

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
3 SEPTEMBER 2024

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Committee on the draft Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership for 2023/24, as appended to this report.

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 2023 (statutory guidance on multi-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children) give responsibility for this join-up locally with the safeguarding partners, the Police, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the local authority, which have a shared and equal duty to agree and make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
5. The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements locally are managed through the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland.
6. It is a statutory requirement, as set out in Working Together 2023, 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. These were last updated in October 2022 and are published on the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Board's website. Following the publication of the new Working Together 2023 in December 2023, the Leicestershire and Rutland Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements are in the process of being reviewed and updated. They are due to be republished by December 2024, in line with government timescales.
8. The Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) 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).

Annual Report

9. The key purpose of the Annual Report is to assess the impact of the work undertaken in 2023/24 on safeguarding outcomes for children in Leicestershire and Rutland. Specifically, it evaluates performance against the priorities that were set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland SCP Business Plan 2023-25.
10. The Draft Annual Report 2023/24 is appended to this report. This is the content of the report which has been to the Design Team but can be updated as necessary before being published.
11. The report outlines the learning, assurance, training and improvement activity of the LRSCP and its partners, and the impact this has had on safeguarding children. Key messages from the SCP specifically in relation to Leicestershire are:
 - a) There has been sustained and demonstrable progress around the Safeguarding Babies business priority, with involvement in a national research project; improvement of local procedure informed by quality assurance processes and review learning; increased number of learning events and resources offered in response to practitioner feedback. This included further promotion of the ICON¹ work, an evidence-based programme focused on reducing head trauma, as well as developing and launching the Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool.
 - b) The Partnership continued with work established in 2021 around Child Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing. This included receiving assurances from CAMHS² about the progress of the Triage and Navigation Service, a pathway to improve the quality of referrals for children's emotional well-being, and also the CAMHS Traffic Light System that assesses children's requirement for intervention.

¹ The mnemonic ICON outlines the key messages of the programme: Infant crying is normal, Comforting methods can help, It's **OK** to walk away, and **never**, ever shake a baby.

² Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

- c) Work continued in relation to the Keeping Adolescents Safe / Supporting Safe Adolescents, including representatives from the Business Offices and several partner agencies of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships attending meetings of the newly formed Child Criminal Exploitation and Serious Violence Delivery Group. The Partnership received assurance from the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) about how feedback is sought from children and young people and how they are engaged in evaluating and improving services for children affected by serious youth violence and/or exploitation.
- d) Work has continued on the priority Safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds by promoting the locally agreed definition of cultural competency and the standard of expected practice. It has been shared with the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Trainers' Network as something to include in training wherever relevant and appropriate. Assurance was sought from member agencies of the Case Review Group about their training in respect of equality and diversity and that guidance is in place to support practitioners so that they can proactively deliver inclusive services.
- e) Regarding the priority Effective Safeguarding in independent and out of school settings, there was continued engagement via the local Independent Schools Forum, with the schools' selecting topics for discussion that are specific to them. This year autism and safeguarding and PREVENT were featured themes.
- f) For the priority Transitional Safeguarding, the Safeguarding Board set up a Task and Finish Group, including representatives from both children's and adults' services, to consider if transitional safeguarding is being managed in the most appropriate and effective way. This work is ongoing.
- g) There has been an improved learning and development output, with the running of several large-scale events and the publication of numerous resources, including those that disseminate Rapid Review learning in a timely manner.
- h) There has been continued positive feedback from the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel regarding the quality of review processes and identification of learning.

Proposals/Options

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

Consultation

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

Resource Implications

15. Safeguarding partners have, along with Safeguarding Adults Board partners, set a single agreement of principles to share the operating costs of the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board for Leicestershire and Rutland.
16. As part of this agreement, Leicestershire County Council contributed £119,266 to the SCP and SAB in 2023/24. This is 33% of the total funding for the Leicestershire and Rutland SCP and SAB (£364,633). This matches the contribution for 2022/23.
17. Expenditure overall was £206,271. The Safeguarding Children Partnership's reserve funds, as of 1st April 2023, stand at £95,350. Plans for further use of these reserve funds will be drawn up in the coming year.
18. Leicestershire County Council also hosts the Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office that supports the SCP and SAB.

Timetable for Decisions

19. The Annual Report of the Safeguarding Children Partnership will be presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 September 2024 and considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 13 September 2024. Subject to approval by the Cabinet, the Annual Report will be published by the end of September 2024. Any comments will be considered and addressed prior to the final report being published.

Conclusions

20. The Committee are asked to comment on the draft Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership for 2023/24.

Background Papers

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2023:

[Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2022/23.](#)

Leicestershire and Rutland Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements:

<https://rsb.org.uk/uploads/leicestershire-rutland-multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements-october-2022.pdf?v=1668441670>

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

21. None.

Equality Implications

22. 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 Business Plan. The Partnership initiated a

specific priority in 2021/22 exploring safeguarding of children from diverse backgrounds. The work on this has continued into 2023/24.

Human Rights Implications

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

Crime and Disorder Implications

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

Environmental Implications

25. The published LRSCP Annual Report will primarily be made available online in electronic form, rather than paper. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Partnership Working and associated issues

26. Safeguarding is dependent on the effective work of the partnership as set out in national regulation, Working Together 2023, published by the Department for Education.

Appendices

Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership 2023/24.

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