

Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2019-20

Foreword

We are pleased to present this first report of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the period from 29 September 2019 to the 31 March 2020.

The transition from Local Safeguarding Children Board arrangements has provided the opportunity to review and strengthen how we work together to safeguard children and look to make better use of the resources we have across the partnership.

Whilst this first period has been a period of transition we have been able to review the approach to safeguarding and mental health, improve processes across safeguarding children and contribute to changes in practice through training and sharing learning from our review and assurance work across the Partnership.

Hearing and responding to the voice of children has been at the heart of all of this, and our powerful film 'Was not heard' produced with and by children and young people locally and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership will support young people and children, and their experiences, needs and welfare to be at the centre of the work of

We want to thank all the dedicated workers and managers in organisations across Leicestershire & Rutland that are working to support the welfare and safety of children.

The Safeguarding Partners for Leicestershire & Rutland

The Partnership

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership brings together organisations across the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland with the vision "for children and young people in Leicester to be safe, well and achieve their full potential".

The Partnership commenced in September 2019 as the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements required by Working Together.

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

The Partnership is Chaired by its Independent Advisor, Simon Westwood who leads the Independent Scrutiny of the safeguarding arrangements. This is the statutory report of the SCP outlining the work it has carried out to the end of March 2020.

In Line with Working Together 2018 government guidance this report outlines:

- What has been done by the Partnership and the partners, to safeguard children and young people during the previous year and how effective the partnership arrangements have been.
- This report includes information about:
 - Agreed priorities
 - Analysis of progress against priorities
 - Decisions and actions taken by partners
 - Feedback from children and young people and how this has been utilised to inform work and influence service provision
 - Information on the delivery and impact of multi-agency safeguarding training
 - Information on the learning and impact of any Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
 - Any changes to the safeguarding arrangements and reasons for those changes

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

The work of the Partnership

The Priorities of the Partnership

In September 2019 The SCP adopted the priorities of the former Safeguarding Children Board, which were as follows:

- **Partnership Transition:** Influence the development of new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to ensure effective engagement.
- **Multiple Risk Factors:** Improve the understanding of the impact of multiple risk factors on children and the response to this.
- **Safeguarding Children – Access to Services:** Ensure the pathways for access to services for safeguarding children are robust and effective
- **Child Exploitation - (Child Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking, Missing and Gangs):** Be assured that children at risk of exploitation are effectively safeguarded
- **Safeguarding Children with Disabilities:** Improve the approach to safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Partnership Transition

The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements document was published in June 2019 and the Partnership commenced in September 2019.

A shared quality assurance framework was developed and adopted across the Leicestershire & Rutland SCP and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

The role and approach to engage schools in the work of the partnership was developed through a conversation with schools. This conversation with schools resulted in additional representation from schools on the partnership and set an engagement and assurance approach with schools based upon existing groups that bring together headteachers and safeguarding leads in Leicestershire and in Rutland.

Further work is required to develop the relationship between the partnership and independent schools, which was delayed by the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As part of developing engagement with the Voluntary and Community Sector the SCP set up a VCS page on its website and the VCS reference group of the partnership produced and disseminated three briefings to communicate key information across the sector. These focussed on key information relevant to the sector including the updates to the Thresholds guidance and specific learning from reviews across the region regarding safeguarding policies and pre-birth risk assessments for unborn children.

Multiple Risk Factors, Access to Services and Safeguarding Children with Disabilities

The LSCB work on Multiple Risk factors and Children with Disabilities in previous years was incorporated into the new Thresholds for access to services set up as part of the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

These were launched alongside an updated referral document with a programme of training over six months supporting workers across agencies to make effective referrals.

At the start of 2020 practitioners across agencies were surveyed to evaluate the use of the updated LLR Multiagency Referral Form and Threshold document. Feedback was received from 167 practitioners. Whilst this indicated these documents are simpler to understand and use, there is further work to continue to improve these, and this will be considered in future updates. The partnership planned to assess the impact of the new thresholds guidance in 2020, however this will be further considered in light of the global pandemic.

