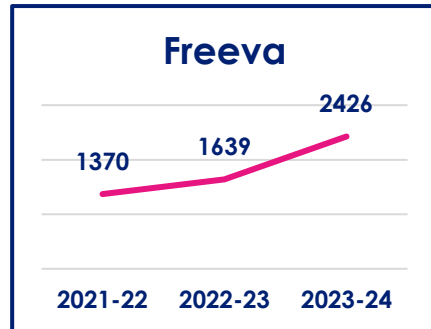
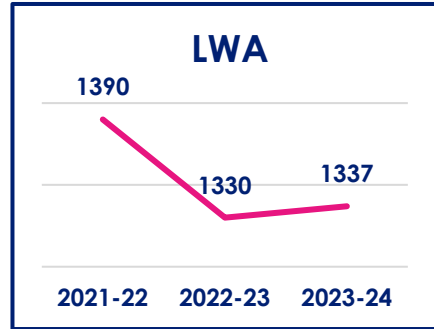
It should also be noted that all data provided by WALL **is LLR wide**, barring the District Housing Link Workers. This data is not currently broken down by locality so we cannot say, with certainty how many of the victims identified live in Leicestershire.

This is an area WALL are working to rectify and aim to be able to provide a breakdown in future years.

Due to the new service offer and ways the data is presented, again it is difficult to compare to the previous assessment.

Trends

Victims identified by Domestic Abuse Service



The number of victims identified by LWA decreased by **4.3%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It then increased slightly by **0.5%** in 2023 - 24.

The number of victims identified by Freeva increased by **19.6%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23 and by a further **48%** in 2023 - 24. As previously mentioned, the change in service provide may account for the significant change.

For WALL's services, there has been a significant decrease in the Idva/Marac Idva figures which is a result of the change in how the services are commissioned and provided.

For the Idva ASHA service, there was an increase of **96.7%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. Whilst it shows a decrease in 2023 - 24, this contract ended part way through the year therefore is not a true reflection.

This is also the case for the Health Idva however we can see an increase of **71.3%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. We know that Health plays an essential role in addressing domestic abuse and it is positive to see a Health Idva in post supporting victims in a number of sites across the LLR.

The JADA+ Project ran across the first two years of this needs assessment. Data shows that there was an increase of **137.5%** of children identified by this service before funding ended.

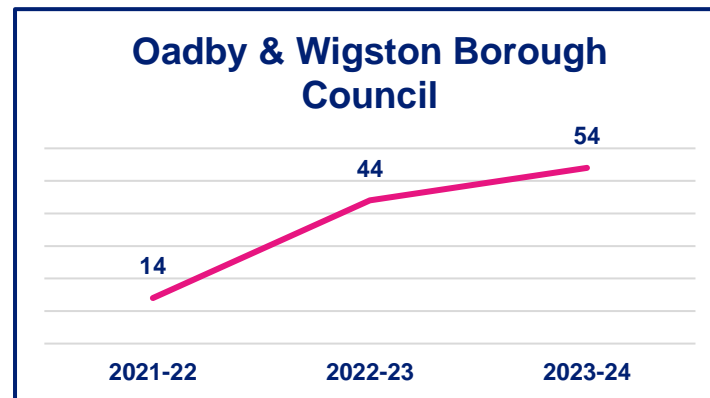
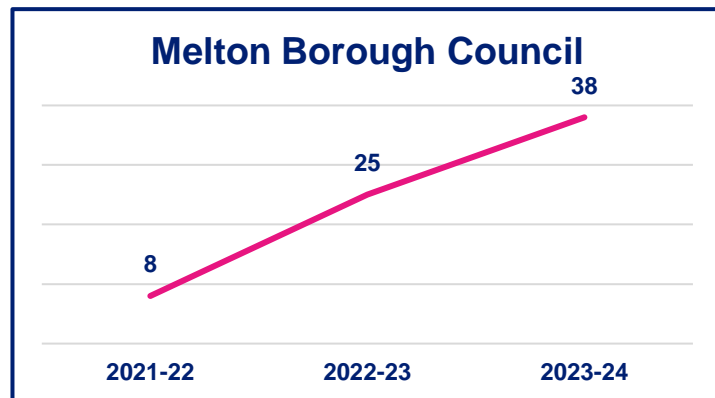
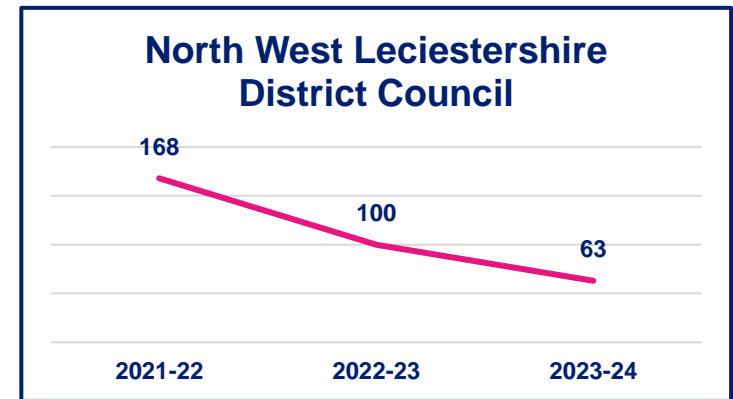
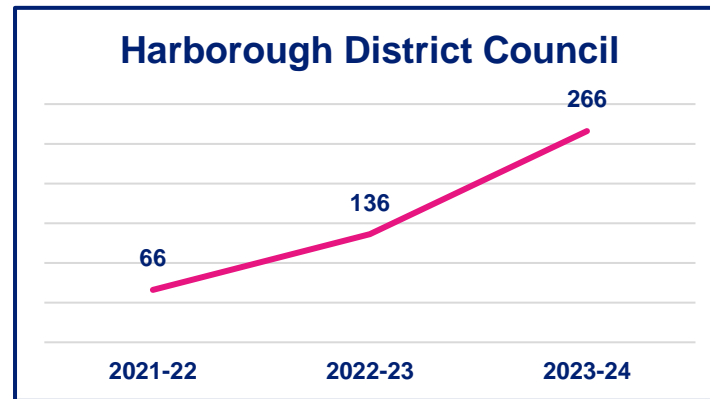
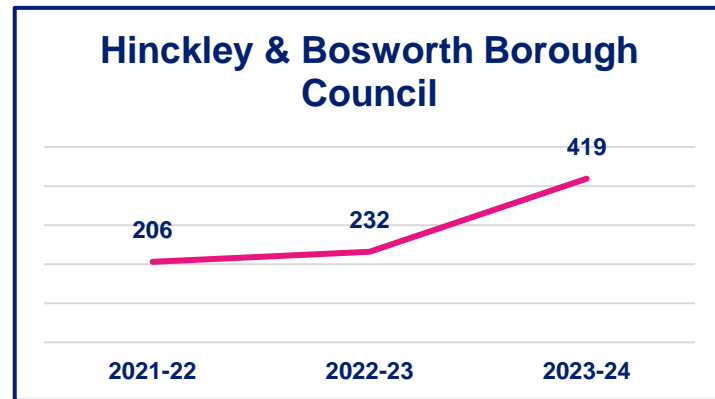
The ADAM Project saw an increase of **43.3%** of victims identified from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It then decreased by **59.3%** in 2023 - 24.

Trends

Victims identified by District Homelessness Teams

Data was provided by five of the seven districts homelessness departments. Unfortunately, Charnwood Borough Council have been unable to provide a data set for this needs assessment. Blaby District Council provided data of their domestic abuse service and not their homelessness team which is reviewed further in the report. They have however stated during partnership board meetings that they have seen a considerable increase in the number of homelessness presentations due to domestic abuse. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Melton Borough Council did not provide data regarding children or other members of the household included on the housing application.

Data shows that areas have seen an increase in the number of victims identified across these needs assessment with the exception being North West Leicestershire District Council.



Trends

Victims identified by District Homelessness Teams

The number of victims identified by HBBC increased by **12.6%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 before increasing further by **80.6%** in 2023 – 23. It should be noted that the number of victims identified in the final year of the previous needs assessment was **301** therefore there has been a decrease of **31.6%** between the previous needs assessment and this one.

HDC saw an increase of **106.1%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 with a further increase of **95.6%** the following year. The number of victims identified in the final year of the previous needs assessment was **48** resulting in an overall increased of **454.2%** in the number of victims identified from the final year of the previous assessment to the final year of this assessment.

As mentioned, NWLDC is an outlier in this area. Whilst there was an initial increase from the previous needs assessment of **330.8%**, this has steadily decreased by **40.5%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 and then a further **37%** in 2023 – 24. However it should be noted that the number of victims identified in 2023 – 24 is still **61.5%** higher than the figure in the final year of the previous assessment.

In OWBC, there was an initial decrease from the previous needs assessment of **62.2%**, the number of victims identified has increased year on year by **214.3%** and **22.7%** respectively.

Due to the low figures reported by MBC in the last needs assessment, we are unable to provide a comparison. However we can see that there has been an increase of **212.5%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 and a further **52%** in 2023 – 24

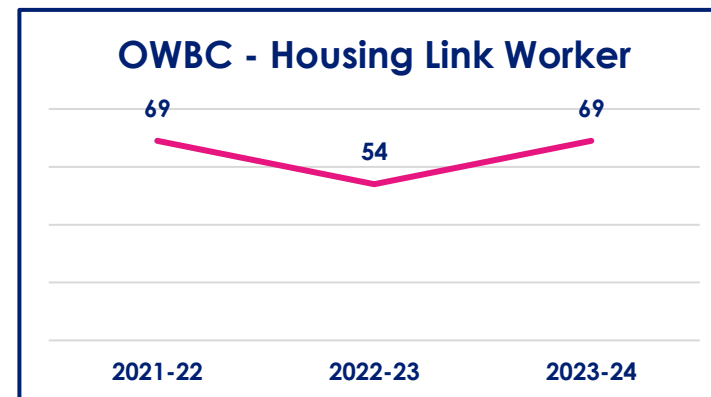
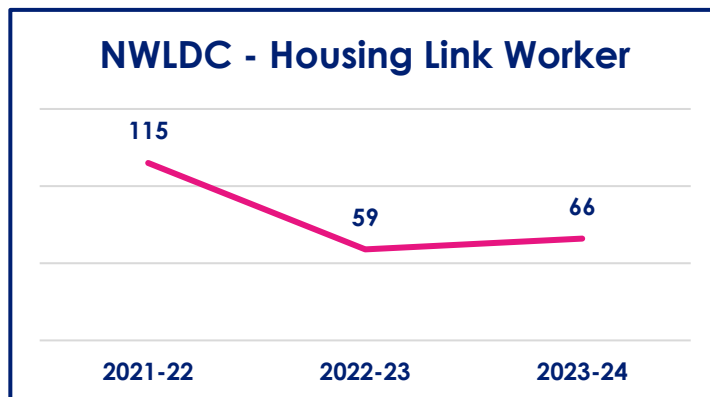
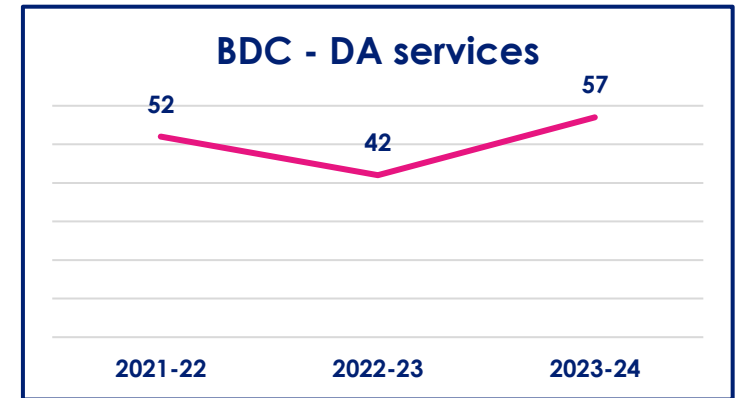
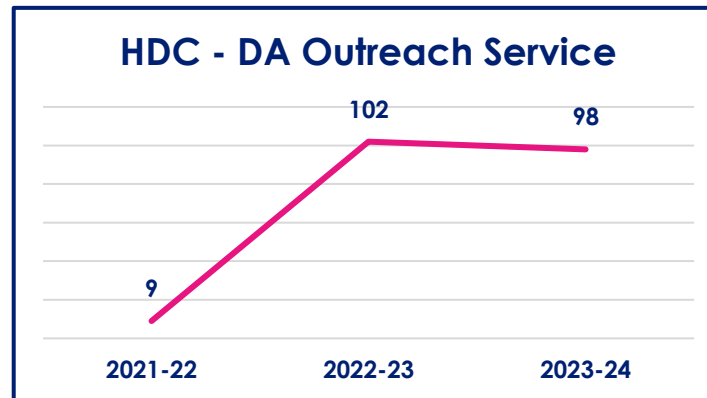
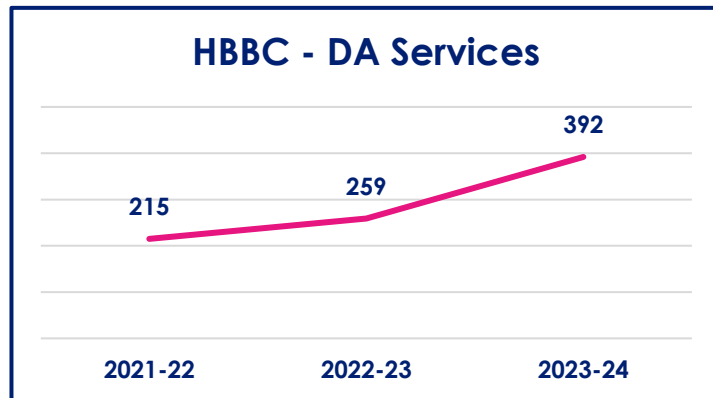
Trends

Victims identified by District Domestic Abuse Service

Hinckley and Bosworth, Harborough and Blaby District Councils provide an in house domestic abuse service.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council have commissioned WALL to provide a Housing Link Worker who are based within their homelessness teams. These roles are funded via the funding received by Leicestershire CC from The Department for Levelling Up Communities and Housing, now renamed Ministry Housing, Communities and Local Government who allocated funding to each local authority for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation duty.

