



Safeguarding
Children Partnership
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND



**Leicestershire & Rutland
Safeguarding Children Partnership
Annual Report - 2023-24**

Foreword

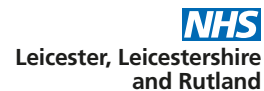
We are pleased to present this report of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

The year has seen a lot of changes nationally, with the consultation around the strategy for delivering widespread reforms to Children's Social Care, entitled "Stable Homes, Built on Love", and the publication of the revised statutory guidance Working Together 2023. We are addressing the impact of these changes locally at a system and practice level, including the implications for our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Working Together 2023 emphasises the need for "a shared responsibility" and highlights how positive outcomes for children depend on strong multi-agency working. Alongside the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board, we have improved procedures for agencies working together, delivered a varied safeguarding training programme and strengthened our quality assurance processes. We continue to work alongside other partnerships, including the Violence Reduction Network and our Safeguarding Adults Board, to ensure a targeted and multi-disciplinary approach to safeguarding challenges. Additionally, partnership agencies have engaged in cross-regional work, including being involved in the Pre-Birth Assessment Change Project led by Research in Practice, to share local practice knowledge around our work with babies and parents in a national forum.

We hope that this Annual Report will help to keep you informed and assured that agencies in Leicestershire and Rutland are committed to continuous improvement in working to support the welfare and safety of children. We would like to thank practitioners across the partnership for their hard work and dedication to children, young people and families.

The Safeguarding Partners for Leicestershire & Rutland



| Key Achievements in 2023-24 | Key Challenges during 2023-24 |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained and demonstrable progress around the Safeguarding Babies business priority, with involvement in 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 • Agencies have reported that, despite challenges with workforce capacity, safeguarding children has remained a priority • Continued positive feedback from the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel regarding the quality of our review processes and identification of learning • 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued workforce capacity concerns across a number of agencies, regarding recruitment and retention of staff, but also a loss of experience through staff turnover and significant use of agency workers (although assurance that safeguarding continues to be prioritised across all agencies) • Ability to increase and improve engagement with children, whilst avoiding duplication and consultation fatigue • Identification of impact measures to understand what positive changes we have made and if those changes have been sustained |

“From the bottom of my heart, when I first met you at contact, I never thought you’d make such a positive impact on me [...]. You taught me patience, and made me believe in myself. And you taught me ways of parenting, that I’ll take with me, forever.”

Leicestershire Parent/Carer

“The worker, honestly, has been a life saver for our family. She has supported us through trickier times, she understands, empathises and offers resolutions to things we need. Honestly she is a star!”

Rutland Parent/Carer

Observations from our Independent Chair and Scrutineer

This is my first opportunity to contribute to the annual report, having been in the role now since July 2023. I was delighted to be appointed to the role of Independent Chair and Scrutineer. This was a jointly appointed role, working across Leicestershire and Rutland and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

The role of the Independent Scrutineer is to act as a critical friend to promote reflection and drive continuous improvement. The Independent Scrutineer considers how effective our local safeguarding arrangements are and provides constructive feedback and recommendations on this to the strategic partners for their consideration. The Independent Scrutineer also scrutinises the Partnership's annual report.

This annual report acknowledges the progress made by the Partnership throughout the year and the challenges that remain, which the Partnership is committed to addressing in the coming year.

During my first year of undertaking the role, I have chaired the meetings of the Joint Leicestershire and Rutland and Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnerships Board and have attended monthly meetings with the Statutory Partners.

I have used the 'Six Steps to Independent Scrutiny' (now called Checklist for Independent Scrutiny), published by Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP), to develop a workplan to inform the scrutiny process.

As part of this workplan, in collaboration with the Statutory Partners, I have undertaken in-depth scrutiny as part of a review of the safeguarding arrangements, which immediately highlighted commendable strengths and practices as well as identifying areas to be taken forward in the form of developments to comply with the requirements as set out in the 2023 Working Together to Safeguard Children. Areas of scrutiny have included:

- Terms of Reference and membership for the partnership and subgroups
- The Business Plan
- Minutes of meetings
- The identified priorities
- The learning and development offer
- The Quality Assurance Framework and data set
- The 2022-2023 Annual Report
- Published strategies and documents
- Structures and roles of the business team members
- Meeting with individual partners and practitioners
- Observation of subgroups
- Observation of Rapid Reviews and the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review process, scrutiny of the subsequent reports and observation and scrutiny of the approach to implementing and assessing the impact of learning
- Observation of training and learning and development events
- A co-production exercise to gain the views of all partners

Future opportunities to engage with children and families are planned.

In undertaking the role of Independent Chair and Scrutineer, there is clear evidence of robust partnership arrangements to ensure that children in Leicestershire and Rutland are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.

The safeguarding arrangements are supported by strong and committed leadership, with all Statutory Partners fully committed to the safeguarding ambitions of the Partnership. There is a culture of openness, respectful challenge, and a willingness to learn. There is positive collaboration and joint working with the Safeguarding Adults Board statutory partners to consider joint priorities.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for the Safeguarding Children Partnership continue to comply with Working Together 2018 and are well placed to take forward the changes and new arrangements in Working Together 2023 with minimal disruption.

In the coming year, the need to strengthen the partnership arrangements is recognised, and significant efforts are already underway. Strong change management, systems leadership, and systematic processes will be crucial for future developments.

As the Independent Scrutineer, I am committed to hearing directly from children, young people, families, and frontline practitioners to understand what is working well and how multi-agency working can be improved. While challenges lie ahead, I have confidence in the ability of Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership to build upon its strengths and I will continue to scrutinise and support the Partnership in navigating risks and challenges.

Amanda Boodhoo

Local Context

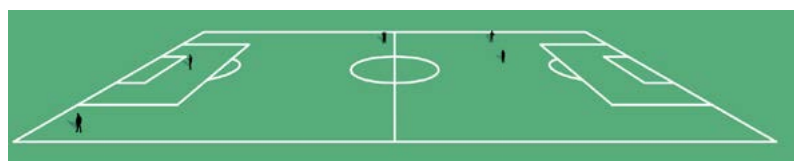
The Census shows that, in 2021, the population of Leicestershire (not including Leicester City) rose from 650,600 in 2011 to 712,300. Across the 7 council areas in 2021, Blaby was home to around 5.6 people per football pitch-sized piece of land, Charnwood was 4.7 people, Harborough 1.2 people, Hinckley & Bosworth 2.7 people, Melton 0.8 people, North West Leicestershire 2.7 people, and Oadby and Wigston 17.5 people. More statistics regarding Blaby can be found [here](#); for Charnwood [here](#); for Harborough [here](#); for Hinckley & Bosworth [here](#); for Melton [here](#); for North West Leicestershire [here](#); and for Oadby and Wigston [here](#).

