

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****6<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022****ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND  
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP****MINUTE EXTRACT**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children and Family Services on the Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership for 2021/22 which sought the Committees views on the draft annual report. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed comments from Members on the draft Annual Report and asked that these be submitted to the Director of, and Lead Member for, Children and Family Services by no later than 20 September 2022.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- i. Members raised concerns regarding the rising number of children with mental health needs. It was noted that the Department would utilise the feedback provided by children to develop its strategy for providing support to such children and to those involved in traumatic incidents. A range of mental health support would continue be provided through the delivery of services across the community and within schools. Members acknowledged that schools were the best place for a young person to access support and were pleased to hear that the Department had used additional Government funding to provide mental health training for school staff and to place support staff within schools to seek referrals. Low level support for young people with mental health needs would continue to be made available via the Council's website.
- ii. In response to concerns raised regarding how the wellbeing of babies was monitored, the Director assured members that the Safeguarding Partnership continued to scrutinise support provided to both children and their parents, with a particular focus on support provided to pregnant mothers and babies. Evidence and research conducted by the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel indicated that children under the age of one were the most vulnerable group of young people. Across Leicestershire and Rutland, eight referrals had been made for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews where a child had been harmed or had died. Five of these children were under the age of one. Where the child had survived, the Department had looked at the evidence and

circumstances involved to review its procedures and processes for supporting pregnant mothers and early age children. In cases where the child had not survived, a rigorous review had taken place which had indicated extremely unique circumstances had been involved and that there were no actions which could have been taken by the Department or its partners which could have prevented this. There had been a national increase in the number of babies being harmed during the period of COVID-19 restrictions, which a review panel had suggested may have been as a result of parents being isolated from family and friends, as well as not receiving regular visits from health visitors. Members were assured that the Council would continue to safeguard a robust level of multi-agency support offered to pregnant mothers and new parents across Leicestershire and Rutland.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the draft annual report assessing the impact of the work undertaken in 2021/22 on safeguarding outcomes for children in Leicestershire and Rutland be noted.
- b) That Members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to submit their views on the draft annual report to the Director of, and Cabinet Lead Member for, Children and Family Services by no later than 20 September 2022.