Only Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council provided data regarding children.



Trends

Victims identified by District Domestic Abuse Service

The number of victims identified by HBBC increased by **20.5%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 before increasing further by **51.4%** in 2023 – 23. In contrast to the HBBC Homelessness team, the Domestic Abuse Service saw an increase of **15% in** the number of victims identified in the final year of the previous needs assessment and the first year of this assessment

HDC saw an increase of **1033.3%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 with a slight decrease **3.9%** in 2023 – 24. We do not have data for this service from the previous assessment.

BDC saw a decrease of **19.2%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 before increasing in 2023 – 24 by **35.7%** however this is only **9.6%** increase from the first year of this assessment. We do not have data for this service from the previous assessment.

Again, NWLDC is an outlier in this area following a similar trend to the homelessness data. This post was created following the previous needs assessment and identified **115** victims in 2021 – 22. This decreased by **48.7%** in 2022 – 23 however did increase by **11.9%** to a number similar to the number of victims identified by the homelessness teams.

OWBC follows a similar pattern to BDC with a decrease of **21.7%**, from 2021- 22 to 2022 – 23, before increasing by the same percentage in 2023 – 24.

There are differences in the number of victims identified by the Housing Link Workers and the Homelessness teams. It would be of benefit to explore this further to understand why that may be and what steps can be taken to ensure that all victims identified by the Homelessness teams are offered the support of the Housing Link Worker and vice versa. This should be monitored on a regular basis for example at the Chief Housing Officer Group.

Marac & Police Data

Marac Cases

At Marac, the most high risk cases are discussed. SafeLives was commissioned to complete a Marac Review across Leicestershire Police and the LLR which was shared in the summer of 2022. This provided a number of recommendations including recommendations regarding referral pathways and the number of cases. We would advise that this be revisited to measure the progress of those recommendations and this data be considered in that process.

Leicestershire Police Force covers three local authority areas each with its own Marac - Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. For the purposes of this report, we will only be focusing on the Leicestershire Marac data covering April to March for years 2021 – 22, 2022 – 23 and 2023 – 24.

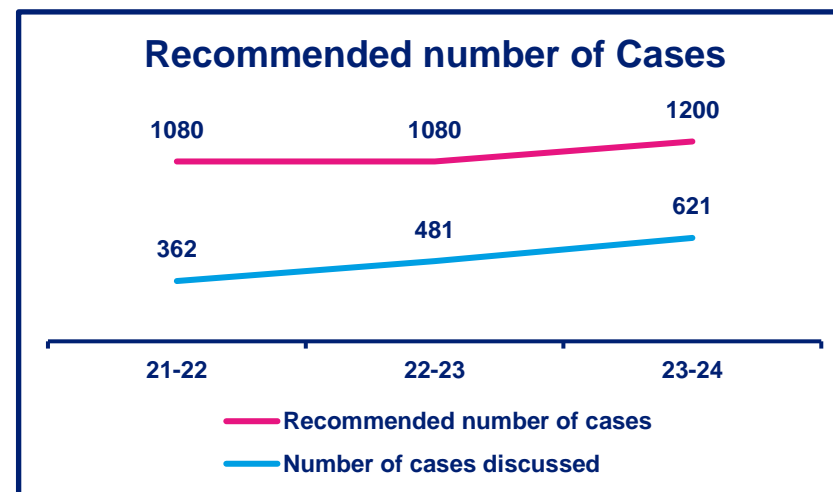
The recommended number of cases for Leicestershire is **1080** per year in **years 2021-22 and 22/23**, and **1200** in **year 23/24** based on the SafeLives recommendation of **40** cases per 10,000 adult female population.

As the adult (16+) female population recorded in the census increased between 2011 and 2021 in Leicestershire, this has resulted in an increase in the recommended number of cases for this Marac.

The table below shows the number of cases heard, inclusive of repeat cases, per year and the number of children within those households.

This will be explored further in this chapter

Year	Number of Cases	Number of Children	Recommended number of cases
2021/22	362	441	1080
2022/23	481	583	1080
2023/24	621	795	1200



Marac Data – Number of Cases

2021 - 22

	SafeLives Recommends	UK wide	MSF Group	Leicestershire Police	Leicestershire Marac
Cases per 10,000 adult female population	40	47	39	19	13
Year on Year change in number of cases		6%	4%	-13%	-7%
Repeat rate	28-40%	33%	29%	36%	36%
Police referrals	60-75%	67%	60%	68%	65%
Non police referrals	25-40%	33%	40%	32%	35%

2022 - 23

Cases per 10,000 adult female population	40	47	39	22	18
Year on Year change in number of cases		-2%	0%	20%	33%
Repeat rate	28-40%	33%	31%	33%	37%
Police referrals	60-75%	66%	60%	67%	68%
Non police referrals	25-40%	34%	40%	33%	32%

2023 - 24

Cases per 10,000 adult female population	40	46	40	27	21
Year on Year change in number of cases		-1%	9%	34%	29%
Repeat rate	28-40%	32%	30%	36%	38%
Police referrals	60-75%	64%	58%	68%	68%
Non police referrals	25-40%	36%	42%	32%	32%

Marac Data

The tables on the previous page show how the Marac in Leicestershire performs in comparison to its most similar force group and national counterparts across the time period of this assessment.

The recommended number of cases for Leicestershire is **1080** per year in **years 2021-22 and 22/23**, and **1200** in **year 23/24** based on the SafeLives recommendation of **40** cases per 10,000 adult female population.

The number of cases discussed within Leicestershire remains significantly below the recommended figure, with **13 cases** per 10,000 adult females heard in 2021 – 22, increasing slightly to **18 cases** in 2022 – 23 and increasing again to **21 cases** in 2023 – 24.

The repeat rate referrals, police referrals, and non police referrals are all in line with the recommended number of cases SafeLives recommends.

Marac Data – Equality

2021 - 22

	SafeLives Recommends	UK wide	MSF Group	Leicestershire Police	Leicestershire
Black, Asian and racially minoritised population		17.9%	14.5%	23.4%	8.6%
Black, Asian and racially minoritised cases		15.3%	10.4%	20%	8.6%
LGBT+ Cases	2.5-8.5%	1.4%	1.7%	1.9%	1.1%
Victims with disabilities	23% or above	8.5%	11.1%	14.3%	15.2%
Male Victims	5-10%	6.2%	5.5%	4.5%	4.1%

2022 - 23

Black, Asian and racially minoritised population		17.7%	14.5%	23.4%	8.6%
Black, Asian and racially minoritised cases		16%	11.3%	19.3%	9.4%
LGBT+ Cases	2.5-8.5%	1.5%	1.4%	1.8%	1.5%
Victims with disabilities	23% or above	9.1%	13.7%	32.5%	36%
Male Victims	5-10%	6.3%	5.9%	6.5%	5.6%

2023 - 24

Black, Asian and racially minoritised population		22.5%	20.9%	32.7%	13.4%
Black, Asian and racially minoritised cases		14.8%	13.2%	16%	9.7%
LGBT+ Cases	2.5-8.5%	1.7%	1.6%	1.9%	1%
Victims with disabilities	23% or above	9.4%	14%	21.8%	24.2%
Male Victims	5-10%	6.4%	6.2%	5.1%	5.6%

Marac Data – Equality

The tables on the previous page show how the Marac in Leicestershire performs in relation to marginalised groups.

We would expect referrals to Marac to be representative of the local Black, Asian and racially minoritised population. As previously stated, the updated census information has resulted in changes to, not only the recommended case figures, but also the population figures.

For the years 2021 – 22 and 2022 – 23, our research shows the Black, Asian and racially minoritised population for Leicestershire to be **8.6%**. The percentage of Marac cases heard where the victim was Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community was **8.6% and 9.4%** respectively and in line with population data.

The population figure increased to **13.7%** in 2023 – 24 while the percentage of cases remain similar to previous years at **9.7%**. Therefore, while the figure has been increasing, it is now below the recommended figure.

The SafeLives recommendation is that **2.5% - 5.8%** of cases heard at Marac are LGBT+ victims. The highest percentage was **1.5%** in 2022 – 2023, less than half the lowest end of the recommended levels.

The recommended level of Marac cases where the victim has a disability is **23% or above**. In the previous needs assessment period, the figures were far below that figure. Therefore, it is positive to see an increase in the identification of cases where the victim has a disability and that this is being recorded appropriately with **15.2%** of cases being heard in 2021 – 22 and **36%** and **24.2%** in subsequent years. We will discuss this further in the disability section of this report.

For male victims, the lowest number of cases was in 2021- 22 with **4.1%**, before increasing to **5.6%** in 2022 – 23 and remaining the same the following year which is within the recommended range.

Police Data

2021/22



	Leicestershire Police	East Midlands	MSF1	MSF2	England and Wales
DA Crimes & Incidents	21,641	102,251	20,781	21,402	1,500,369
Crimes & Incidents Per 1000 population	20	21	18	18	25
DA Crimes	15,481	68,702	15,397	12,829	910,980
Crimes per 1000	14	14	13	11	15
% of all crimes recorded	15%	17%	15%	17%	17%

2022/23



DA Crimes & Incidents	24,145	109,177	21,438	20,850	1,453,867
Crimes & Incidents Per 1000 population	22	22	19	17	24
DA Crimes	16,927	72,157	16,255	12,565	889,918
Crimes per 1000	15	15	14	10	15
% of all crimes recorded	16%	17%	15%	16%	16%

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Police Data

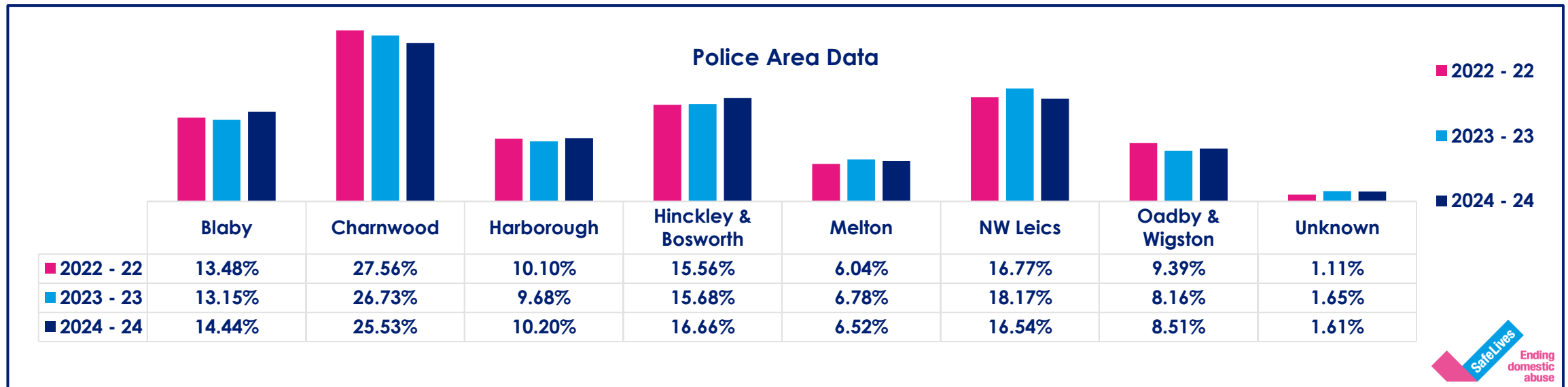
The tables above show a comparison of the number of incidents and crimes reported across Leicestershire Police force wide, two Most Similar Forces and across the East Midlands and England and Wales.

The comparison data is not currently available for the 2023 – 2024 period, however we know that across Leicestershire Police there were **8453 domestic abuse victims identified**

Leicestershire Police domestic abuse crimes and incidents is **20** per 1000 population in 2021/22 and **22** per 1000 population in 2022/23. This is higher than the two MSF areas (2021/22, **18 and 18**, 2022/23 **19 and 17**) and in line with the regional rate. However, this is lower than the national rate of domestic abuse crimes and incidences at **25** per 1000 population in 2021/22, reducing to **24** per 1000 population in 2022/23.

There has been an increase of **11.5%** in the number of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes recorded by Leicestershire Police from 2021/22 – 2022/23, and an increase of **9.3%** in domestic abuse crimes from years 2021/22 to 2022/23.

In terms of location, Charnwood has the highest number of victims identified by the police across all three years which is the same as the previous needs assessment. However, this has decreased year on year with Hinckley and Bosworth seeing the opposite and increasing year on year. The lowest number of reported victims are in Melton followed by Oadby and Wigston.



Domestic Homicides:

21/22

- North-West Leicestershire
- Hinckley & Bosworth

22/23

- Charnwood

23/24

- Melton

In the three-year period that the needs assessment covers there were four domestic homicides across Leicestershire County Council.

The DHRs that occurred in North-West Leicestershire, Charnwood, and Melton are still currently ongoing and therefore these will not be discussed in the report.

However, the homicide that occurred in Hinckley & Bosworth was undertaken by a joint Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and falls under Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth CSP. This is discussed on the following slide.

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Domestic Homicide Reviews

Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth 2021: The DHR concluded that there were no professional missteps or omissions identified that may have contributed to the death of the victim, and noted there was insufficient evidence to indicate that domestic abuse was a factor in the homicide.

Recommendations from the report included the following;

- To ensure the Carer's Strategy refresh that was presented at Leicestershire County Council Cabinet in 2022 is making timely and sufficient progress to ensure carers get the assessment and support they need.
- To ensure all agencies have up to date training on domestic abuse in accordance with the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and this remains effective for workforces.

SafeLives agrees with the recommendations and would ensure that relevant domestic abuse training includes information on supporting carers and making sure they are included within risk assessments, in line with our Whole Picture Strategy.

However, SafeLives would also recommend more could have been done to understand whether domestic abuse was a factor throughout this homicide. We know from previous DHRs on older people¹ that the potential for violence in relationships increases when an intimate partner/family member is acting as a carer for the other. In this instance, the victim had previously been harmed during a self-harm incident from 'Bob', and no further questioning from staff around domestic abuse, or other support occurred. Support could have been implemented to help the victim deal with the health struggles Bob was having, and create a safety plan around this.