As of 2021, of the East Midlands' 35 local authority areas our council areas are populated as follows:



Blaby,
12th most densely populated

Around **6 people** on a football pitch-sized area of land



Charnwood,
13th most densely populated

Around **5 people** on a football pitch-sized area of land



Harborough,
9th least densely populated

Around **1 person** on a football pitch-sized area of land



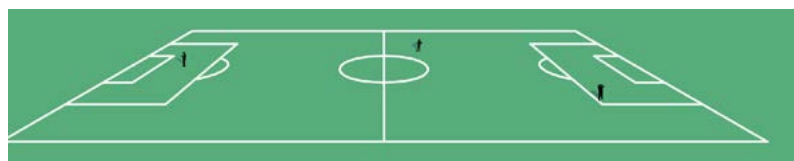
Hinckley & Bosworth,
16th most densely populated

Around **3 people** on a football pitch-sized area of land



Melton,
5th least densely populated

Around **1 person** on a football pitch-sized area of land



North West Leicestershire,
17th most densely populated

Around **3 people** on a football pitch-sized area of land



Oadby and Wigston,
5th least densely populated

Around **18 people** on a football pitch-sized area of land

The Census shows that, in Rutland, the population size increased by 9.7%, from around 37,400 in 2011 to 41,000 in 2021. This was higher than the increase for the East Midlands (7.7%). There was an increase of 31.2% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 4.0% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 2.4% in children aged under 15 years. More statistics can be found [here](#).



Rutland,
4th least densely populated

Around **1 person** on a football pitch-sized area of land

The Partnership

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) brings together organisations across the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland with the vision:

“For children and young people in Leicestershire and Rutland to be safe, well and achieve their full potential.”

The Partnership:

- Sets how organisations should work together to safeguard children
- Provides multi-agency training and development resources to support good safeguarding
- Tests how well organisations are working together and the difference this is making
- Reviews serious safeguarding incidents to identify improvements needed
- Uses learning and feedback to improve and develop how agencies work together to safeguard children.

Following the publication of the new [Working Together 2023](#) in December 2023, the Leicestershire & 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.

The members of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership include the statutory Safeguarding Partners: Police, Local Authorities, and Integrated Care Board (ICB). These statutory Safeguarding Partner agencies form the Planning & Delivery Group, with chairing duties rotating through the membership. This group drives implementation of the Partnerships’ Business Plans; scrutinises and responds to multi-agency safeguarding performance and assurance; has oversight of learning from reviews; oversees work of the Partnerships’ subgroups; and agrees learning and development arrangements. Statutory Safeguarding Partner representatives also chair several subgroups. The Safeguarding Partners are accountable for decisions regarding Rapid Reviews and whether to proceed to Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

The membership of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership also comprises of other relevant agencies including schools, health agencies, probation and other organisations working with children. The full membership of the partnership can be found on the Safeguarding Children Partnership website: <https://lrsb.org.uk/scp-membership-list>.

The engagement of all partners, at a Partnership and subgroup level, is monitored. If a partner agency does not attend a number of meetings, this is escalated to the Chair of the group. If the matter remains unresolved, it is further escalated to the statutory Safeguarding Partners and Independent Chair. Details of attendance at Partnership meetings across 2023-24 and the governance of the Partnership and its subgroups are available at Appendix 1.

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership is funded by contributions from the statutory Safeguarding Partners. Further information about finance and the budget is available at Appendix 2.

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

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

During 2023-24:

- Young people sat on a specific interview panel to help select the new Independent Chair for the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships.
- During one of their meetings, the Safeguarding Children Partnerships heard from a young person, who has used Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). They talked about their experiences and how they have supported the production of a new booklet, entitled “Welcome to CAMHS”.
- During the development of the local Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool, parent groups were asked to review the tool and provide feedback. This influenced the format, the messages provided and the language used. The local Safer Sleep Champions have been asked to record any family feedback provided to frontline practitioners whilst the tool is embedded in practice. This can influence future improvements to the tool.
- A range of ICON Dads videos have been scripted by local fathers to reflect their experiences of managing crying babies. The videos have been commissioned and will be completed and shared locally and nationally in Spring 2024.

Below is feedback that reflects the views of families in receipt of multi-agency services coordinated by Children’s Social Care in Leicestershire and Rutland.

“The worker has been brilliant, she has not looked down at us and she has treated us with respect.”

Feedback from Leicestershire parent/carer

“The young person knows what a pathway plan is and she completes them with her Personal Assistant. She said she finds it helpful that her Personal Assistant sets out clearly what she needs to do and by when.”

Feedback from a Leicestershire Care Leaver

“This way of working Child in Need cases is much better; communication is better and there has been regular meetings.”

Feedback from a Leicestershire Nursery regarding the Child in Need pilot

“The worker has been great. She has really helped us and we have seen a lot of changes for the better.”

Feedback from Rutland parent/carer

“Everything was explained to me clearly. Some help we needed was given, so we are moving in the right direction.”

Feedback from Rutland parent/carer

“The worker got me going to the Children’s Centre which my kids love and that helped us. We hardly see the worker now because there’s not much work we need to do, [we see the worker] monthly now. At the beginning it was weekly.”

Feedback from Rutland parent/carer

The Safeguarding Children Partnership wants to have meaningful engagement with children, young people and families that makes a difference to the work of the partnership. It is acknowledged that engagement with children could still be improved.

The focus is on drawing upon existing participation work within organisations across the partnership, to understand what young people are saying about safeguarding and how partners are hearing and responding to the voice and lived experience of children and young people. This will reduce duplication and consultation fatigue and, where the partnership requires specific participation work, this will be carried out through working with existing participation groups.

“My worker is always happy and smiling, he makes me happy and listens to me.”

Feedback from a Leicestershire young person

“My worker is very reliable and makes sure I’m involved in my family time and has not let me down yet.”

Feedback from a Rutland young person



The work of the Partnership

The Priorities of the Partnership

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership worked with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to identify shared priorities for the [Joint Business Plan 2023-25](#).

Three of these priorities – Safeguarding Babies, Child Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and Safeguarding Children from Diverse Backgrounds – have been in place since 2021/22. Keeping Adolescents Safe/Supporting Safe Adolescents and Effective Safeguarding in Independent and Out of School Settings continue from 2022/23. This is due to the continued national and local prevalence of these themes and the breadth of the work requiring completion to achieve an appropriate level of assurance. The new sixth priority, Transitional Safeguarding, is being addressed in conjunction with the Safeguarding Adults Boards.

For each of these areas, we have set out our rationale for prioritising the topic, and presented the key deliverables, leads, activities, impact measures and timescales. This enables us to monitor progress and secure assurance that our actions are making a positive difference to the lived experience of our children and families.

The annual Business Plan was replaced with a two-year-plan to allow time to embed the outcomes of the key deliverables and, subsequently, analyse the impact of these outcomes.

The work on these business priorities was embedded within the assurance, training, procedure and review work of the Partnership outlined further in the following sections of this report. Updates on the joint business plan are provided throughout the business year to the Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

Safeguarding Babies: Improving how we work together with families before and after births to safeguard babies and seek assurance that multi-agency working with families to safeguard babies is effective.

What we did:

- Continued to promote [ICON](#), which was launched early in 2022/23. ICON is an evidenced-based programme focused on reducing abusive head trauma (AHT) triggered by crying. The mnemonic ICON outlines the key messages of the programme: **I**nfant crying is normal, **C**omforting methods can help, **I**t's **O**K to walk away, and **N**ever, ever shake a baby.
- Supported the launch and promotion of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (LLR) Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool. It has been developed for use by any practitioner from any agency across the sub-region to support them in having safer sleeping conversations with families. The tool is consistent with the information and messages that Midwives and Health Visitors will be giving to all families, before and after a baby is born. The tool was developed in Nottingham and has been used with their permission. It was further developed and localised for families in our area by a multi-agency group.
- Completed a multi-agency audit on the pre-birth process. Further detail on the audit is available in the “Quality Assurance and Service Improvement” section of this report.
- Updated the “Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning” procedure to include learning from local reviews and the multi-agency audit.
- Carried out further work in all Partnership subgroups in light of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review's third national review on “The Myth of Invisible Men”, including developing and publishing “Practice Principles for engaging fathers and male carers in effective practice”.
- Selected “Safeguarding Bumps and Babies” to be the theme of the 2023-24 Festival of Learning which ran from 1st to 7th November 2023, with both virtual and in-person training sessions being delivered to a multi-agency audience.
- Engaged in the Pre-Birth Assessment Change Project led by Research in Practice.