QUOTE

Child Exploitation

Development work regarding Child Exploitation including Child Criminal Exploitation was led by the Child Exploitation Operations Group and Vulnerability Executive. The Partnership received assurance reports regarding this work and links with children who go missing.

Seeking Assurance

The partnership has developed and implemented a Quality Assurance Framework shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. This can be found here ([link](#)).

The partnership reviewed the data required to assess the performance and impact of multi-agency safeguarding. Going forward the partnerships will be reviewing key multi-agency safeguarding data from Safeguarding partners including in the short to medium term specific data being reported to the DfE as part of the response to Covid-19.

The SCP carried out its first multi-agency assurance process focussed on Mental Health and Safeguarding children in January 2020. The process reviewed a range of information and reports including multi-agency and single agency audits, learning from reviews, information from commissioners of services, and the findings of work by young people in the area.

The assurance process identified 'Better engagement from and with CAMHS in safeguarding and Child in Need processes' as the main area to take forward to support effective safeguarding of children.

The assurance process identified other areas to take forward as follows:

- CAMHS and other services supporting child mental health need to know and understand safeguarding crossover
- Improved recognition of and response to teenage Neglect, particularly emotional neglect.
- Mental health should promote more robust multi-agency working. This requires that people understand their and each other's roles.
- Quality of discharge planning from mental health settings into schools is not clear
- There are still gaps in hearing and responding to voice and lived experience of children
- Ensure practitioners recognise that parental mental health plays an important part in children's lived experience and respond appropriately
- It is uncertain how agencies are working at key multi-agency safeguarding contact points.
- Understand and responding to Behavioural/emotional difficulties vs mental health issues

“You go back to school and they don't understand what you have been through or how to support you” (YPAG)

“It is really obvious that you are getting support, you are pulled out of lessons or it is marked on the register” (YPAG)

The partnership has set up a task and finish group that is working on approaches to improve multi-agency working and understanding across mental health and safeguarding provision. The partnership's performance framework will include information about multi-agency safeguarding contact points. Training is being commissioned regarding teenage neglect and further work to look at how schools link with mental health services is planned.

These areas will continue to be followed up in the partnerships assurance work going forward.

The Partnership received a report from Councils and Leisure Centre operators giving assurance about the action being taken in response to recommendations from the LSCBs review of safeguarding in Leisure Centres that took place in 2018.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures

In addition to the update of the Thresholds guidance and referral form and the survey on the implementation of these the partnership has ensured procedures are in place for multi-agency safeguarding in line with Working Together 2018.

Training

The SCPs training co-ordination and delivery function is shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to support consistent and effective partnership working. In total 44 courses were delivered across the two areas as part of the partnership's training plan with around 1,200 participants from across partner agencies.

Training included the 'Core Awareness in Safeguarding Children and Young People' and 'Multi Agency Working Together' courses and 'Working Together to Achieve an Effective Referral' focussed on the updated thresholds guidance and Multi-Agency Referral Form. Specific multiagency training was carried out regarding safeguarding and the following areas of priority: The Voice of the Child; Disabled Children; Neglect; Children's Mental Health. The SCP also supported co-ordination of relevant multi-agency training from Substance Misuse, Mental Health and Domestic Abuse providers and the Violence Reduction Network.

The SCP ran two large-scale conference-style training events. The first called 'The Voice' focussed on the importance of hearing what children say and acting on their words and incorporated the SCPs newly produced 'Was not heard' video. The second was a joint conference with the Safeguarding Adults Boards across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland covering learning areas across adult and child safeguarding including criminal exploitation, mental capacity and preventing violent extremism.

The SCP also facilitates a local trainer's network which supports development of local safeguarding trainers through development sessions and networking. Learning from reviews and assurance and changes to procedures are communicated through this group.

In addition Leicestershire & Rutland County Councils ran training and development sessions for Safeguarding leads in schools and early years establishments in the area.

Response to Covid-19

At the end of March 2020 the partnership had to react quickly to the emerging global pandemic and response to this. Within four days of lockdown, the four safeguarding partners had reviewed their arrangements and written out to the partnership identifying which SCP work would be prioritised in the changing circumstances.