We also know from the Safe Later Lives report² that older people have extra barriers to disclosing domestic abuse such as a generational understanding of domestic abuse, longstanding abuse occurring, and systems not being accessible for older people. Therefore, agencies need to consider this when enquiring about domestic abuse and seeing warning signs. Further training on ensuring services are accessible to older people, and recognising signs in older people would be beneficial.

We can see there is a rise in numbers of older people in the population within Leicestershire County Council and therefore a deeper understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse in older relationships is essential.

1. <https://safelives.org.uk/news-views/what-domestic-homicide-reviews-tell-us-about-the-abuse-of-older-people/>
2. <https://safelives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safe-Later-Lives-Older-people-and-domestic-abuse-Spotlight.pdf>

Demographic Data

Population

During the previous needs assessment, Census Data was used from the 2011 Census. Following the 2021 Census we have used this data set within this needs assessment.

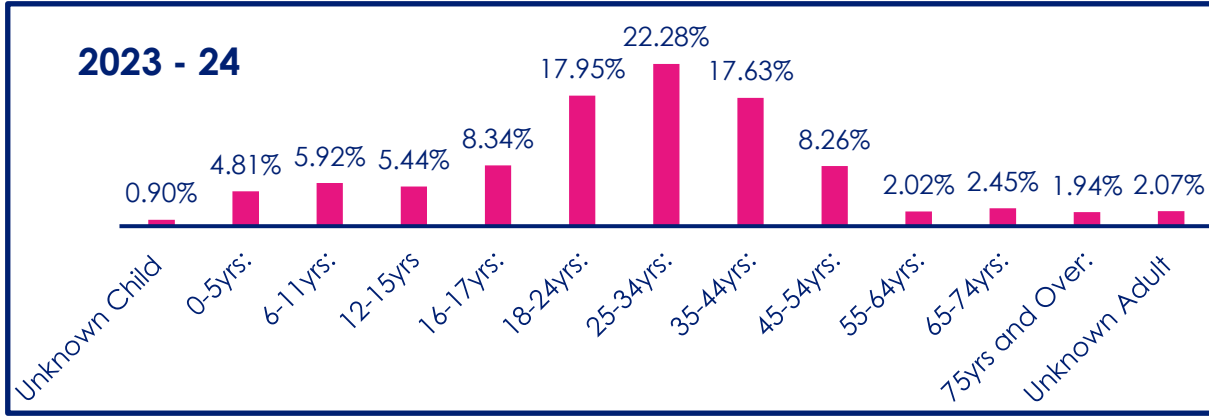
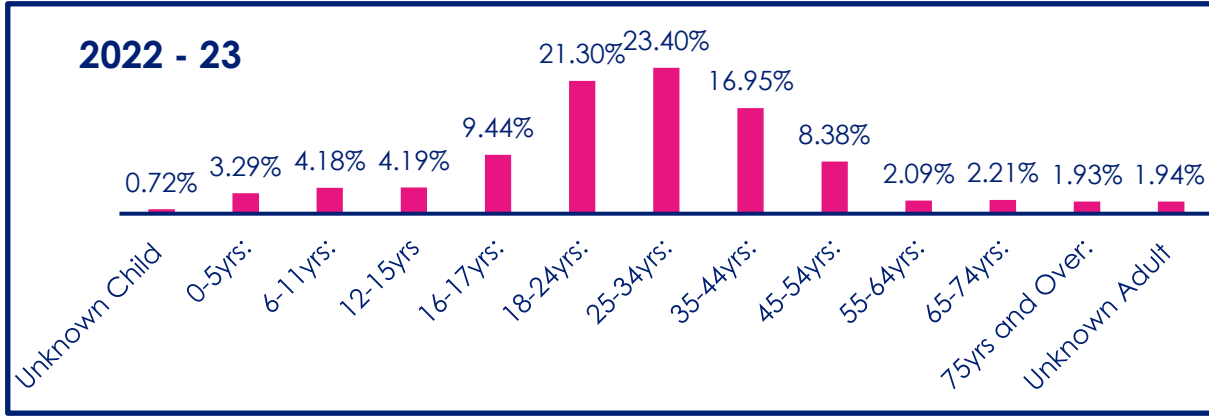
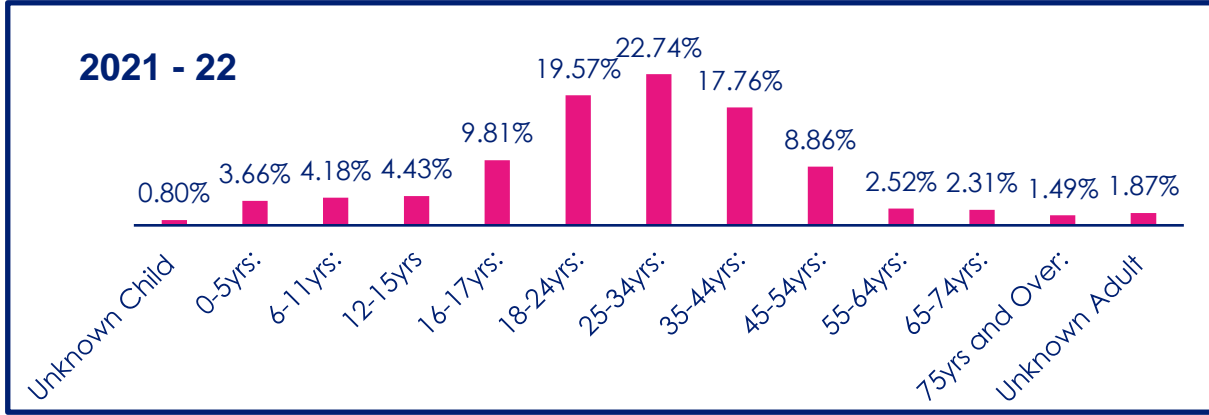
There have been significant changes within the composition of the population in all districts across Leicestershire. All have seen an increase in the overall population ranging from **2.7%** in Oadby and Wigston to **14.3%** in Harborough, which is the largest increase in the East Midlands.

In terms of age, the most significant change has been in the **over 65 age group**. Harborough has seen the second highest increase in the over 65 population in England with **38.5%**. The other districts, baring Oadby and Wigston at **13%**, have all seen an increase of between **25% and 31.4%** compared to a **20.1%** increase in England overall.

For the **under 15 age range**, Charnwood is the district with the highest increase of 10.2% with Melton having the lowest at **3.6%** compared to **5%** in England overall. For the **15 – 64 age range**, all have seen an increasing baring Oadby and Wigston who have seen a decrease of **1.7%** compare to **3.6%** in England overall. These increases range from **1.7% in** Melton to **10.1%** in Harborough.

These changes will have an impact on the range of needs and therefore services required by victims and survivors across Leicestershire.

Age



There has been an improvement with the collection of age data with the level of unknown falling from **5.6%** at the end of the previous assessment to **2.07%** at the end of this assessment.

The age profile of identified victims in Leicestershire remained broadly consistent across all three years, with **almost a quarter** of all identified victims falling within the 25–34-year-old age bracket. This is consistent with the previous needs assessment.

There have however been changes in the age of victims identified from the previous assessment.

There has been a decrease in the 35 – 44 and 45 – 56-year-old age ranges from **20.3% to 17.63%** and **14.1% to 8.26%** respectively, from the start of the last assessment to the final year of this assessment.

As per the previous slide the 2021 census shows that there has been a significant increase in the older population in Leicestershire ranging from **13%** in Oadby and Wigston to **38.5%** in Harborough¹

SafeLives' Prevalence Tool estimates there **are 6,000** victims aged over 60 who will have experienced domestic abuse in the last year in Leicestershire. However, we can see that **735** victims aged over 65 were identified in 2023 – 24, accounting for **5.89%** of adult victims and **4.39%** of all victims.

Our Spotlight on Older People and Domestic abuse shows that those over 60 experience domestic abuse for much longer, on average **12.9 years** compared to the national average of **4.5 years**, with **25%** experiencing abuse for between **20 and 50 years**.²

1. [Oadby and Wigston population change, Census 2021 – ONS](#)
 2. [Spotlight #1: Older people and domestic abuse | Safelives](#)

Age – Children and Young People

Using the prevalence tool, it is estimated that **6000** young victims aged 16 - 24 will have experienced domestic abuse in the last year within their own intimate partner relationships.

There has been a significant increase in the number of victims identified aged 16 – 24 from the previous needs assessment.

Previously between **2% and 2.8%** of all victims identified were aged 16 – 17 compared to a range of **8.34% to 9.81%**

There is a higher proportion of 18 – 24-year-olds identified during this period with a range of **17.95% to 21.30%** of all victims in that age range. This is compared to a range of **11.6% to 13.2%** previously.

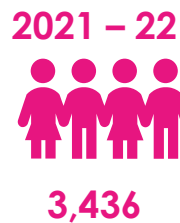
The 16 – 24-year-old age group accounts for over a quarter of all victims in all three years of this assessment.

It should be noted that the data provided for the needs assessment for those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV in their own relationships.

At Marac, **10** cases were heard where the victim was 16/17 in 2023 - 24 in Leicestershire. A reduction from the previous two years of **17** in 2021 - 22 and **15** in 2022 – 23 .

The prevalence tool estimates that there are 17,000 children (under 18) living in a household with partner abuse in the past year in Leicestershire.

The total number of child victims identified in the Leicestershire in each of the 3 years the needs assessment covers are:



It should be noted that a number of agencies do not capture data regarding children.

Barring children aged 16 and 17, children aged 6 – 11 years old have the highest prevalence of identification.

Children account for around a quarter of all identified victims ranging from 22.88% in 2021 – 22 to 25.41% in 2023 – 24 compared to 19.2% at the end of the previous assessment. This highlights the importance of the commissioning and sustainability of specialist children's provision, for those living in households where abuse is taking place and for those experiencing abuse within their own relationships.

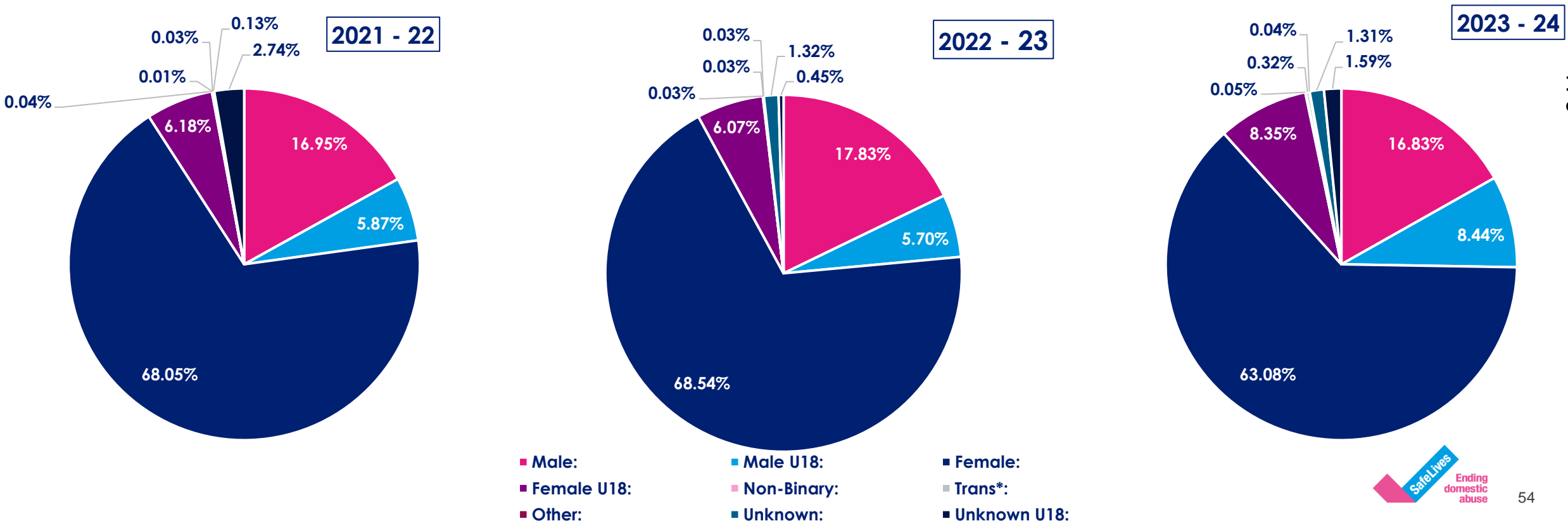
Gender Identity

The gender of victims in Leicestershire also remained fairly consistent across the three years with the highest number of identified victims recorded as being adult female. Similarly to the age data, there has been an improvement with the data capture. The number of all victims with their gender identity recorded as unknown in the final year of the previous assessment was **7.35%** and has reduced to **2.87%** in 2021 – 22, **1.77%** in 2022 – 23 and **2.9%** in 2023 – 24.

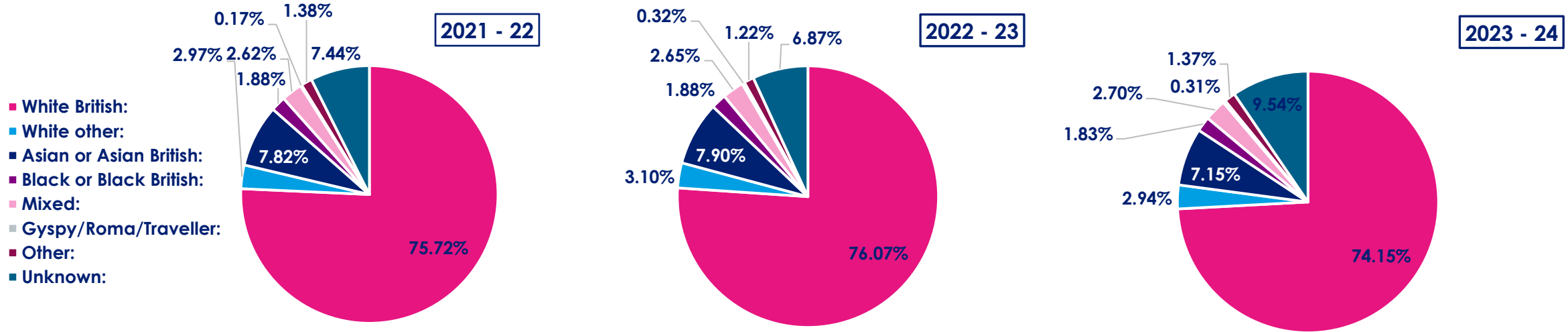
Fewer than 1% of victims were recorded as identifying as non-binary, transgender or other, combined across all three years.