Outcomes and Impact:

- Universal ICON messages have been delivered to all parent/s across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland and targeted to vulnerable families, and parents and carers of premature and low birth weight babies. ICON has been publicised across radio stations, with a total reach of 296,000 adults, and promoted through the Safeguarding Partnerships websites, safeguarding training, and highlighted during ICON weeks in 2022 and 2023 with a specific Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland ICON day.

“You really helped all [the way] through, you’ve always got that message. And I’ve got it in my head – I can cope. For 5 minutes, I can leave her down. I would not have known that. Could you imagine if I had not have known that and I was just with her and she was screaming. I don’t know what I would have done. But I’ve got it in my head – I can cope, I can cope. I can walk away for two minutes, come back, check on her. Without those tools, without you guys, it would have been awful, absolutely awful. But it’s not, it’s the best.” – feedback from parent about ICON messages.

- Since its launch, the Safer Sleep Resources webpage on the Leicestershire & Rutland website has been viewed 745 times.
- The findings of the multi-agency audit were fed into and influenced the update of the local procedure.
- 20 training sessions were delivered and numerous YouTube videos produced to support the Safeguarding Babies business priority, with the blended approach to learning and development improving the reach of this work.

“I will be more aware in looking out for coercive reproduction and asking more questions about the context of the pregnancy when completing social care assessments of unborn babies.”

“I found it useful to have time to reflect on the voices of babies and the importance to observe and pay attention to behaviour. Behaviour is a form of communication so we need to take time to observe and reflect on that information.”

“Opportunity to be in the room with a range of professionals, hearing about recent developments and newly developed safe sleeping tool.”

Feedback from Festival of Learning sessions

Moving Forwards:

- Further assurance of ICON touch point messages being recorded by Maternity and GP services is still required. Future work will include a launch of a range of videos, scripted by local fathers, about their experiences of managing crying babies, which will be shared locally and nationally in Spring 2024. Additionally, the DadPad App, commissioned by Perinatal Mental Health, will be available to all fathers across the sub-region from Summer 2024 and will include national and local ICON information.
- The impact of the local Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool will be considered in Summer 2024, six months after its launch. A frontline practitioner survey will be disseminated by the Safer Sleep Champions across the multi-agency partnership to understand how the tool works in practice and how it can be improved and further promoted.

Child Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing: Seek assurance that partnership working supports good mental health for children and that mental health and safeguarding are effectively addressed together.

What we did:

- To obtain assurance that children who require support with emotional and mental health needs and who require safeguarding are effectively managed, the Planning and Delivery Group receives a highlight report from the Child and Young Person Mental Health Emotional Well Being Delivery Group detailing the work of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Emotional and Well-Being services. These services are commissioned by the Integrated Care Board (ICB). This information is enabling the Planning and Delivery Group to:
 - Track the progress of the Triage and Navigation Service (mental and emotional health referral pathway) to improve the quality of referrals for children’s emotional well-being, to reduce the numbers not accepted due to incomplete information
 - Be sighted upon local developments and response to the national issue about NHS capacity to manage the increased demand for neurodevelopmental assessment.
- Received assurance on the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services’ (CAMHS) Traffic Light System that assesses children’s requirement for CAMHS intervention as low, medium or high risk and titrates intervention according to need to keep children safe whilst waiting for CAMH services. Assurance was received that high risk category children include those who self-harm or have suicidal ideation and have limited protective factors to safeguard themselves or others.
- Ensured dissemination of the referral pathway into CAMHS and Emotional Well-being services to partner agencies.
- Received information to understand:
 - the structure of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Outpatient Service and the wait and access times for their generic team and 7 specialist teams
 - the challenges faced by CAMHS services and how these are being addressed.
- Received the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Child Death Overview Panel (LLR CDOP) Annual Report for 2022-23, which has a section on suicide and self-harm. This includes key findings and recommendations following a January 2023 review of local cases, the Panel’s previous 2020 Suicide & Self Harm Report and the recommendations of the 2021 National Child Mortality Database thematic report in terms of relevance to local context and case learning.
- Considered the local implications of “Right Care, Right Person” (RCRP). This is a collective national approach from the Home Office, Department of Health & Social Care, the National Police Chiefs Council, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and NHS England which aims to work to end the inappropriate and avoidable involvement of police in responding to incidents involving people with mental health needs and ensure that individuals in mental health crisis are seen by the right professional. This assurance will continue into 2024/25.
- Received information, via the Planning & Delivery Group, regarding a new pathway for children and young people in crisis in acute care. This is an escalation pathway from Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland providers (Local Authority, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust [UHL], Integrated Care Board [ICB] and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust [LPT]), as a dual collaborative, for children that are in crisis and, previously, have been left in the Emergency Department for long periods of time.

- Carried out a multi-agency dip sample audit of referrals to Children's Social Care (CSC) across the three Local Authorities where the contacts were labelled as 'child's mental health'. Further detail on the audit is available in the "Quality Assurance and Service Improvement" section of this report.
- Established a Task and Finish Group to update the local procedure "Practice Guidance: Supporting Children and Young People who Self-Harm and/or have Suicidal Thoughts".

Outcomes and Impact:

- Assurance provided has highlighted positive outcomes and nationally recognised work in the Intensive Community Support Team and Eating Disorders Team, which are Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services' (CAMHS) Specialist Outpatient Teams.
- Delivered 8 training sessions to support the Child Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing business priority.

Moving Forwards:

- The information received through all assurance work will inform the update of the "Practice Guidance: Supporting Children and Young People who Self-Harm and/or have Suicidal Thoughts", particularly around referral pathways to the Children and Young People Mental Health Triage and Navigation Service which now has a self-referral portal.
- Further assurance is required regarding improvements in the quality of referrals to Triage and Navigation and the impact in reducing the number of referrals who are "not accepted".



Keeping Adolescents Safe / Supporting Safe Adolescents: Seek assurance that there is a clear governance and approach for safeguarding children from harm outside the home and that it is effective.

What we did:

- Continued to receive assurance from the Adolescence Safety and Diversion Board which provides governance to the Strategic Partnership Board's work relating to child exploitation (under 18s) and violence affecting young people (under 25s). Representatives from the Business Offices and several partner agencies of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships attend meetings of the newly formed Child Criminal Exploitation and Serious Violence Delivery Group. During 2023-24, the Child Criminal Exploitation Operations Group and the Serious Violence Delivery Group merged to form this single group. The rationale for this merge included acknowledgement that there are known links between exploitation and serious violence including overlaps in the groups affected, common risks and protective factors and the strategies required to prevent their occurrence. Additionally, the partners and communities which both areas of business seek to engage with are often the same (e.g., parents and schools) and a more joined-up approach will assist with this engagement.
- 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. Co-production is achieved through participation, co-design, leadership, community oversight and scrutiny and co-delivery. Information was provided on projects and programmes that provide primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.
- Supported the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Hub in undertaking a new regime of audit work.
- Refreshed the local "Harmful Sexual Behaviour" procedure and updated the "Online Safety" procedure.
- Continued to run training on "Child Exploitation – Introduction to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Trafficking, Missing & County Lines" as part of the regular Safeguarding Children Partnership training programme.