The LRSCP and Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board also agreed a joint statement in relation to Covid-19 to encourage people to continue to report concerns regarding safeguarding.

The Partnership saw a significant reduction in the number of contacts coming into children's social care at the end of March and beginning of April and was concerned that children at risk of abuse would be seen by fewer professionals. In response to this, led by Rutland County Council, the SCP developed a safeguarding campaign to encourage everyone to look out for the safety of children in their community during lockdown. This was promoted across the partnerships, through social media and in local communities and was recognised as good practice by the Local Government Association in May 2020.

The safeguarding partners set up a 'sub-cell' of the Local Resilience forum to oversee safeguarding operational responses and identify and respond to safeguarding risks arising as a result of changes in service provision.

The impact of Covid-19 and the response of partners and the partnership was regularly reviewed to support effective safeguarding and use of partners resources.

Child Safeguarding Practice reviews and Serious Case Reviews

The partnership assesses Serious Safeguarding Incidents as defined by Working Together 2018 and decides whether a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) to identify how to improve safeguarding responses in future is required. These replace Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) carried out by Safeguarding Children Boards.

The former Safeguarding Children Board published one Serious Case Review in 2019 and work continued on four further Serious Case Reviews. These are all scheduled to be completed and published by the end of September 2020 in line with Working Together Transition guidance.

The Partnership did not commence any Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in the period of this report.

The Partnership completed six other learning reviews that had not met the criteria for an SCR or CSPR.

These reviews identified the following key areas for further work:

- Identifying and responding to adolescent neglect
- Hearing and responding to the voice and lived experience of children and evidencing this
- Addressing multi-agency communication, professional differences and transfers of cases between areas in the best interests of a child or young person
- Effective engagement and involvement of all agencies in child protection conferences
- Understand and responding to behavioural or emotional difficulties as opposed to mental health issues
- Collaborative working regarding safeguarding and child mental health support

Action plans are in place to respond to these and learning has been shared with practitioners across organisations through the Safeguarding Partnerships' Safeguarding Matters newsletter

Action already taken during the year includes:

- Standards and guidance produced to support effective child protection conferences
- Ran 'The Voice' conference and produced 'Was not heard' film spotlighting hearing and responding to the voice of children, to be utilised by agencies with practitioners commencing in 2020.
- Planning training on adolescent neglect (initially postponed due to Covid-19)
- Work underway on the multiagency response to safeguarding children with mental ill-health.

"When I cry I'm talking to you, when I fall silent I'm talking to you..." (Was Not Heard)

Practitioner feedback on the 'Was not heard' film has been excellent, This will be a core element of training and briefing work to enhance how the voice of children is heard across the partnership.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published one national review during this report's period: 'It was hard to escape: Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation' was published on 4 March 2020.

Applying the learning locally will be considered by the partnership's Planning and Delivery group and the local partnership groups that oversee work on criminal exploitation. An article on the learning from this review will be included in the Partnership's Safeguarding Matters newsletter.

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

"It's my life you're talking about. I might not understand everything yet but I'm living it." (Was Not Heard)

The Partnership has a Young Peoples Advisory Group, which includes young people from across Leicestershire and Rutland with a variety of backgrounds relating to safeguarding.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership adopted the action plan developed by the Advisory Group with the Safeguarding Children Board to develop responses to Mental Health and Safeguarding and produced a 'you said we did' sheet to communicate with young people the questions the Group had asked and how the partnership had responded.

"I feel like I was listened to" (YPAG)

In February 2020 the Young People's Advisory Group considered current work of the Partnership, their experiences and the views of their peers and identified the following areas of priority for the Partnership:

- Mental health
- Online safety

"Worries about being bullied online can affect your mental health and then you turn to the internet for help which can put you in a vulnerable situation to more bullying or the wrong information because of fake news"

These priorities were fed into the postponed SCP priority planning day in May 2020 and will be incorporated into the SCP Business plan for 2020-21.