Marac data shows that **4.1%** of all victims discussed in were male in 2021 - 22, increasing to **5.6%** in 2022 – 23 and 2023 - 24. All falling within the SafeLives recommended 5-10% range. It is noted that Freeva now also employ a specialist male worker role.

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Ethnicity



This is another area where there has been significant improvement with the data collection. In the previous needs assessment, the level of unknown was as high as **80.2%** with the lowest figure being **39%**.

Within this assessment, the number of victims whose ethnicity is unknown is **7.44%** in 2021 – 22, **6.87%** in 2022 – 23 and **9.54%** in 2023 – 24.

Across all three years, White British is the most prevalent group with approximately a quarter of all victims identifying as White British.

ONS data suggests that **16.36%** of individuals in Leicestershire are Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community. The data provided by agencies is in line with this with **16.84%** of victims identified as Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community in 2021 – 22, **17.07%** in 2022 – 23 and **16.30%** in 2023 – 24.

In 2023 - 24, **9.6%** of Marac in Leicestershire were identified as relating to those who were Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community. In previous years, referrals had been in line and slightly over the recorded Black, Asian and racially minoritised community population data however with the updated census data, we can see that Marac cases are below the population figure.

It is positive that those from minoritised communities are being identified. Leicestershire GATE works with those from the Gypsy Roma Traveller community and is funded by the county. It is noted that dedicated specialist By & For safe accommodation provision has been commissioned also. However, further specialist support for those residing in the county from other minoritised communities needs a focus.

Ethnicity

Our research shows that for Intimate Partner Violence only, we would estimate a total of **1500 Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised** adult victims per year. This does not include child domestic abuse victims or victims who experience abuse from non-intimate partners such as parents, siblings, HBV etc.

In the 2023 - 24 year the data submitted recorded **2729 Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised** adult and child victims accessing services.

The HALT (Homicide Abuse Learning Together) group carried out research into Domestic Homicide Reviews and Black and Minoritised Victims and Perpetrators.¹

One of the key themes of this research is the Invisibility of Race and Culture. It showed that many agencies did not collect data regarding a person's ethnicity, highlighting that poor data collection has wider impact regarding accessibility of services to Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised victims.

One DHR included in the research noted -

“several agencies had no details of ethnicity, nationality or religion as these were not recorded at the point of referral. It is a core principle of good practice to ensure agencies know the background of those using their services; otherwise they have no information to consider in what they might need to adapt to improve access”

Where ethnicity is recorded, it is not always fully understood, acknowledged or recognised as a significant factor within the experience of Domestic Abuse.

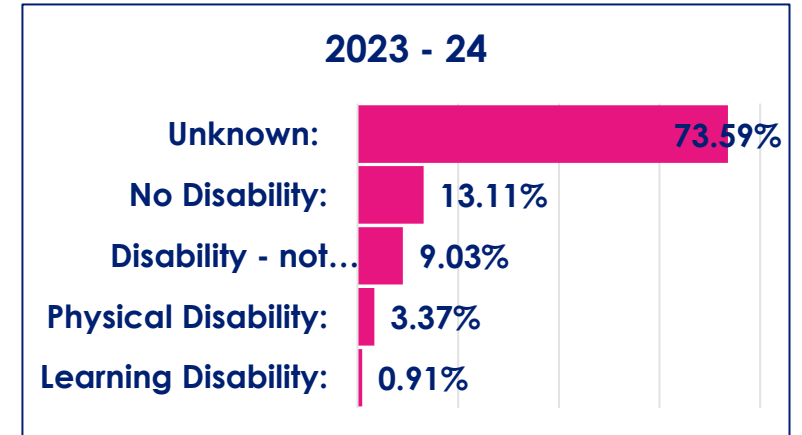
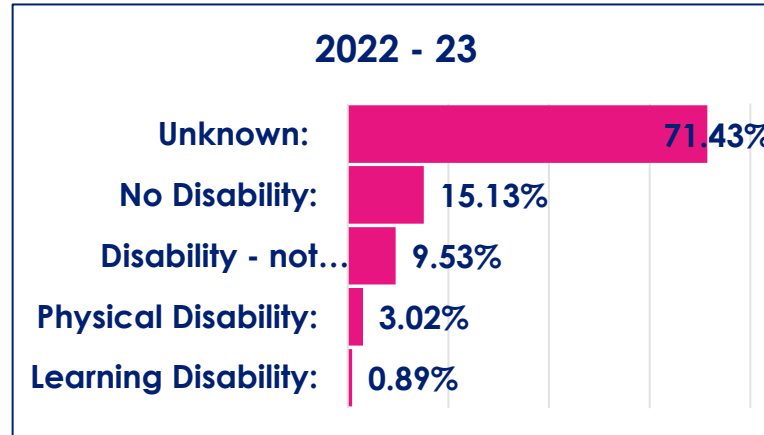
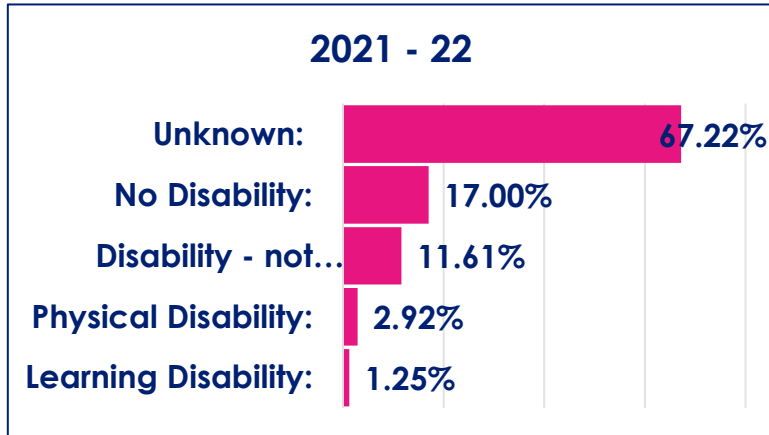
Other themes include

- Perception of Services; with the DHRs reporting that victims had received negative experiences of seeking help and that there was a lack of awareness of UK laws, culture, available support and misleading information by perpetrators influencing a victim's perception of services.
- Stereotypes and culturalisation of Domestic Abuse including the uncritical acceptance and normalisation and culturalisation of Domestic Abuse in minoritised communities.
- Interpreters and communication, with friends, children and even the perpetrator being used as an interpreter for the victim, and professional interpreters being inconsistently used meaning the victims voice and views were not heard. There is also an example of a victim having to provide an account of a serious sexual assault to a male GP, male Police Officer and male medical examiner with no interpreter support.
- DHR recommendations with around half of the DHRs including recommendations regarding ethnicity/culture such as – enhanced risk assessment predominantly focusing on HBV/Forced Marriage, raising awareness of domestic abuse, staff training and using independent interpreters

This research shows that it is imperative that a person's ethnicity and identity is fully captured, acknowledged and understood.

1. [An analysis of minoritisation in domestic homicide reviews in England and Wales - Khatidja Chantler, et al., 2022 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

Disability



Whilst there is a high level of unknown regarding disability, it should be noted that only Leicestershire Police, the Targeted Family Help service and two of the Districts did not provide and/or capture disability data. While there have been improvements with data collection regarding disability, there are areas to strengthen. This should be an area of priority for those agencies.

It should also be noted that the number of disabilities identified may be higher in some agencies than the number of victims identified as some victims identify as having more than one disability. Within the “disability not defined” category, some agencies have captured mental health condition or cognitive impairment, some have included sensory disabilities within physical disabilities and others within disability not defined. It would be of benefit to have a collective decision on the categories of disabilities so there is consistency across the board.

Using the SafeLives prevalence tool, we estimate that there were **7,500 Disabled victims** of domestic abuse in the past year, The numbers identified are significantly below this.

In 2021 – 22 **2404** victims were recorded as having a disability with **2057** in 2022 – 23 and **2299** in 2023 – 24. This is in contrast to the Marac data where we have seen an increase in the identification of cases being heard where the victim has been identified as having a disability.

If a victim's disability is not recorded and acknowledged, not all risks can be identified and therefore subsequent action plans and support cannot be specific to that person's needs and family circumstances.

Disability

People with Disabilities in Partner Relationships



Adapted with permission from
DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT
202 East Superior Street, Duluth, MN 55802
218.722.2781 | theduluthmodel.org

Created by SAFE with in-depth input from
people with disabilities.
disabilityservices@safeaustin.org

SAFE have created a power and control wheel for those with disabilities in partner relationship which highlights the additional barriers and challenges a disabled person may face.¹

SafeLives Spotlight on Disabled People and Domestic Abuse² has found that disabled victims of domestic abuse also suffer more severe and frequent abuse over longer periods of time than non-disabled victims. SafeLives' data reveals that disabled victims typically endure abuse for an average of 3.3 years before accessing support, compared to 2.3 years for non-disabled victims. Even after receiving support, disabled victims were 8% more likely than non-disabled victims to continue to experience abuse. For one in five (20%) this ongoing abuse was physical and for 7% it was sexual.

This is in line with Public Health England's (2015)³ report that **disabled people**:

- experience disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse.
- experience domestic abuse for longer periods of time, and more severe and frequent abuse than non-disabled people.
- encounter differing dynamics of domestic abuse, which may include more severe coercion, control or abuse from carers.

We also know that women with learning disabilities and/or autism are three times more likely to experience domestic abuse than their non-disabled peers.⁴

SafeLives have also undertaken research, in partnership with the Vision Foundation regarding the impact of domestic abuse on those who are visually impaired. **One in 12 visually impaired people** in the UK is believed to be a victim or survivor of domestic abuse, meaning that **188,000** of the 2.19 million blind and partially sighted people living in this country have experience of domestic abuse. The report highlighted the additional barriers and abuse faced by those who are visually impaired⁵

1. Power and Control Wheel - Full Text - The SAFE Alliance. (safeaustin.org)

2. Spotlight #2: Disabled people and domestic abuse | Safelives

3. Outcomes for disabled people in the UK - Office for National Statistics. (ons.gov.uk)

4. Disability & Domestic Abuse

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480942/Disability_and_domestic_abuse_to_government_w_FINAL.pdf

5. The Unseen: Blind and partially sighted people's experiences of domestic abuse | Safelives

Sexual Identity of Victims Year on Year comparison:

The data regarding sexual identity is limited with a minimum of **73.7%** victims' sexual identity unknown. This has decreased from a minimum of **89.3%** of victims in the previous assessment.

According to research more than **one in four** gay men and lesbian women and more than **one in three** bisexual people report at least one form of domestic abuse since the age of 16¹

It should be noted that sexual identity is not captured by Leicestershire Police which accounts for a significant number of the unknown figure. For other agencies, the information recorded is sporadic.

The way in which the data is captured, groups Lesbian Women and Gay Men together, with the figures showing in:

- 2021 - 22 **42** Lesbian / Gay, **94** Bisexual and **12** Other Sexual Identity victims recorded;
- 2022 - 23 **60** Lesbian / Gay, **95** Bisexual and **9** Other Sexual Identity victims recorded;
- 2023 - 24 **56** Lesbian / Gay, **110** Bisexual and **5** Other Sexual Identity victims recorded.



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Our research shows that for Intimate Partner Violence only, we would estimate a total of **5,500 LGB+** adult victims per year, significantly higher than the recorded numbers.

At Marac in 2021 - 22 **1.1%** of cases related to an individual who identified as LGBT+ in Leicestershire, this increased to **1.5% in 2022 – 23** before decreasing to **1%** in 2023 – 24.

All of these figures fall below the recommended SafeLives recommended figures of between **2.5% and 5.8%**.

National data suggests that LGBT+ victims of abuse are more likely than heterosexual individuals to experience abuse from multiple partners, are almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide, are more than twice as likely to have self-harmed and are more than twice as likely to have experienced historic abuse from a family member¹. Therefore it is vital that the sexual identity of domestic abuse victims are recorded and understood in order to provide appropriate support.

The Leicestershire LGBT Centre has been commissioned by Leicestershire County Council to provide domestic abuse counselling support. They also provide social groups, drop in sessions, and outreach services in each of the districts.

1. [Recognise and Respond](#): Strengthening advocacy for LGBT+ survivors of domestic abuse



Socio-economic Characteristics

Data regarding socio-economic characteristics is limited, other than employment status and household structure, which are recorded by some agencies. This has improved from the last needs assessment with the level of unknown reducing from 92.7% in the final year of the previous assessment for household structure/family make up to 79% in the final year of this assessment.