Outcomes and Impact:

- Assurance work informs procedural and training requirements.
- 11 training sessions were delivered to support the Keeping Adolescents Safe/Supporting Safe Adolescents business priority, including commissioned training delivered by subject experts:
 - "Really enjoyed the training today, left me with lots of food for thought and looking forward to taking it forward. Will definitely be directing my team to book" – feedback from attendee of "Hidden Sentence" training, on the impact of parental imprisonment, delivered by the Violence Reduction Network*
 - "The trainers were really insightful. I thought it was brave and empowering how they used their own experiences to explain how we can manage disclosures differently" – feedback from attendee of "Following the Breadcrumbs" training, delivered by the Reign Collective.*

Moving Forwards:

- The Child Criminal Exploitation and Serious Violence Delivery Group continues to oversee the development of a Contextual Framework to provide Adolescent Safeguarding and promote awareness raising to prevent future harm.
- The Safeguarding Children Partnerships continue to receive assurance that approaches to safeguard children from extra-familial threat are embedded and effective, including hearing the experiences of local children and families.

Safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds: Understand and improve how well partners work together with children and families from diverse backgrounds.

What we did:

- Further promoted 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.
- Sought assurance 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. Information was requested regarding how equality and diversity are covered in internal training and how often staff need to repeat this training as part of their continuing professional development; how equality and diversity are covered in the induction for new staff; and how agency training and guidance addresses the recording of protected characteristics, for both children and related adults.
- Considered the information provided by the East Midlands Councils in their Quarterly Migration Briefings, which includes regional updates, latest migration figures and national updates and the sub-regional implications.
- Started planning how best to provide multi-agency learning and development around immigration status, culture, faith, and parenting, to sit alongside already existing training and resources that consider safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds.
- Ensured that the impact of abuse and neglect on protective characteristics are analysed during the Rapid Review process.

Outcomes and Impact:

- Cultural competence and intersectionality are considered in audits and reviews across the Safeguarding Children Partnerships improving our understanding of how well partners work together with children and families from diverse backgrounds.
- 10 training sessions were delivered to support the Safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds business priority.

Moving Forwards:

- The definition of cultural competency will be included and highlighted in all appropriate/relevant training. Likewise, when training is commissioned, it can be included in the contract as an expected practice standard from the trainer in their delivery.
- It is recognised that there is still work to do to embed cultural competency and intersectionality, as assurance work indicates that understanding and reflection of cultural and diversity needs could be better addressed in practice, including assessments.

Effective Safeguarding in independent and out of school settings: Work with faith groups, independent schools, community organisations and other settings to support them to play an effective role in safeguarding children.

What we did:

- 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.
- Improved links with representatives from faith organisations and considered how these groups can be further engaged and involved in local safeguarding arrangements.
- Reviewed and updated the Out of School Settings leaflet, entitled “Keeping Children Safe”.

Outcomes and Impact:

Better links with schools and faith organisations are leading to increased engagement.

29 training sessions were delivered to support the Effective Safeguarding in independent and out of school settings business priority:

“Well presented and clear. Resources provided after the session are very useful” – feedback from attendee of Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) training

Moving Forwards:

- It is recognised, particularly in light of Working Together 2023 and its guidance on working with schools, colleges, early years, and other education providers, as well as voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) organisations and sports clubs, that further work is required in this area. This to ensure the local safeguarding arrangements include systems to engage and collaborate at both the operational and strategic level. The Safeguarding Children Partnership’s Independent Chair is looking at these new recommendations for engaging with schools for implementation in 2024/25.
- It is also acknowledged that the work of the multi-agency Task and Finish Group, chaired by Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs), to progress key deliverables on out of school settings, small and community organisations has been delayed.



Transitional Safeguarding: Seek assurance that Transitional Safeguarding is being managed appropriately across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

What we did:

- Set up a Task & 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.

Moving Forwards:

This is a 2-year priority. Throughout 2024-25, the Task & Finish Group will consider the requirement for an overarching Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland strategy/policy for transitional safeguarding, with transparent buy in from senior leaders.



Quality Assurance and Service Improvement

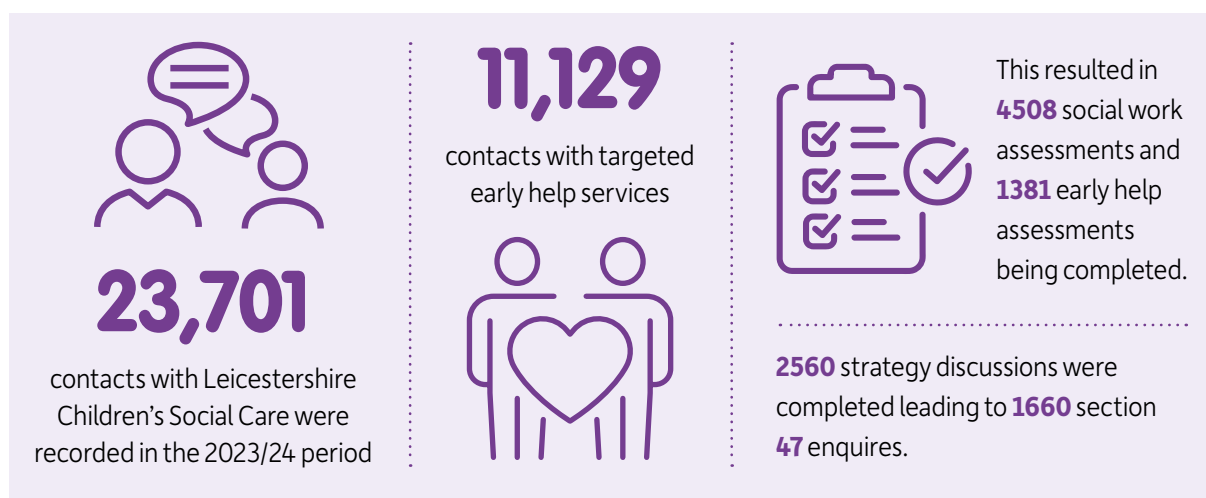
The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership has a Quality Assurance Framework shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. This can be found here <https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp>. This will be updated in the upcoming year to reflect Working Together 2023.

Performance Data

Leicestershire

Leicestershire's analysis of performance for the last 12 months has identified some key areas which will have an impact for partnership working both in terms of working together to support children in care and safeguarding.

Demand for services at the front door has seen increases in numbers of contacts and referrals being processed in the system. High numbers of requests for information evidence strong information sharing across partners.