The Advisory Group is carrying out a local survey of the impact of Covid-19 on young people's emotional health and wellbeing. The group will consider the findings of this alongside the partnership to identify further work required to respond.

Changes to the arrangements

The partnership is committed to developing and improving. The following changes to the arrangements have been made since the commencement of the partnership in September 2019:

- Completion of the Quality Assurance Framework
- Assurance and Audit subgroup established to take forward assurance and audit work.
- Membership of the main SCP partnership meeting broadened to all safeguarding partners and relevant agencies
- Membership of the Planning and Delivery Group focussed down on the Safeguarding partners.
- The Independent Advisor only advises on CSPR decision making rather than making the decision regarding whether a CSPR is to be carried out to maintain independence.
- Engagement arrangements with schools established through existing forums.

These changes have been made as the partnership has reviewed the roles of its group and what supports good governance as it has been working during this period. The changes will be included in an updated arrangements document published in August 2020. The arrangements will be formally reviewed in conjunction with the arrangements for Leicester by March 2021 following a year of operation.

Independent Scrutiny

Report of Independent Advisor...

Finance

The work of the SCP is supported by the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Partnership Business Office that also supports the Safeguarding Adults Boards and carries out Domestic Homicide Reviews for Community Safety Partnerships in Leicestershire & Rutland. The SCP is funded by contributions from its partners. In 2019/20 contributions covered the former LSCB for the period up to 29 September 2019 and the SCP from 29 September 2019 to 31 March 2020. The contributions and overview of expenditure of the LSCB and SCP for the whole period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 are set out below:

Income

	£
Leicestershire County Council	84,307
Rutland County Council	53,034
Leicestershire Police	44,599
West Leicestershire CCG	30,494
East Leicestershire & Rutland CCG	26,103
National Probation Service	1,348
Reducing Re-offending Partnerships	2,000
Cafcass	550
Total Income (SCP and LSCB)	242,435

Expenditure

	£
Staffing	129,681
Independent Chairing	15,600
Support Services	9,000
Operating Costs	8,849
Training	33,673
YPAG	1,798
Case Reviews	19,451
Total Expenditure (SCP and LSCB)	218,052

Expenditure was lower than budgeted due to vacancies in the support office, and delays in Case Reviews. The balance will go into reserves to cover cost of case reviews going forwards.

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

Forward priorities

We are working under the expectation that the impact of and responses to Covid-19 will continue over the next year and therefore all of the work of the SCP will take place in that context. Many areas of our work will change to adapt to this context. There will also be some areas of business that need a specific focus related to Covid19 and our response to it.

As this is a changing situation the partnerships plans will be regularly reviewed to respond to this.

In this context the Partnership has identified the following forward priorities and outcome statements shared with Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board:

Statutory responsibilities

- The Partnership has carried out the statutory requirements of the Safeguarding Partners and assured itself they are meeting these.
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Partnership assurance work result in timely learning and changes in systems and practice to improve safeguarding/outcomes for children.
- The impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding and welfare of children is understood, emerging issues are identified, and partnership approaches to address this and mitigate future risk are in place.

Voice of the Child

- The priorities and work of the partnership has been influenced by the voice and experience of children who have received safeguarding support.
- Partners evidence that work with children to safeguard them is directed by their voice and lived experience and this is having a positive impact on their safety and wellbeing.
- The partnership is assured that messages and measures online safety are reaching children and young people and supporting them to be safe online.

Mental Health

- The emotional and mental health needs of children with learning disabilities and/or autism are understood in the context of safeguarding and support for this group of children is in place as required to reduce risk.
- Safeguarding and mental health support for children is joined up and partners work together and with young people to reduce risk of harm.

Communications

- People who work or live in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland report child abuse and neglect and concerns they are aware of.

Domestic Abuse

- The partnership is assured that there are appropriate support and interventions for children living with domestic abuse.

“There needs to be more information for all young people on how to protect yourself against cyber-bullying” (YPAG)

“Health and wellbeing and positive mental health should be put on the school curriculum – because young people need to know how to understand it” (YPAG)

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