Although limited data is currently captured by local agencies about socio economic characteristics, these can have a significant impact on victims' ability to access appropriate services when they need them, for example:



Marital status: divorce and matrimonial rights to a home



Family make up: needs of a single person and those with children



Income: a persons income and expenditure can impact their eligibility for social housing



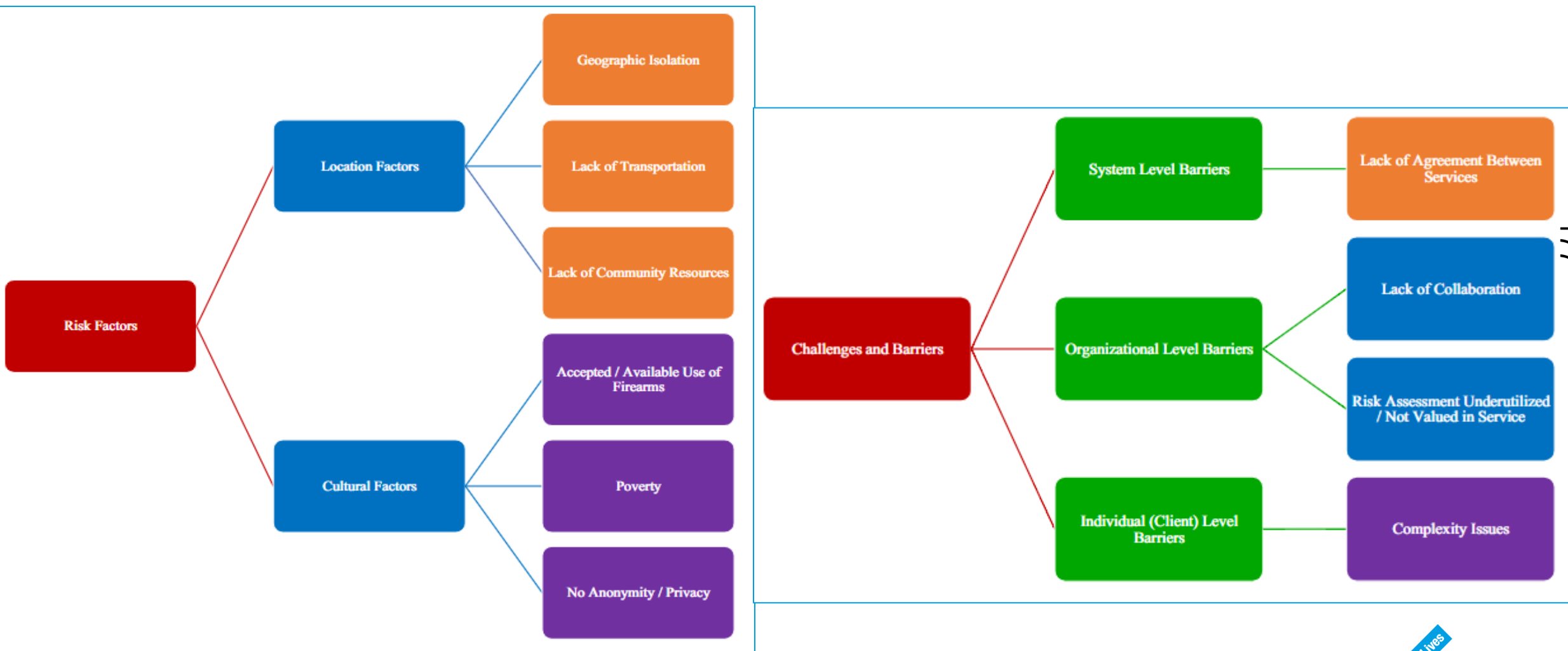
Benefits: a victim seeking safe accommodation may experience delays in claiming benefit, resulting in arrears. In addition, the impact due to the change of circumstance affecting benefits

All these characteristics represent the whole person and a whole family, it is, therefore, important to capture this information to ensure victims get the right support at the right time.

Rural Areas

There are many areas of Leicestershire which are classed as rural areas.

Challenges in Risk Assessment with Rural Domestic Violence Victims: Implications for Practice, shared in the Journal for Family Violence, Youngson et al highlights the unique risk factors and barriers of victims experiencing DA in rural locations.



Rural v Urban

Urban

- Dense population drives numbers of DV cases + higher reporting rates
- Higher education levels = know what abuse is and is not
- More aware/more likely to question abuse
- Greater freedom to act when needed
- Some informal support network in place - friends, neighbours work colleagues
- Easier access to formal support agencies via domestic violence support agency or GP/health
- Easier to action an escape plan:
 - Transport
 - Support
 - Finance
 - Access to safe refuge



Rural

- Sparse population + lower reporting rates BUT incidence rate is the same
- Lower education levels and abuse can be normalised - less awareness of what abusive behaviour is?
- Less aware/less likely to question abuse?
- Much less freedom to enable action to be taken
- More likely to be socially isolated
- Difficult to access formal support agencies due to coverage & contact and less likely to confide in GP/Health
- Much harder to action an escape plan
 - Lack of transport/public transport
 - Support/more reliant on informal network
 - Less access to finance
 - Safe refuge likely to be out of area

Needs more UK based evidence

Barriers to acting/reporting may be the same in both areas but the scale of the barriers in rural areas is larger as the factors involved reinforce each other

A consortium of OPCC areas commissioned the National Rural Crime Network to conduct research into Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas – Captive and Controlled¹.

A key part of this research was to understand whether there is a difference in the nature and patterns of domestic abuse between those in rural areas compared to urban areas.

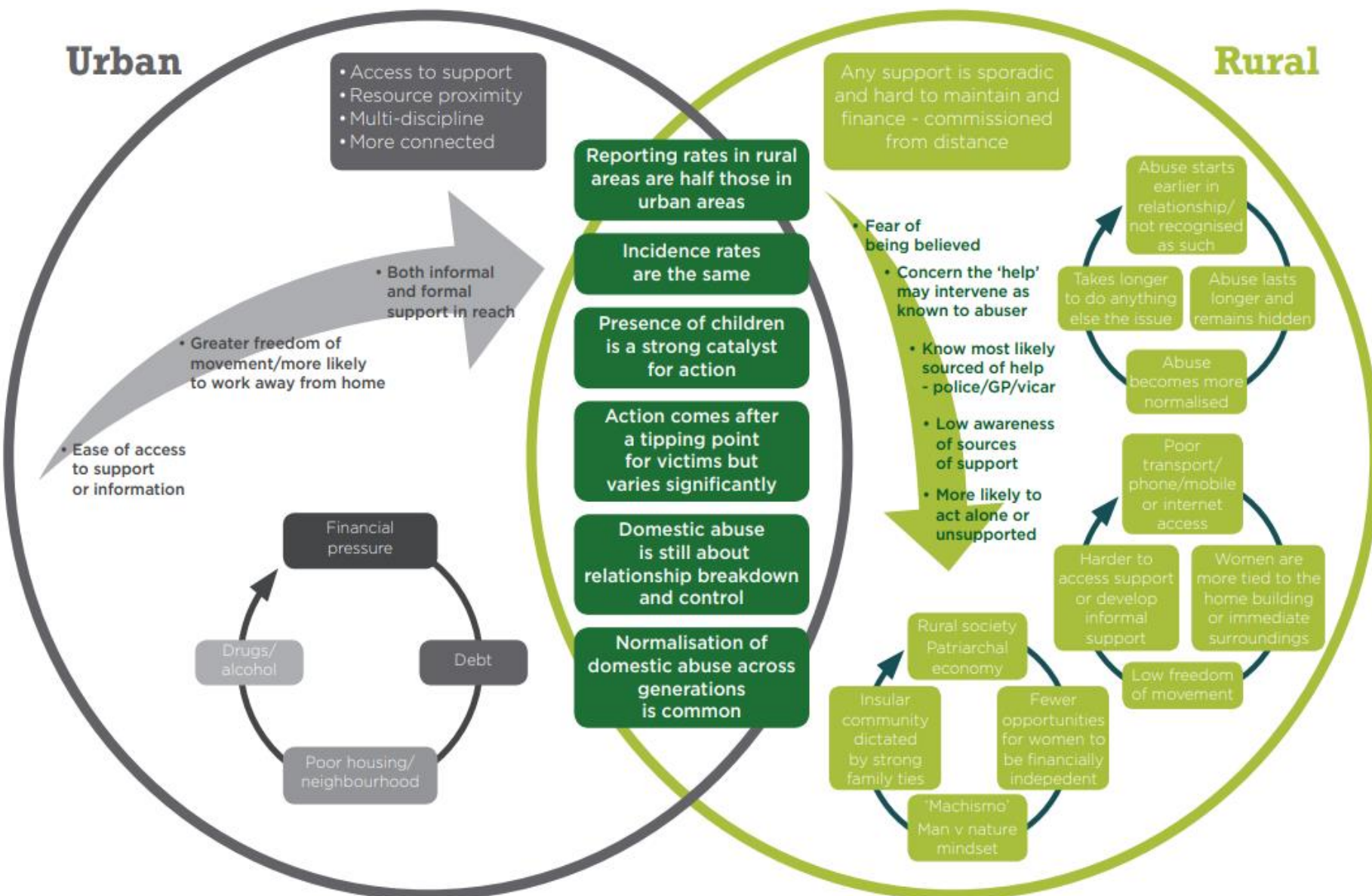
The table opposite highlights those potential differences, which have been simplified to assist with research.

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Figure 3: Differences noted between Urban and Rural areas for Domestic Abuse

1. [Captive & Controlled - Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas - National Rural Crime Network](#)

Rural v Urban



The **dark green** section highlights the drivers of domestic abuse. Whilst there are similarities, it is shown within this research that the scale of barriers faced by rural victims is significantly greater than those in urban areas. This can be due to geographic, cultural and societal differences in addition to isolation having an impact on the ability to report abuse.

We can see within the **grey** circle the factors impacting domestic abuse rates and barriers to action for those in urban areas.

The **green** circle shows the factors impacting domestic abuse rates and barriers to action for those in rural areas. Whilst not all will be present in each case, this highlights the additional barriers to disclosure and support. Not only the practical barriers such as lack of transport and support services, but the cultural and social barriers including a lack of awareness of domestic abuse and a fear of not being believed.

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Figure 7: Composite View of Urban v rural issues based on Literature Review

Rural v Urban

Captive and Controlled Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas Key Findings - National Rural Crime Network

The **Captive and Controlled** report detailed **10 Key Findings**:

1. Abuse lasts, on average, 25% longer in the most rural areas
2. The policing response is largely inadequate
3. The more rural the setting, the higher the risk of harm
4. Rurality and isolation are deliberately used as weapons by abusers
5. Close-knit rural communities facilitate abuse
6. Traditional, patriarchal communities control and subjugate women
7. Support services are scarce – less available, less visible and less effective
8. Retreating rural resources make help and escape harder
9. The short-term, often hand-to-mouth funding model has created competing and fragmented service provision
10. An endemic data bias against rural communities leads to serious gaps in response and support

It is important to consider these findings when commissioning services within rural areas and communities to ensure appropriate access to services.



Safe Accommodation Provision

What is Safe Accommodation?

Refuge Accommodation - A refuge offers single gender or single sex accommodation and domestic abuse support which is tied to that accommodation. The address will not be publicly available. Victims, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.

Specialist safe accommodation - dedicated specialist support to victims with relevant protected characteristics and/or complex needs such as specialist refuges for Black, Asian and racially minoritised, LGBT+, and disabled victims and their children.

Dispersed accommodation – Safe self-contained accommodation with the same level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge.

Sanctuary Schemes – may also be called Target Hardening scheme. A survivor centred initiative which aims to enable a victim to remain in their own home by installing additional security to the property and perimeter alongside specialist domestic abuse support.

Move on and/or second stage accommodation – Accommodation temporarily housing victims, who no longer require the intensive support provided in a refuge, but still require a lower level of domestic abuse specific support before they move to fully independent and permanent accommodation. May include support accommodation schemes.

Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation – A safe place with support given victims an opportunity to spend a temporary period of time to consider and make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe.

Safe accommodation is not generic temporary accommodation which is not solely dedicated to providing a safe place to stay for victims of domestic abuse. It is important to note that those experiencing Domestic Abuse may well be in standard temporary accommodation but may not have been identified as such or may have been placed in this accommodation due to Homelessness Duty.



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Safe Accommodation Provision

Service	Provider	Commissioner	No of Units	Referral Pathway
Refuge	Women's Aid Leicestershire(WALL)	Leicestershire County Council	7 units in Hinckley and Bosworth	Via the local helpline, self-referrals, national helpline, professionals, other domestic abuse support services, Women's Aid online referral route.
Dispersed Accommodation	Women's Aid Leicestershire(WALL)	Leicestershire County Council	9 units in Charnwood 2 units in Hinckley and Bosworth	Via the local helpline, self-referrals, national helpline, professionals, other domestic abuse support services, Women's Aid online referral route.
Specialist dispersed property for male victims	Women's Aid Leicestershire(WALL)	Leicestershire County Council	1 units in Hinckley and Bosworth	Via the local helpline, self-referrals, national helpline, professionals, other domestic abuse support services, Women's Aid online referral route.
Specialist refuge accommodation for Black Asian and Racially Minoritised Women	Panahghar (Commenced in July 2024)	Leicestershire County Council	6 units in Charnwood	Via Panahghar's helpline service

As of July 2024, there are currently **25** safe accommodation spaces in Leicestershire which are situated in two districts, Hinckley and Bosworth and Charnwood. It should be noted that there are a further **8** dispersed safe accommodation spaces within Rutland which are jointly funding by the partnership board.

This is an increase of **4** spaces from the previous assessment however if we include the spaces within Rutland, there is an increase of **12** spaces.