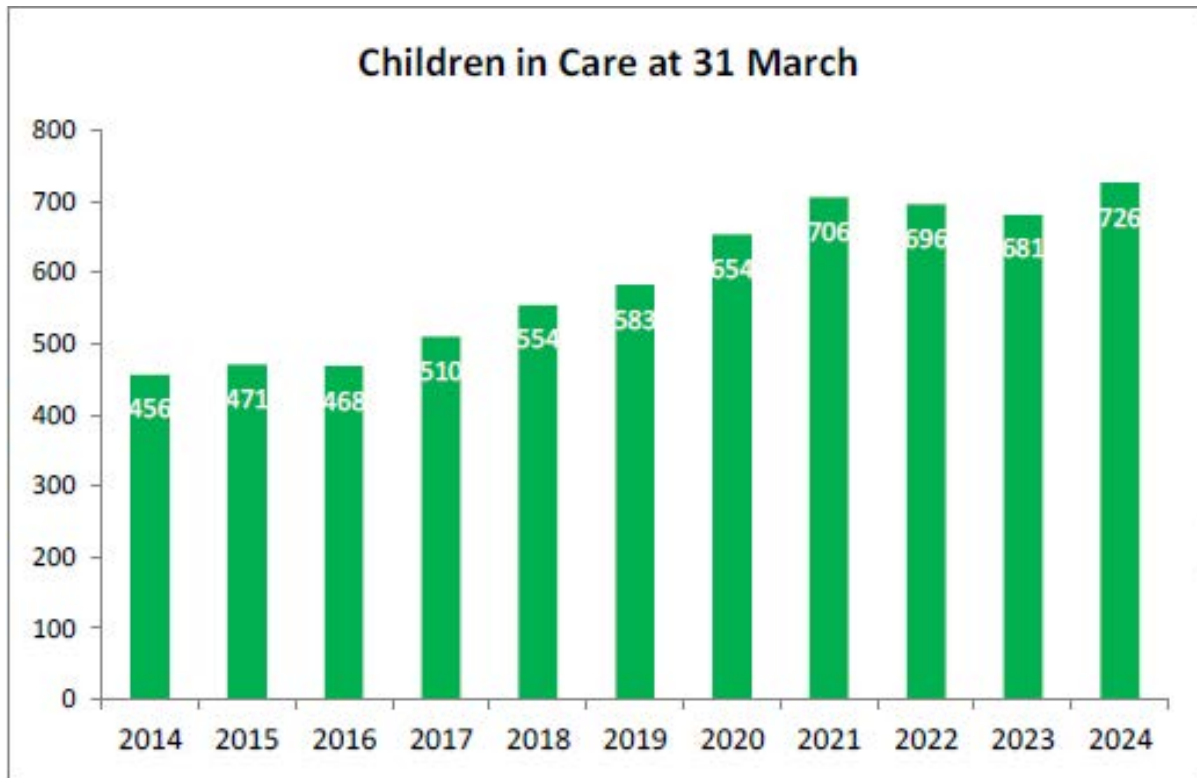


Work with partners to provide robust oversight to the quality of strategy discussions has continued to be in place with oversight of the operational partnership meeting and the regular audit and oversight of threshold and agency contributions.

Numbers of children subject to multi-agency child protection processes fell during 2023/24 – from 516 in March 2023 to 430 in March 2024. A new and robust Child in Need offer was launched in February 2024 and this aims to offer early and intensive interventions to support children and de-escalate from child protection offer. Leicestershire are monitoring impact over 2024/25.

This sits alongside a dedicated Domestic Abuse offer launched in January 2023 with early responses to standard domestic abuse notifications to focus on safety planning and support for families and specific resources for working with men causing harm using the Caring Dads group work offer and engagement workers to offer challenge and support.

Numbers of children in care during 2023/24 have increased. In Leicestershire, there were 726 children in care on 31st March 2024, an increase of 45 children (6.6%) from 681 children in care on 31st March 2023. This is the first annual increase of children in care in Leicestershire since 2021. 726 children are equivalent to 50.8 children per 10,000 population aged 0 to 17 in Leicestershire. This compares to an average of 60.5 children in care per 10,000 children in Statistical Neighbour authorities, and 71.0 for England as of 31st March 2023. This comparison demonstrates that, despite increases year on year, the number of children looked after by the Local Authority remains under national averages and the launch of a dedicated 'edge of care' service – Families Together – in November 2023 continues a strong response to support children in their family network.



This increase overall includes a further increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in care during 2023/24 compared to 2022/23. At 31st March 2024, there were 112 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in care representing 15.4% of the overall care population. This is an increase of 29 young people from 83 on 31st March 2023. This rise continues the upward trend noted in 2022/23. Additional capacity has been put in place to ensure Leicestershire's offer to children seeking refuge is robust and provides appropriate support services including to those leaving care.

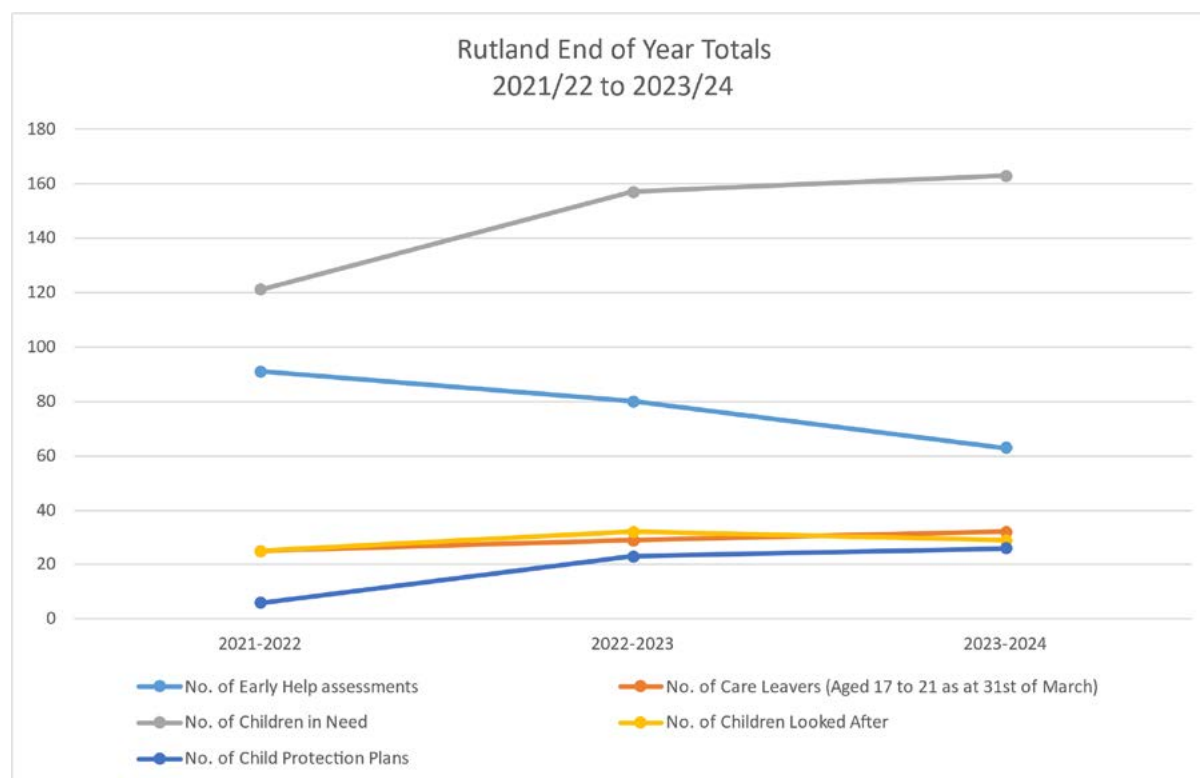
This increase will increase pressure across agencies supporting Leicestershire children including services to support health needs. Strong Corporate Parenting structures underpin the offer to children in care with key agencies represented and engaged.

