

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

**1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

**LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL SAFEGUARDING**  
**CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS UPDATE**

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

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership, including the draft Annual Report 2019/20 for the partnership and the Business Plan for 2020/21.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties for local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area; section 47 of the same Act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
3. These duties can only realistically be discharged with the full co-operation of other partners, many of whom have individual duties when carrying out their functions under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
4. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018 (statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children) give responsibility for this join-up locally with the safeguarding partners, the Police, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the local authority, which have a shared and equal duty to agree and make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
5. The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements locally are managed through a new partnership – the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland. The arrangements were published on 28 June 2019 and commenced on 29 September 2019. These arrangements replaced the former Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

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

### **Background**

7. The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for Leicestershire and Rutland were presented to this Committee on 5 March 2019, prior to being published on 28 June 2019.
8. The Safeguarding Children Partnership shares some operational arrangements with the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB) and some partnership structures with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPB).

### **Progress**

9. Since commencing in September 2019, the main Partnership met in October and December 2019 and July 2020. A meeting scheduled for March 2020 was cancelled at short notice as it fell during the early weeks of lockdown, as responses were still being developed. The Partnership subgroups have continued to drive the work of the Partnership during this period.
10. The first months of the Partnership have been a transitional period, during which it has further developed and adapted the detail of its ways of working. Areas of further development in this period include:
  - Quality Assurance and Performance Framework
  - Engagement approach with schools
  - Engagement approach with Children and Young people
  - Child Safeguarding Practice Review policy and process aligned with the Leicester SCPB.
11. The Partnership carried out a multi-agency assurance process regarding mental health and safeguarding children and oversaw continued work on Case Reviews commenced by the former Safeguarding Children Board.
12. Learning from these processes is being put into action to improve multi-agency safeguarding practice and outcomes for children. The learning has been shared through the Partnership's Safeguarding Matters newsletter and concise learning briefings which also encourage practitioners to reflect on their practice.
13. Learning from reviews has also featured as part of the Partnership's multi-agency safeguarding training programme delivered by partners. Forty-four courses were delivered to around 1,200 participants across agencies. This included two large-scale conference events focussed on the voice of children and learning from reviews.
14. The Partnership has worked with young people to produce a video highlighting the importance of the voice and lived experience of children called 'Was not heard' and has developed the '#ourdoorisopen' campaign in response to Covid-19 lockdown to encourage the public to be aware of and report safeguarding concerns.

15. This work of the partners and the outcomes of review and assurance work are included in the Annual Report of the Partnership, attached as Appendix A to this report.

### **Changes to the arrangements**

16. As the Partnership has operated it has kept its working under review to support good governance and what works. This has led to a number of changes to the arrangements that were published in June 2019. These are as follows:
- An Assurance and Audit subgroup established to take forward assurance work.
  - Membership of the main Safeguarding Children Partnership meeting has been broadened to all safeguarding partners and relevant agencies
  - Membership of the Planning and Delivery Group has been focussed down on the Safeguarding Partners.
  - In order to maintain independence, the Independent Advisor only advises on decision making regarding Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews rather than making the decision regarding whether such a review is to be carried out.
17. In addition, the Partnership has developed its Quality Assurance Framework and has established approaches for engagement with schools in conversation with head teachers across the range of school sectors. The arrangements document has also been updated in light of these.

### **Forward Plans**

18. The Partnership has drawn up its priority statements and a Business Plan for 2019/20; this is a single plan shared with Leicester SCPB and has been informed by the SCPs Young People's Advisory Group who met in February 2020 to consider and identify their priorities for safeguarding children.
19. The Business Plan is attached as Appendix B to this report and includes the following priority outcomes:

#### **1) 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.
- There is evidence that the work of the Partnership has improved safeguarding and welfare of children and young people
- 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.

#### **2) 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.

### **3) 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.

### **4) Communications**

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

### **5) Domestic Abuse**

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

### **Independent Advisor**

20. The former Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board, Simon Westwood, has supported the Partnership through its transition as Independent Advisor. A single Independent Advisor has now been appointed across Leicestershire and Rutland SCP and the Leicester SCPB to facilitate the Partnerships and lead the independent scrutiny of the arrangements. Kay Whyte-Bell will commence in this role at the end of September 2020.

### **Proposals/Options**

21. The Committee is asked to consider the progress report, including the draft Annual Report and Business Plan, and to make any comments or proposed additions or amendments to the report that will be addressed prior to the final version of the Annual Report being published.

### **Consultation**

22. The Annual Report includes a summary of the consultation and engagement work the LSCB has carried out with children and young people and with practitioners.
23. The Business Plan has been directly influenced by the priorities identified by children and young people as part of the Leicestershire and Rutland SCP Young People's Advisory Group.
24. All members of the SCP have had opportunities to contribute to and comment on earlier drafts of the Annual Report and have been consulted in developing the Business Plan.

**Resource Implications**

25. Safeguarding partners have, along with Safeguarding Adults Board statutory partners, set a single agreement of principles to share the operating costs of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards for Leicestershire and Rutland.
26. As part of this agreement Leicestershire County Council contributes £112,633 to the SAB and SCP in 2020/21. This is 16% of the total funding for the SABs and SCPs across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and 31% of the operating budget for Leicestershire and Rutland. The budget agreed by the County Council for the SCP and SAB in February 2020 was £137,897. The difference will be held in reserve to support any extraordinary demands upon the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board.
27. This compares with £137,866 in the previous year which was 40% of the total budget for the Leicestershire and Rutland LSCB, SCP and SAB of £343,419 in 2019/20.
28. Leicestershire County Council also hosts the Safeguarding Boards' Business Office that supports the SCP and SAB.
29. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

**Timetable for Decisions**

30. The Annual Report of the Safeguarding Children Partnership will be published by the end of September 2020. Any comments will be considered by the addressed prior to the final report being published.

**Background Papers**

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 5 March 2019.  
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s144650/New%20Safeguarding%20Arrangements.pdf>

**Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

31. None.

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**List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership 2019/20.

### **Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

32. Safeguarding children, young people and adults, concerns individuals who are likely to be disadvantaged in a number of ways. Information on differing needs of and impacts on different groups of individuals with regard to safeguarding is considered as part of the process to develop the Board's Business Plan. Specific impacts on or views of different groups is also considered in the work of the SCPs Planning and Delivery and Assurance and Audit Groups in assessing performance and effectiveness with regard to safeguarding.

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

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

### **Environmental Implications**

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

### **Partnership Working and associated issues**

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