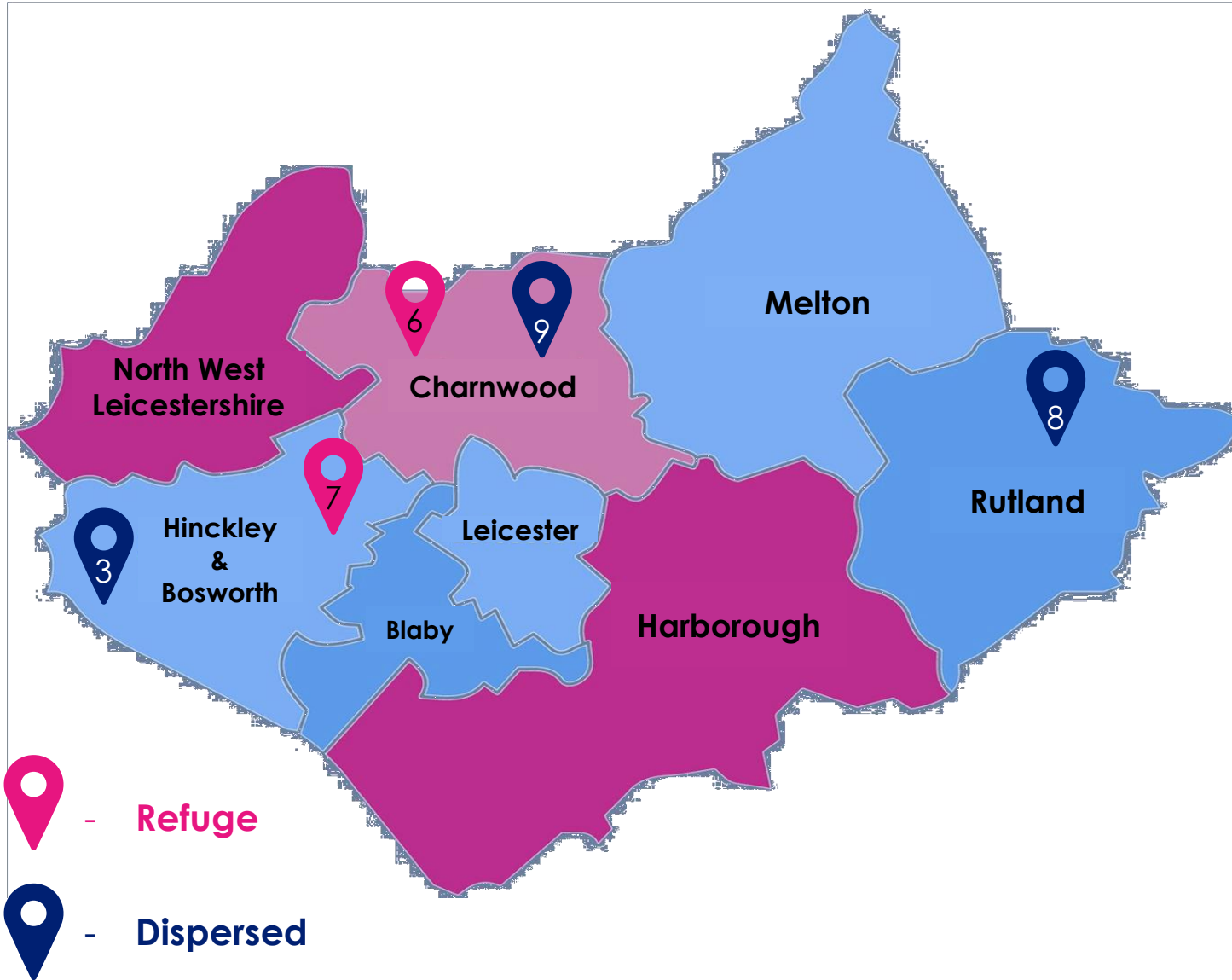
It is noted that not all districts have safe accommodation however victims can access these services regardless of their location as well of those in Rutland.

The Council of Europe¹ recommendation is 1 family place per 10,000 population. The population of Leicestershire according to the 2021 census is 712,300 therefore the recommended number is **71** spaces.

[1. Final Activity Report \(coe.int\)](#)



Safe Accommodation Provision - Map



This map illustrates where the current safe accommodation provision is located across Area.

As mentioned on the previous slide, safe accommodation is only available in two districts, three if you include the Rutland dispersed properties.

Many would have to travel a minimum of 30 minutes by car to access safe accommodation, with some being over an hour away by car. When using public transport this could take much longer.

Consideration should be given to the location of safe accommodation, how appropriate this might be for victims, thinking about their support network, culture, employment and children's school.

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Safe Accommodation Provision

Within the previous needs assessment, there was a sanctuary scheme offer available. This was funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This funding has now ended and there is no sanctuary scheme available in Leicestershire.

The Sanctuary Scheme is a victim/survivor centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, when it is safe to do so and if they chose to, by installing additional security to the property and perimeter (Sanctuary) and support. It also forms part of the whole housing approach to domestic abuse.

Consideration should be given to reinstating the sanctuary scheme as an option of safe accommodation for victims and their families. This will provide choice for victims, allowing them to remain at home and within their support networks when it is safe to do so. It will enable more victims to be safely supported and may reduce the need for refuge or dispersed accommodation for the victim.



Safe Accommodation Referrals

Referrals to Safe Accommodation – Refuge & Dispersed Accommodation

WALL manages the majority of the refuge and dispersed accommodation across Leicestershire with Panahghar managing the specialist accommodation for Black, Asian and racially minoritised communities.

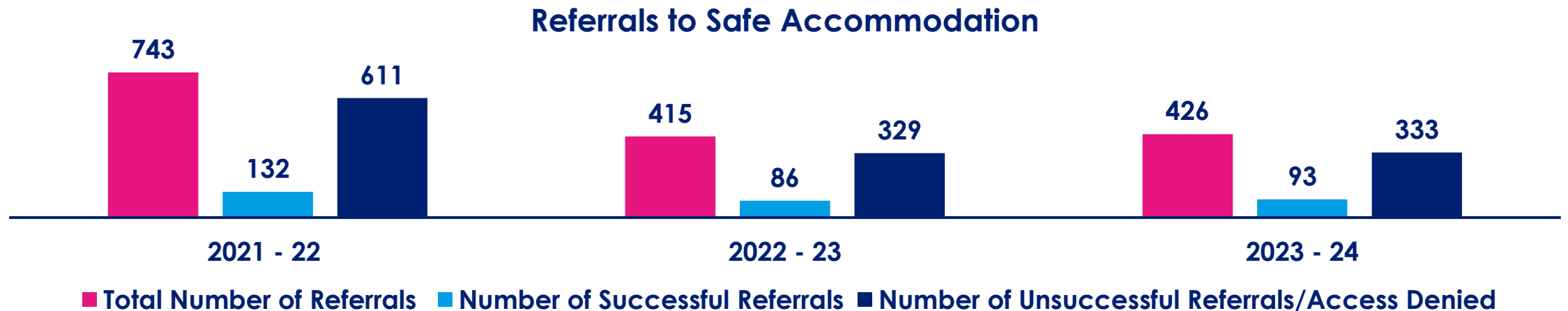
Panaghar's service contract commenced in July 2024 however due to delays with housing benefit they have been unable to take referrals until October 2024. Due to the contract commencement date, Panaghar's service is not included in the data set for this needs assessment. It is positive to see that this service has been commissioned and implemented in Leicestershire.

It must be noted that the data provided by WALL for their safe accommodation provision is **LLR wide** so covers all referrals into safe accommodation across the LLR area. This data cannot be broken down into those accessing the Leicestershire accommodation only. Referrals to the service can be made by professionals and self referrals via the helpline, website and by contacting the team directly.

Limited data is available regarding referrals to safe accommodation. WALL have identified this as an area for improvement.

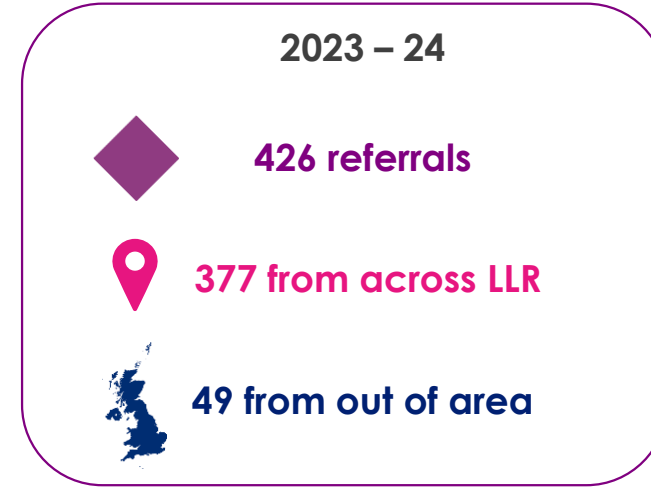
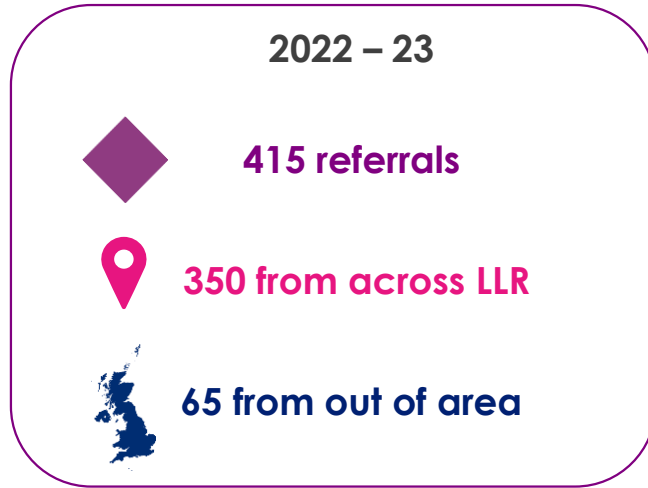
The data shows that there has been a **44.1%** decrease in referrals in to safe accommodation from 2021 – 22 before increasing slightly in 2023 – 24 by **2.65%**. WALL have advised that for 2023 – 24 175 referrals were for clients who have been referred into organisation for support before. Of these 175 referrals , 94 clients had been previously referred to refuge and assessed.

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Referrals to Safe Accommodation – Refuge & Dispersed Accommodation

We know that many victims will have to move out of area to a new local authority to access safe accommodation. WALL accepted a number of referrals over the period of this needs assessments from victims out of area. Data regarding area is not available for 2021 – 22.



WALL have advised that for the 2022 – 23 and 2023 – 24, a large proportion of referrals were for those within Leicester City. In 2023 – 24, 253 referrals were for those within Leicester.

For those who were referred from out of area, the top areas are detailed in the table below.

2021 – 22	Nottingham – 9	Chesterfield – 3		
2022 – 23	Derbyshire – 15	Birmingham – 10	Nottingham – 9	Northampton - 5
2023 - 24	Nottingham – 19	Derbyshire – 19	Birmingham – 13	Northampton - 8

Denied Access to Service

Not all victims who are referred to Safe Accommodation services will be able to access them for a number of reasons. In 2021 – 22 **82.2%** of referrals were denied access, **79.2%** in 2022 – 23 and **78.1%** in 2023 – 24.

Data is limited regarding denied access to service.

In **2022 – 23** the most common reason for being denied access is 'no space or capacity'.

For **2023 – 24** the most common reasons are

- Client does not require support/declined refuge
- No capacity/space available
- Area identified as being unsafe.

We can see that 'no space/capacity to support' is cited in both years. It has been highlighted that the number of safe accommodation spaces available in Leicestershire is below the recommended figure of 71.

Regarding the 'client does not require support/declined refuge', there may be some relevance in the location of safe accommodation as discussed earlier in this report. This was highlighted in the previous assessment as there was a high proportion of denied access due to 'client does not want support'. Consideration should be given to providing safe accommodation within all districts.

Consideration should be given to alternative forms of safe accommodation which may be more suited to those who cannot access a refuge, such as a Housing First scheme, where wraparound support for complex and additional needs can be provided or properties with adaptations for those who have a disability or care and support needs include children.

Consideration should also be given to perpetrator management as set out in the [Domestic Abuse Draft Statutory Guidance Framework](#), which could enable victims and children to remain in their homes and communities, reducing disruption and trauma already experienced

Denied Access to Service

In addition to the previous slide, there are many other barriers to accessing safe accommodation including socio economic factors.

Where a victim needs to access safe accommodation and they are claiming Universal Credit, they are able to make a claim for Housing Benefit to cover the cost of safe accommodation.

However, if their income is over a certain amount, they would not be eligible for Housing Benefit and therefore would have to cover the cost of provision themselves.

For those on certain benefits, assistance can be sought to cover the cost of both safe accommodation and their main home. Again, if your income is over a certain amount, you would not be eligible for this and would have to cover the cost of both.

As a result, many cannot afford safe accommodation costs and either remain in their home or seek alternatives such as staying with family. Sadly, this is a national issue and not specific to Leicestershire.

There are additional challenges for those with NRPF or insecure immigration status.

We know that many who are denied access to safe accommodation will access temporary accommodation. We do not have data regarding this from the districts. This is an area for further exploration to gain a greater understanding of those accessing temporary accommodation due to domestic abuse.

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Safe Accommodation Data

Safe Accommodation 2021 - 22

The diagrams below illustrates the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22



175 Victims Supported

172 - Female Victims
3 - Male Victims



Sexual Identity

162 - Heterosexual
3 - Gay/lesbian
6 - Bisexual
4 - prefer not to say

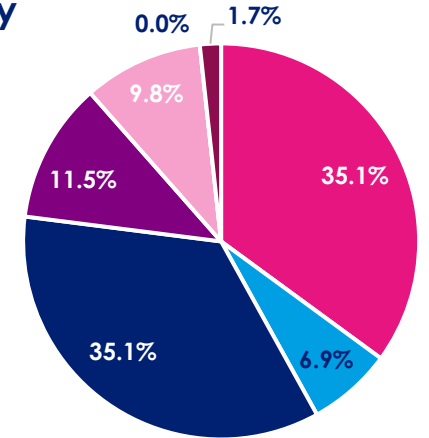


Family Composition

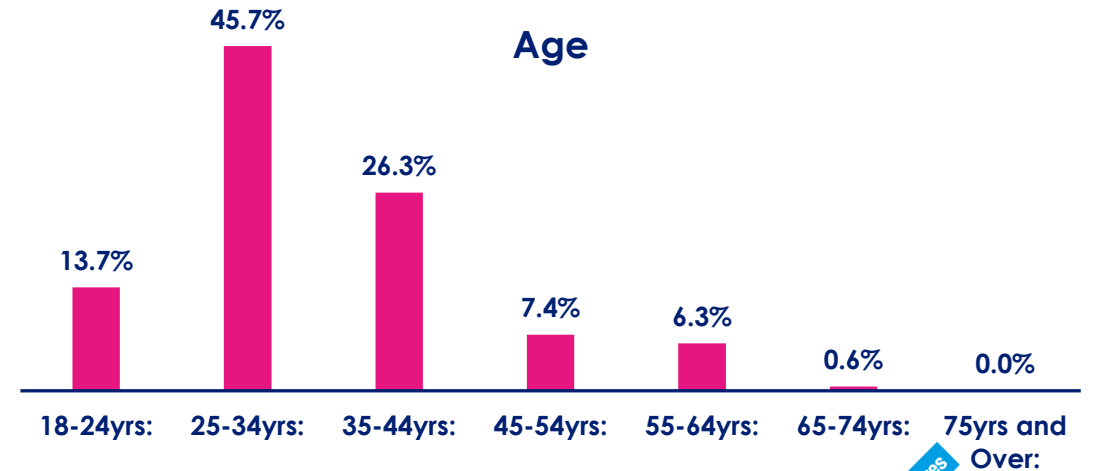
48 - single victims without children
127 - victims with children