There has been a drop in early help assessments – from 3677 in 2021/22, to 2673 in 2022/23, and 1415 in 2023/24 – for several reasons. The Children and Family Wellbeing Service (now Family Help) experienced a significant increase in referrals from 2020-21 which continued into 2021-22. The service undertook several measures to support the management of demand and ensure families received the most appropriate support according to their needs. This included:

- Introduction of an 'Early Responder' role at the front door. This is a practitioner role where support is provided to families with lower-level needs within 24-48 hours of referral for up to 4 sessions. No formal assessment is completed.
- Enhanced provision of information, advice, and signposting to families at the front door, including sending out information packs and onward referral to other agencies.

In addition, during this time, there were several other initiatives which may have had an impact on the number of early help assessments completed. These included changes to process on case recording systems and introduction of new services such as Teen Health, which may have provided alternatives to early help assessments.

Rutland



There has been a decline in Early Help assessments. This was due to more focus on targeting support on solution focused approaches to referrals at Tier 1 and 2 and through groupwork solutions based on analysis of data and trends in relation to referral needs. An example of this was group work on managing your anxious child, following an increase in referrals regarding anxiety in young people. Through targeting support in this way, Rutland have increased capacity to support families in need. In this period, they have implemented the schools support partnership to support schools to manage children in their settings and reduce the need for targeted support.

Following a fall in numbers post covid, Rutland have seen:

A gradual increase across the years in Child in Need, Child Protection and Children looked after numbers

An increase in complexity of family circumstances and this is reflected in the increase for Child in Need and Child Protection

An increase in looked after children through the year; although they are securing permanence outside the care of the Local Authority for more young people so numbers look fairly stable

An increase in care leaver numbers and this trajectory is likely to continue. This is, in part, due to the consistent number of young people from overseas seeking asylum via the national transfer scheme.

Self-Assessment

During 2022-23, the safeguarding partners and specific relevant agencies carried out a Section 11 self-assessment audit of their safeguarding effectiveness. Returns were fully analysed and presented to the Safeguarding Children Partnerships during the 2023-24 business year. Almost all partner agencies provided some evidence that they were effective across all areas in the assessment. Where agencies judged themselves as not meeting the standard for being 'fully effective' against an area of assessment, additional information was required to indicate how they plan to achieve full effectiveness and by when.

A Section 11 audit was not completed in 2023-24. A further Section 11 process is being produced for the business year 2024-25. This will be focused on frontline staff and managers in partner agencies.

To enhance the process, it has been agreed to undertake Section 11 self-assessments using different methodologies to obtain safeguarding assurance from agencies. A survey of frontline staff and managers is planned. This will enable the Safeguarding Children Partnerships to obtain assurance of the impact of recommendations and actions resulting from safeguarding reviews and multi-agency audits.

Audits

Learning from audits leads to recommendations and actions that are progressed and monitored. The learning is disseminated and informs changes required at both a system and practice level. The impact of action outcomes is analysed once the outcomes have been embedded.



Deep dive audit

Pre-Birth Planning

A deep-dive multi-agency audit, focusing on Pre-Birth Planning, was due to be completed before the end of 2022-23. Whilst the audit itself was completed within the year, the multi-agency Audit Discussion Days, to enable analysis and key learning to be identified, took place in 2023-24.

This theme was agreed to support the Safeguarding Babies business priority and in light of learning from local Rapid Reviews. The Pre-Birth audit considered whether services complied with, and applied, the multi-agency Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures including thresholds, supportive tools like the Neglect Toolkit, partner identification and service response to the unborn/born child via pre-birth planning.

The group of babies was identified for review based on cases where the expectant parent/s had previous children removed from their care. A total of 12 cases were reviewed – 5 from Leicester City, 5 from Leicestershire and 2 from Rutland.

What worked well:

9

out of 12 cases

clear history of risks identified

8

out of 12 cases

timely actions through the process

6

out of 12 cases

creative work by the Social Worker and tenacity over the time working with parents

8

out of 12 cases

good multi-agency engagement

11

out of 12 cases

risks to the unborn were clearly considered

7

out of 12 cases

discussed at monthly GP Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings. In 3 cases these included discussions with Health Visitors. This reflected good knowledge of the case

6

out of 12 cases

there was evidence of good liaison across Health services by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT)



| Recommendations from audit | Action | Required outcome |
|--|--|--|
| <p>1. Raise awareness and learning and increase skills in relation to working with parents who have a learning disability or learning difficulty and/or mental health needs.</p> | <p>To support existing local procedures already in place:</p> <p>Practice points on working with parents who have a learning disability or learning difficulty and/or mental health needs included in the Leicestershire & Rutland “Practice Points – Learning from SCP Reviews and Audits” – completed</p> <p>7-Minute Briefing to be produced to disseminate the learning from this multi-agency audit – due early 2024/25</p> | <p>Increased awareness of potential considerations when working with parents who have a learning disability or learning difficulty and/or mental health needs</p> |
| <p>2. The Assurance and Audit Group continue to monitor and seek assurance around the development and implementation of a single digital solution for access to and information sharing between Health Visiting and Midwifery.</p> | <p>Seek regular updates from relevant Health agencies – throughout 2024/25</p> <p>The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has begun commissioning work to address digital solutions identifying midwifery and health visiting as priority areas. Due to the complexity of IT systems currently in place, there is currently no timeline for completion.</p> | <p>Assurance that there is improved information sharing between health professionals that are key to the pre- and post-birth periods</p> |
| <p>3. Improved reflection of culture, race, and ethnicity in cases – need for increased learning in this area across agencies.</p> | <p>Requested that the Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group considered how to ensure the cultural competence definition agreed locally is embedded in practice – completed and action taken</p> <p>Article included in Safeguarding Matters regarding learning from this audit around consideration of culture, ethnicity, race and diversity, including the locally agreed definition of cultural competence – due April 2024</p> | <p>Improved reflection of culture, race and ethnicity in cases, including in recording</p> <p>Embedding of locally agreed definition of a worker who is culturally responsive / culturally competent</p> |

| Recommendations from audit | Action | Required outcome |
|---|---|--|
| <p>4. The Assurance and Audit Group continue to monitor and seek assurance around a single digital solution across health agencies to allow access to and sharing of information, including fathers and male carers/partners.</p> | <p>Seek regular updates from relevant Health agencies – throughout 2024/25</p> <p>Work to drive quality improvement of health information shared with partners for the purpose of safeguarding and strategy discussions has commenced in 2024.</p> | <p>Assurance that there is improved information sharing in Health across different departments in single agencies and across agencies regarding fathers and male carers to allow practitioners access to all information available</p> |
| <p>5. Strengthen cross agency presence at conferences and key meetings. It is important to recognise that no single health practitioner represents all of health.</p> | <p>To support existing local procedures in place and locally produced “Guide to Multi-Agency Meetings in relation to Safeguarding Children and Young People”:</p> <p>Learning to be included in planned 7-Minute Briefing</p> <p>Ongoing focus and continued monitoring via the Safeguarding Keep in Touch meetings</p> | <p>Assurance around statutory functions in relation to multi-agency safeguarding children processes</p> |
| <p>6. Review and refresh of the Pre-Birth procedure and flowchart, in the light of this audit and the National Research into Practice work that Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland were part of.</p> | <p>Share the learning from the audit with the Policy & Procedures Group to inform further updates to the “Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning” procedure – completed</p> | <p>Improved procedure around Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning to reflect national and local learning from reviews and quality assurance processes</p> |
| <p>7. Consider services to parents after their baby is removed, as they may need advice on contraception and practical support. Also specified for different agencies.</p> | <p>To support this being covered in the updated “Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning” procedure:</p> <p>Learning to be included in 7-Minute Briefing</p> | <p>Improved support to parents</p> |

Spotlight Audits

In addition to the deep-dive multi-agency audit, two spotlight audits were completed.

Children with Mental Health Needs

During April 2023, in light of the Business Plan priority and following up an audit completed in 2021-22, the Partnerships carried out a spotlight dip sample audit of referrals to Children's Social Care (CSC) across the three Local Authorities. The audit was focused on contacts labelled as 'child's mental health'; this was to ensure that cases were not limited to cases involving a child/young person with a defined mental health need, but the audit took account of a range of requests for services for children – for example, after overdose, concerns about self-harm / bullying etc.

The aim of the audit was to see how well Children's Social Care services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland follow up the contacts and evidence if information is cross checked with and triangulated across agencies, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) etc. Ten cases were audited: four from Leicestershire, four from Leicester City and two from Rutland.

The key themes/learning identified were:

- At the point of first contact, Local Authority Services need to contact Health agencies, particularly Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and GPs, to seek and triangulate information about the child/young person's emotional health as part of the assessment process.
- Local Authority Services need to ensure practitioners put in place robust safety plans that are developed with families, ensuring mental health agencies involved with the family are actively supporting in the time of crisis.

These actions are being taken forward by the Local Authorities.



Neglect

During August 2023, the Partnerships carried out a spotlight dip sample audit of referrals to Children's Social Care across the three Local Authorities. The audit was focused on neglect. This audit theme was selected in light of learning around neglect from local and national reviews.

The aim of the audit was to see how well Children's Social Care services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland follow up the contacts and evidence if information is shared and/or cross checked with and triangulated across partner agencies. Ten cases were audited: four from Leicestershire, four from Leicester City and two from Rutland.

The key themes/learning identified were:

- There was no evidence of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Neglect Toolkit being used with any of the families whose records were audited.
 - Action: the 2024 Section 11 Audit will include frontline staff knowledge of the Neglect Toolkit and include a link for practitioners to access the tool.
- Good evidence of health information being shared in strategy meetings and in assessments.
- Involvement of fathers is an issue particularly in the City and Health agencies. However, in Leicestershire, there is some evidence that this is starting to be embedded. The concern around Health agencies is that practitioners, such as Health Visitors, Midwifery, School Nurses, routinely do not have access to father's/mother's records.
 - Action: "Practice Principles: engaging fathers, and male carers in effective practice" have been produced and disseminated.
 - Action: Await implementation of a single digital solution to improve information sharing access across Health agencies.
- Adult mental health and learning difficulties feature in a number of cases across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Practitioners and professionals need to ensure that information is sought about parents of a child and their ability to care and support a child if they have mental health concerns.



Other assurance work

‘Keep in Touch’ Assurance Meetings

The Safeguarding Keep in Touch meetings are supported by senior managers and safeguarding leadership from key agencies across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland. The purpose is to maintain better conversations to enable senior safeguarding leads to share intelligence and joint oversight of the ability of Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland, as collective multi-agency children’s safeguarding partners, to maintain statutory functions in relation to safeguarding children, share information and data and provide a timely response to emerging safeguarding issues with partnership support. The information shared at the meetings has enabled senior managers to inform their frontline practitioners about new staffing initiatives by partner agencies who have designed specialist roles to target children and parents at risk, and also for staff to be aware of any anticipated workforce shortage and mitigation in their area of work.

Discussions in 2023/24 have included how each agency has managed significant workforce issues and how these are being resolved. The meeting has also provided a platform to communicate positive messages following service redesign and discuss how the service integrates with the work of wider partners. All agencies have reported the complexity of difficulties faced by some families across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Positively, each agency has provided monthly assurance that safeguarding work is prioritised and maintained full engagement with required safeguarding processes and the local authorities.

Operational Performance Group

An Operational Performance Group has been formed. It feeds into the Partnerships’ Assurance & Audit Group, with a standing item on the agenda. Whilst the monthly Keep In Touch meetings unpick practice issues and are more strategic, the Operational Performance Group meetings evaluate multi-agency working.

Internal Quality Assurance Processes

The Assurance & Audit Group sought assurance from partner agencies around their internal quality assurance processes. The aim was to provide a picture of activity that agencies have completed over the previous twelve months, giving an overview of what the key successes have been, what are the areas for development and any key actions for the forthcoming year linked to the business plan priorities.

It was positive to note that agencies reported the dissemination of learning from reviews and audits internally through a number of different briefing methods.

Homes for Ukraine and safeguarding duties

Leicestershire

During 2023-24, 216 individuals (172 adults and 44 children) arrived into Leicestershire on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This means that, between March 2022 and 31st March 2024, 1199 individuals (837 adults and 362 children) have arrived into Leicestershire on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. As of 31st March 2024, 395 individuals (297 adults and 98 children) remain in hosted accommodation in Leicestershire on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. The numbers remaining in hosted accommodation are not the numbers of Ukrainians fleeing war still in Leicestershire. Leicestershire County Council are only able to track numbers who remain on the scheme (in hosted accommodation). Some of the 804 guests who have left the scheme (left hosting) are in private rented accommodation in Leicestershire. These figures also do not include Ukrainians who arrived to stay with family members on the Family Visa scheme – the Home Office do not provide Leicestershire County Council with these figures.

Leicestershire County Council have worked with 7 Ukrainian children who are considered unaccompanied on the scheme (here without a person with legal parental responsibility) during 2023/24. By the end of 2023/24, three of these had left the scheme (returning to Ukraine or moving to private accommodation with an accompanying non-parent family member); two had become adults and Leicestershire County Council were providing ongoing support in their transition to living in this country as adults; and they were continuing to support two as unaccompanied children.

Rutland

During 2023-24, in Rutland, the sponsor figures fluctuated between 33 and 19 from August 2023 to the end of March 2024 and the individual guests varied from 75 to 40 during this time.

Information Sharing Agreement (ISA)

The local Information Sharing Agreement of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards was updated throughout 2022/23 and re-published in April 2023. A further update is in progress to reflect the changes included in Working Together 2023.

Safeguarding in Education

Leicestershire

As of September 2023, a new Safeguarding and Compliance Lead for Education is in position at Leicestershire County Council.

A new annual safeguarding return for education has been launched across the Leicestershire county schools. This is a statutory requirement under section 175 of the Education Act. The new return was trialled by a working party of Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and allows schools to complete a self-evaluation to ensure that Safeguarding Policy and Practice is following Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and statutory requirements. The return is shared with Safeguarding and Compliance at Leicestershire County Council to allow an evaluation of safeguarding in Leicestershire schools.

The Safeguarding and Compliance Lead attends Rapid Reviews and the team supports schools in submitting their report from the scoping period, as well as working to develop the learning which is taken from the Rapid Reviews. This year this has involved re-establishing the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' "Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Practice Guidance: Supporting Children and Young People who Self-Harm and/or have Suicidal Thoughts" with education settings and providing additional resources to improve communication between schools and multi-agency, to include a social care directory and directory of services to schools.