- White British:
- White Other
- Asian or Asian British:
- Black or Black British:
- Mixed:
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller:
- Other Isolated/Marginalised community/Prefer Not to Say:

Ethnicity



Age



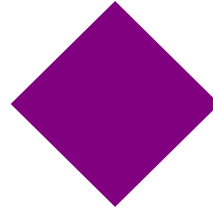
Safe Accommodation 2021 – 22

Below is the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22



Disability

- 15 - Physical disability
- 5 - Learning disability
- 2 - Visual impairment
- 1 - Speech impairment or communication difficulties
- 53 - Mental Health issue
- 15 - Other long term health conditions



Honor Based Violence

- 9 - experienced HBV
- 1 - experienced Forced Marriage



Immigration Status

- 22 - Family Visa
- 1 - Work/Student/Visit Visa
- 4 - Indefinite leave to remain



Additional Needs

- 174 - Homeless
- 1 - Alcohol misuse
- 17 - Drug misuse
- 38 - Legal Support
- 107 - Financial support
- 22 - Translator required



Housing prior to Safe Accommodation

- 2 - Private/Owner Occupier
- 8 - Private Renter
- 34 - Social Housing
- 77 - Temporary
- 54 - Other



Employment

- 32 - Employed/Self Employed
- 90 - Unemployed
- 52 - Unknown

Safe Accommodation 2022 - 23

The diagrams below illustrates the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2022 – 23



86 Victims Supported

85 - Female Victims
1 - Male Victims



Sexual Identity

78 - Heterosexual
1 - Gay/lesbian
6 - Bisexual
1 - prefer not to say

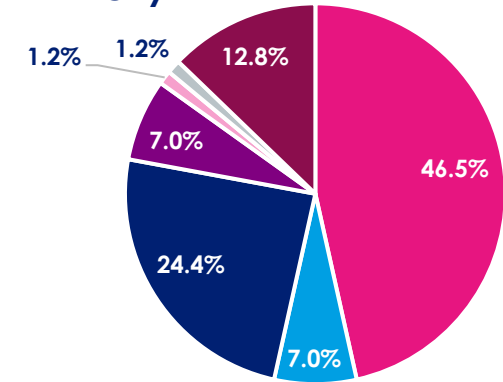


Family Composition

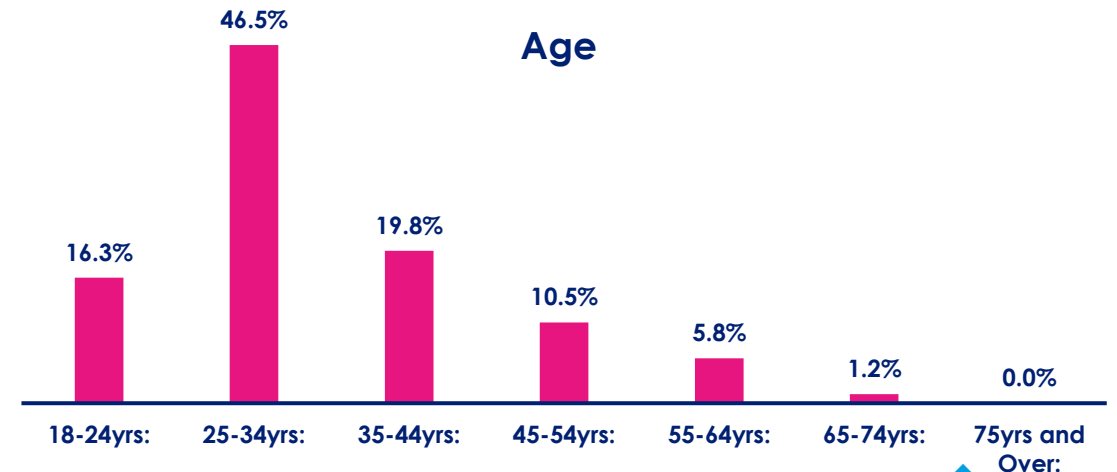
25 - single victims without children
61 - victims with children

- White British:
- White Other
- Asian or Asian British:
- Black or Black British:
- Mixed:
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller:
- Other Isolated/Marginalised community/Prefer Not to Say:

Ethnicity



Age



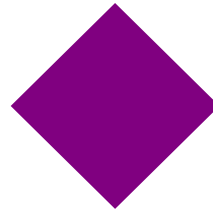
Safe Accommodation 2022 – 23

Below is the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22



Disability

- 20- Physical disability
- 3 - Learning disability
- 1 - Deaf/hearing impairment
- 18 - Mental Health issue
- 41 - Other long term health conditions



Honor Based Violence

- 5 - experienced HBV
- 1 - experienced Forced Marriage



Immigration Status

- 1 - Work/Student/Visit Visa
- 4 - Limited leave to remain
- 15 - Other/unknown/prefer not to say



Additional Needs

- 86 - Homeless
- 2 - Alcohol misuse
- 4 - Drug misuse
- 1 - Offending history



Housing prior to Safe Accommodation

- 2 - Private/Owner Occupier
- 5 - Private Renter
- 23 - Social Housing
- 31 - Temporary
- 25 - Other supported housing



Employment

- 8 - Employed/Self Employed
- 78 - Unemployed

Safe Accommodation 2023 - 24

The diagrams below illustrates the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2023 – 24



141 Victims Supported

138 - Female Victims
3 - Male Victims



Sexual Identity

128 - Heterosexual
3 - Gay/lesbian
4 - Bisexual
6 - prefer not to say



Family Composition

40 - single victims without children
98 - victims with children
3 - victims were pregnant

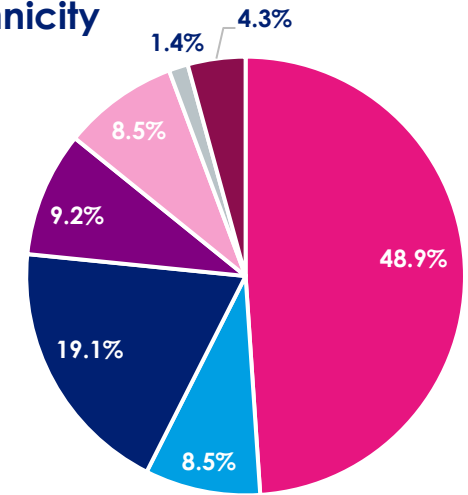


192 Children within refuge

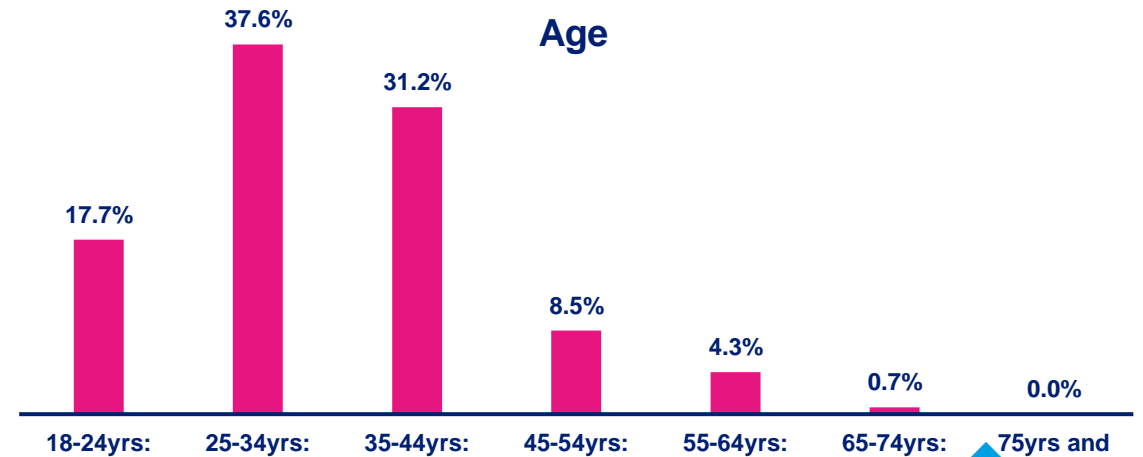
77 - 0-5 years
55 - 6-11 years
36 - 12 – 15 years
24 - 16 – 17 years

- White British:
- White Other
- Asian or Asian British:
- Black or Black British:
- Mixed:
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller:
- Other Isolated/Marginalised community/Prefer Not to Say:

Ethnicity



Age



Safe Accommodation 2022 – 23

Below is the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22

Disability



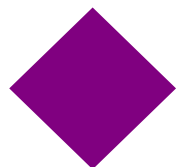
- 28 - Physical disability
- 6 - Learning disability
- 2 - Deaf/hearing impairment
- 8 - Sensory impairment
- 60 - Mental Health issue
- 1 - Neuro divergent
- 9 - Other long term health conditions

Additional Needs



- 141 - Homeless
- 3 - Alcohol misuse
- 2 - Drug misuse
- 82 - Legal support
- 106 - Financial Support
- 17 - Translator required

Honor Based Violence



- 4 - experienced HBV
- 3 - experienced Forced Marriage

Immigration Status



- 1 - Work/Student/Visit Visa
- 3 - Asylum seeker
- 10 - Indefinite leave to remain
- 3 - Limited leave to remain
- 15 - Other/unknown/prefer not to say

Housing prior to Safe Accommodation



- 2 - Private/Owner Occupier
- 1 - Private Renter
- 35 - Social Housing
- 86 - Temporary
- 1 - Other supported housing
- 16 - Other

Employment



- 23 - Employed/Self Employed
- 75 - Unemployed
- 43 - Unknown

Safe Accommodation

As previously stated, the data provided by WALL is LLR wide and not Leicestershire specific. Our analysis of the data cannot be fully attributed to Leicestershire due to this. WALL have advised that a significant number of referrals are from those residing in Leicester.

This is an area for improvement for future data collection and needs assessments.

The data provided shows that the most prevalent age range across all three years is the **25 – 34 years**. There is an increase in the **35 – 44 years** in 2023 – 24. This is in keeping with the overall identified victim figures.

We do not have any data regarding the ages of children except for 2023 – 24. That data shows that while there is a spread across the age ranges, the highest proportion of children are age **0 – 5 years** at **40.1%**.

Children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right. It is important that support is available in age appropriate formats. Support in accessing schools, nurseries and other provision such as play groups is also of benefit.

With regard to ethnicity, the data changes across the three years. As a caveat we know there are a significant number of referrals from Leicester which has a higher Black, Asian and racially minoritised community population (66.8%).

In 2021 – 22, **35.1%** of victims identified as White British and Asian or Asian British. In 2022 – 23 the number of victims identifying as White British increased to this decreased to **46.5%** with Asian or Asian British decreasing to **24.4%** before decreasing again to **19.1** in 2023 – 24.

There are a number of victims who accessed refuge accommodation who had a disability with physical disabilities and mental health needs being the most identified. Accessibility to safe accommodation for those with disability is key. This is a key area for all to consider especially when we consider the ageing population of the area.

The data shows that a high proportion of victims within the service required financial and legal support. The data records all victims accessing safe accommodation as homeless. We would assume that to mean, support with homelessness is required rather than a person being 'street homeless'. Clarification around this would be of benefit.

Safe Accommodation

WALL have stated that

'It has been identified that the support needs for clients has increased. With us as a service having to ensure that our team are trained to enable us to provide an effective service to anyone seeking refuge. With this in mind, this also reflects the lack of funds available to services such as ours to enable us to provide additional team members (Staff) to provide the level of support required by those accessing refuge. This being a national concern and not one expressed within just this area. Taking into account the volume of referrals received alone by ourselves, this highlights the demand and need for refuge within this area. And the increase in those needing to seek refuge and a safe environment away from harm. Looking at those that WALL have not been able to accommodate due to no spaces being available this outlines the demand for refuge.'

Supported Housing: National Statement of Expectations

The National Statement of Expectations (NSE) was developed in collaboration between the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with input from local councils and the supported housing sector. Together, they are committed to seeing delivery of good quality supported housing which meets residents' needs and represents good value for money.

The NSE provides a mechanism for establishing the vision for accommodation standards, quality, and value for money. The NSE is not a statutory requirement, and to date there has been no definitive set of guidelines on what should reasonably be expected from the accommodation element of supported housing. However, it is hoped that organisations involved in the provision of supported housing will use, adopt, and find the principles and examples of best practice helpful.

In supported housing, accommodation is provided alongside support, supervision, or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community, including for people fleeing domestic abuse with their children.

In order to deliver the ambitions of the NSE local authorities should work alongside providers and local delivery partners to:

- Assess local demand and plan effectively
- Ensure safe and good quality supported housing
- Ensure supported housing provides good value for money

Women's Aid Annual Audit 2021

The annual audit presents information on the provision and usage of domestic abuse services (both accommodation and community support services) in England, mainly focusing on the financial year 2019/20. This year the report also includes a section on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Key findings from the audit included:

- It is estimated (based on the On Track data collection) that 10,592 women and 12,710 children were supported by a refuge in 2019 - 20.
- 3,935 refuge spaces in England, falling short of the number of spaces recommended by the Council of Europe by 1,694, which represents a 30% shortfall^[1].
- It is estimated that a total of 24,748 referrals were received by refuges. This means that 57% of all referrals received for refuge were rejected. The main reason for rejection was a lack of space or capacity with 18% of all referrals received rejected for this reason, this also equates to 32% of all rejected referrals being rejected due to lack of space or capacity.
- Only 26% of refuges commissioned by local authorities indicated that the funding covered all aspects of the support staff costs.
- 63% of women in refuge services had children and 6% were pregnant
- 88% of service users had experienced emotional abuse, 67% had experienced jealous or controlling behaviour.
- 49% of service users in a refuge had support needs around mental health
- 48% of service users in a refuge reported feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts because of the abuse.
- 26% of women at refuge services have a disability; most common were mental health disabilities, 7% had a physical disability.
- Of service users who were not British nationals, just over half (54.5%) were able to access public funds.
- Only 4% of vacancies posted on Routes to Support^[2] could consider women who had no recourse to public funds.
- Under half of refuge vacancies can accommodate a woman with two children and less than one in five for a woman with three children.

These statistics highlight that nationally there are barriers for some women to enter refuge.

This includes women who are NRPF and who are a parent and who are likely to have mental health needs requiring sufficient therapeutic support. We also know that people with a disability are more likely to experience domestic abuse. The small percentage of women in refuge with a physical disability, is likely not reflective of demand from this group and impacted by the availability of accessible accommodation.

Whole Housing Approach

SafeLives supports the DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) Whole Housing Approach which aims to improve the housing options and outcomes for all experiencing domestic abuse. It suggests a range of housing options or specialist initiatives to give victims and survivors the choice to relocate or remain in their existing property and for agencies to work together collaboratively.

This diagram shows the model and it's 12 parts. The lighter circles represent the temporary accommodation settings and tenure types with the darker circles representing the housing options and specialist initiatives to support victims to either relocate or remain in their home.

Further information available here
<https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/what-we-do/whole-housing-approach-housing-toolkit/>





Survivor Voice

Survivor Voice

“We’ve walked through fire to get our voices back; we’re not going to give them up now.” Ursula,
Pioneer

SafeLives are committed to placing people with lived experience at the heart of all we do, valuing internal and external survivors’ experience as an asset.

Working together, we can aggregate and amplify survivors’ voices and interweave authenticity and independence throughout all our work. By listening and responding to views that are different to our own, professionals and survivors can critically assess and address challenges together. To do this authentically we support survivors to tell their truth and speak with an unmediated voice.

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Case Studies

The needs assessment also requires a review of case studies to understand a victim's journey, support required, received, and the outcome.

22 case studies have been provided and analysis of these is below:



1 case was an OOA referral



2 victims were pregnant

12 victims had children – 9 victims had more than one child

1 victim was transgender

2 victims had step-children



14 victims were unable to access refuge accommodation due to their circumstances

1 victim was asked to leave refuge accommodation

1 victim's case was closed as housing would not consider a different location



1 victim was already residing in refuge through WALL

2 victims were accepted into refuge

8 victims were housed in temporary accommodation

Case Studies

Of the 14 victims that were unable to access refuge, three stated they did not wish to change their children's schools, one stated they could not move away for work reasons, five stated they did not want to move out of area, or the location of the refuge was too far away, one declined due to the perpetrator being bailed away from the property, and one declined stating the refuge was not suitable for kids. One case also declined due to not being able to bring pets.



- 3 were not eligible due to pregnancy, the victim being on bail, and the victim previously assaulting staff.
- 1 victim was asked to leave refuge due to a breach in contract and no further information is provided on follow up housing.
- 1 victim declined refuge due to being in a different location and was told that housing would not consider another area. There is no further information on why this occurred.
- 1 victim was housed in supported accommodation that was not DA specific.
- 1 victim went on to live with family due to the location of refuge.

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Those who were trying to access safe accommodation but could not be placed somewhere straight away were placed in hotels, hostels and Bed & Breakfasts. Of the four who were placed in those, two then went on to access safe accommodation, whilst the other two remained on priority banding waiting housing. Time periods of being in temporary accommodation lasted up to 7 months. Eight cases accessed temporary accommodation and of these, three were still in temporary accommodation, three were rehoused into their own properties, one returned to live at the perpetrator's address, and one went on to refuge. Those that remain in temporary accommodation are on priority banding for their own accommodation. Six cases were rehoused straightaway through social housing or through CSC. Two cases were currently residing in refuge looking for onwards accommodation.

Case Studies



Of the cases where children were present and looking to flee with the victim, nine out of the 12 cases were referred for Early Help/CSC support or already had this support in place. Two cases there was no record of referring or accessing support for the children. In one case the child was residing with the perpetrator however a safeguarding referral was completed to the relevant area on behalf of the victim.



When considering support needs for victims who were seeking safe accommodation, 37% of cases had mental health needs. Of these a referral was made to counselling/therapy services in six cases and three were receiving emotional support from DA agencies already. Two cases had substance misuse needs, and one was referred for specialist support. Two cases needed support with injunctions and both cases were referred to NCDV for this. Six cases needed support with finances in which support was given around benefits.

58% of cases were referred for specialist DA support, 29% were already engaging with DA services, and 8% received no support regarding domestic abuse.

These cases demonstrate the varying needs of victims seeking safe accommodation, and that no single model of accommodation-based support will be able to meet these needs. Leicestershire County Council should review their options for safe accommodation and seek to design an offer that can cater for the complexity and variety of needs victims of domestic abuse present with.

Survivor Voice

SafeLives spoke to 2 survivors of domestic abuse to understand their experience of Safe Accommodation

Although SafeLives managed to gather the voices of two survivors, there were difficulties in collecting more voices from around the county.

Survivor voice is key to understanding victims needs and how we can improve services to best support them. Survivors are at the heart and start of everything we do at SafeLives, and we are looking to continue this in Leicestershire with Echo Project.



2 interviews with
2 women

Echo Project seeks to embed survivor voice into the design and delivery of policies and services that intend to meet their needs. The Authentic Voice Coordinators within Leicestershire will continue to gather voices and therefore support in understanding the needs of survivors for all aspects of domestic abuse including housing.

Both survivors however spoke about further training needed within the area to fully understand the complexities and dynamics of an abusive relationship. It was thought there was a lack of understanding regarding the impacts of domestic abuse on personal lives, and the housing system needs to have a more human approach alongside understanding to ensure survivor needs are met.

We can see from the case studies that accessing safe accommodation can be difficult, but having a better understanding of the dynamics of abusive relationships and being more human can have positive impacts on survivors being heard, and feel they are in control of their own lives when deciding to leave.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion and Recommendations

We have, throughout this report, using SafeLives recognised best practice guidelines, in conjunction with tools such as our prevalence tool, made recommendations regarding the expected levels of services reach and provision. We recommend that these are considered as part of Leicestershire's Domestic Abuse commissioning strategy.

Local Partnership Board

Since the previous needs assessment The Leicestershire and Rutland DA Local Partnership Board has been established which meets quarterly. There have been a number of changes to the board ensuring compliance with the statutory guidance including the inclusion of many by and for services. It is chaired by the Lead Member for Safer Communities within Leicestershire County Council.

An area for development is the child victim representative role.

The Echo Project will support the strengthening, embedding and amplifying of authentic adult and child voice within the Local Partnership Board.

This can only be done with the support of the board and its partners to work collaboratively with the Echo team and local survivors.

- All agencies and partners to engage with the Echo Project to ensure authentic voice is at the centre of Leicestershire's Domestic Abuse Strategic

Conclusion and Recommendations

Data collection

Leicestershire Partnership Board used the previous needs assessment to highlight the need for collecting appropriate data, particularly in ethnicity, sexual identity, gender identity and socio economic status.

There have been significant improvements in the level and accuracy of the data collected compared to the previous needs assessment particularly around age, gender and ethnicity.

Disability and sexual identity recording is still limited. Regarding disability, this is not captured by Leicestershire Police, the Targeted Family Help service and two of the Districts. Research shows that disabled victims of domestic abuse also suffer more severe and frequent abuse over longer periods of time than non-disabled victims.

Whilst there has been a decrease in the level of unknown for sexual identity, almost three quarter of victims' sexual identity is unknown.

Research shows that those in LGBT+ relationships face additional barriers to reporting and accessing services.

It is important to ensure that this information is asked and captured in order to fully understand the demographics and intersecting needs of victims and survivors within Leicestershire.

There were challenges in the collection and the consistency of data provided including districts being unable to provide any data.

Many of the District Homelessness Teams collect age related data on all members of the household but will only capture further demographic data on the lead applicant. This could account for some of the unknown figure. Within Children's Social Care statutory assessments, only the child's data is captured; whereas WALL and a number of the District Domestic Abuse Services only capture the adult victim data.

Many agencies do not collect information regarding socio economic characteristics.

A concern is that by not capturing the demographic data of the whole family, we cannot understand the needs of the whole family and provide appropriate support.

As stated WALL are not able to separate their data into locality at present and are working towards a solution for this.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Data collection

- There is a continued need for a consistent approach to collecting data across Leicestershire This will provide a clear understanding of victim's characteristics, areas of multiple disadvantage and complex needs, which will in turn, inform a comprehensive strategy for domestic abuse and ensure that services delivered can meet identified needs
- The recording of disability data is a priority for Leicestershire Police, Targeted Family Help, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council
- Data collection regarding all members of the family to be considered in order to provide a whole family approach

Conclusion and Recommendations Review

Provision of support and capacity of commissioned services

Victim's services have undergone a period of change across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland with a new service contract starting on the 1st April 2022.

There is now a Helpline and Engagement service managed by Freeva. This is the Front Door for all referrals, and they also provide the Marac Idva. There is also a Domestic Abuse Locality service consisting of a Complex Need service; an Outreach service managed by LWA; and the Safe Accommodation provision managed by WALL.

A number of new services have been commissioned which commenced in 2024. As such their data is not captured within the timeframe of this needs assessment.

The services are

- Specialist dispersed property for male victims
- Specialist refuge accommodation for Black Asian and Racially Minoritised Women

WALL have also expanded their dispersed refuge accommodation to include refuge for those with larger families, clients with pets, and male victims.

There are currently 25 safe accommodation spaces across Leicestershire against a recommended figure of 71 and the lack of space is the one of the highest reasons for denied access. This was also a theme within the case audits.

Safe Accommodation is only available in two districts, limiting options for victims needing accommodation. Location has been cited as a reason for victims not wanting to enter refuge.

Since the previous needs assessment, Leicestershire have found it difficult to secure dispersed accommodation in other districts due to the lack of housing available.

The lack of a sanctuary scheme is a cause for concern as this limits the options available to victims. It does not enable them to stay in their own home where it is safe to do so. In turn, this can have an impact on the number of referrals to refuge and the increasing need as there is not alternative.

Conclusion and Recommendations Review

Provision of Support and capacity of commissioned services continued

- Increase the number of safe accommodation with the aim to reach the recommended figure of 71
- Consideration should be given to the location of safe accommodation and the range of safe accommodation commissioned to ensure accessibility to all victims. This may include adapted properties, provision for older people in line with the aging population, larger properties and Housing First Schemes with wrap around support for complex and additional needs
- The reintroduction of the Sanctuary Scheme to enable victims and survivors to remain in their own homes with support where safe to do so

Conclusion and Recommendations

Housing and Homelessness

Whilst we do not have data regarding temporary accommodation, we know many victims are access alternative temporary accommodation rather than safe accommodation. Within Leicestershire, alternative temporary accommodation options include a hotel or Bed and Breakfast.

These options are not safe accommodation and can be traumatic for victims and their families, especially those with children, disabilities and/or additional needs. This highlights the importance of the need for a range of safe accommodation options.

In the previous needs assessment, we highlighted the importance of considering those who are street homeless and hidden homeless. This is an area which is a focus of the District Chief Housing Officer Group.

Work had commenced during the previous needs assessment regarding a dedicated domestic abuse specialist within the Housing Options and Homelessness service in all districts. Each district received funding to employ a 'Housing Link Worker' to create links between Domestic Abuse services and housing. Most districts have recruited with an employee in post. The consistency of support offered is unclear and it would be of benefit for the districts and the link workers to come together to ensure best practice across the county.

- Review of housing and allocations policies to ensure consistency across areas
- Ensure Homelessness and Housing Options teams are fully aware of the Safe Accommodation and support options for victims

Conclusion and Recommendations

Children

There are a high proportion of child victims aged 6 - 11 in Leicestershire with children accounting for around a quarter of all identified victims ranging from 22.88% in 2021 – 22 to 25.41% in 2023 – 24 which suggests that children are experiencing trauma at a very early, crucial stage of their development and continues through their childhood. Prevention and early identification need to remain a priority as well as continuing therapeutic support for child victims

There has been a significant increase in victims identified aged 16 – 17 ranging from **8.34% to 9.81%** of all identified victims across the three years. It should be noted that the data provided for the needs assessment for those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in domestic abuse relationships and/or victims of IPV in their own relationships.

This highlights the importance of the commissioning and sustainability of specialist children's provision, for those living in households where abuse is taking place and for those experiencing abuse within their own relationships. It is currently unclear what provision and support offer is available to children in Leicestershire.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises that children in abusive households are victims. As stated previously, not all agencies are collecting data regarding children. It is imperative that all data around children is captured. This is to ensure that the needs of the child are assessed, understood and met by providing appropriate support and services for the whole family and linked in with other relevant strategies.

It is noted from the refuge demographic data that there are a significant number of children within the service but limited information regarding their needs and outcomes.

- Specialist children's provision to be commissioned for those within safe accommodation and the wider community
- Specialist children and young peoples' provision for those experiencing domestic abuse within their own relationship. This is an area for consideration for those within safe accommodation, as well as in the community
- Children's provision to be tailored to a child's needs, identity, and culture

Conclusion and Recommendations

Performance Monitoring

It was previously recommended that the Local Partnership Board complete dip sampling and case audits on those accessing safe accommodation on a quarterly basis. Whilst it is noted that individual providers are completing these, it would be of benefit for the Local Partnership Board to review these on a regular basis to quality assure.

No Recourse to Public Funds

WALL have highlighted that immigration status can be a barrier for victims accessing safe accommodation. In the previous needs assessment we recommended that staff be aware of the Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) Concession scheme for those who have been granted leave to enter as a spouse or partner of a British person.

We do not have an update regarding this and would recommend that this be an area which is explored to ensure the intersecting needs of victims are being met.



Appendix A

Data Submissions

Data was supplied by the following agencies –

- Leicestershire Police
- LWA
- Freeva
- WALL
- Adam Project
- Hinckley & Bosworth DA service
- Harborough DA service
- Blaby DA service
- North West Leicestershire Housing Link Worker
- Oadby & Wigston Housing Link Worker
- Children's Services
- Adult Social Care
- Leicestershire LGBT+ Centre
- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
- Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
- North West Leicestershire District Council
- Melton Borough Council
- Harborough District Council
- Blaby District Council

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