The Leicestershire Headteacher bulletin is issued to schools twice a week and contains safeguarding information from both local and national safeguarding updates. Schools also receive a termly safeguarding newsletter. The Safeguarding and Compliance Lead supports schools and Designated Safeguarding Leads by providing training and support regarding complex cases or signposting services.

Rutland

Rutland have shared the learning from the Safeguarding Children Partnership in a number of ways. Practice sessions are held weekly across Children's Social Care, SEND and Inclusion where the learning points are shared, and workers have the opportunity to discuss any findings and how they can take the learning forward. They have quarterly development days where they also utilise this learning to support learning and development. They have also distributed the learning in the Education Bulletin and in Safeguarding Briefings. Regular training events are advertised through the weekly Education Bulletin and on the Rutland County Council website training page.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures

The partnership has ensured procedures are in place for multi-agency safeguarding in line with Working Together. With the publication of Working Together 2023 in December 2023, procedures are being updated in light of the updated statutory guidance.

Throughout 2023-24, the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships have specifically revised the following procedures in response to learning from local and national reviews and assurance processes and created a new guidance document:

- Bruising, Marks, or Injury of Concern in Mobile Children
- Child Abuse linked to Faith or Belief
- Children of Parents who Misuse Substances
- Child Protection Enquiries – Section 47 Children Act 1989
- Disabled Children
- Early Help Assessment
- Female Genital Mutilation and Other Harmful Practices
- Forced Marriage
- Gang Activity, Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation Affecting Children
- Guidance for Safe Recruitment, Selection and Retention for Staff and Volunteers
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Information Sharing
- Online Safety
- Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning
- Recognising Abuse and Neglect
- Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment
- So Called ‘Honour’ Based Abuse
- Spiritual, Cultural and Religious Beliefs
- Practice Principles – Engaging Fathers, and Male Carers in Effective Practice (new document)

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships’ procedures can be found online: <https://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

A full list of new chapters and amendments made can be found on the ‘[Amendments](#)’ page of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual.

Individuals who want to sign up for alerts regarding the Safeguarding Children Partnerships’ procedures can [register for updates](#).

Training

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership's training co-ordination and delivery function is shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to support consistent and effective partnership working.

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships provide training resources and events in support of their business priorities as well as other areas identified in a training needs assessment with partners, identifying other key areas including intrafamilial sexual abuse and neglect.

A blended approach to learning is taken, incorporating video resources and resource packs alongside online and face-to-face training sessions.

Resources



The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards offer a set of [Building Confidence in Practice Resources](#), with one on Professional Curiosity for Supervisors and Managers being launched in January 2024. The aim is to focus on often complex issues that arise for practitioners when they are working with people, whether they are children or adults. They can be used in team meetings or as part of a group/individual supervision.



The [LLR SCs' YouTube](#) channel provides a bank of safeguarding videos that capture presentations from multi-agency training events and other resources that can be utilised by partners for learning and development – for example, in single agency training and supervision.



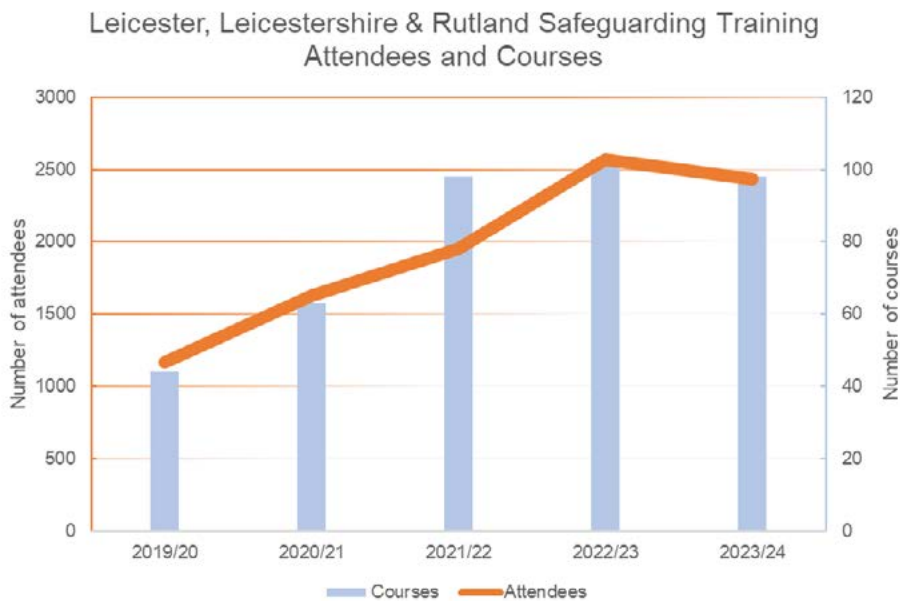
As in previous years, during 2023-24, two print issues of the [Safeguarding Matters newsletter](#) were published, with a focus on disseminating learning from reviews and audits and promoting procedural updates.

The Safeguarding Matters Digest is a monthly email, which is used to disseminate local and national safeguarding information in a concise and regular format.

The Safeguarding Matters newsletters and Live PowerPoints and videos are available via the website and YouTube channel. Individuals can request to be added to the distribution list so that they are informed of publication and event dates by emailing lrspbo@leics.gov.uk. The Safeguarding Matters Digest is disseminated via email to those that have signed up to receive it. To be added to the distribution list, individuals can email lscpb@leicester.gov.uk.

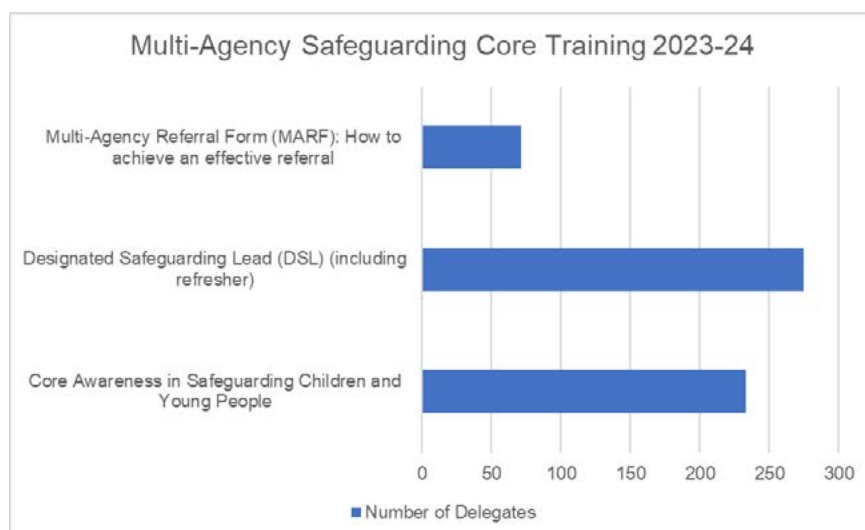
Training Delivery

This year training was delivered to 2435 attendees over 98 training events. The chart below documents the numbers attending Safeguarding Children Partnership training over the last five years.



The trend continues that, since the re-establishment of face-to-face training following the Covid pandemic, there is a better uptake of this training in comparison to virtual, online training. It is reported that cancelled places on training are often due to workload.

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships continue to provide free of charge, high quality training, with a core programme focusing on basic safeguarding / business as usual training that aims to support practitioners to fulfil their multi-agency safeguarding role. This is supplemented by commissioned training on key safeguarding themes and specific types of abuse/neglect, as well as large scale events.



Following requests from practitioners, this year the programme has been updated to include Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) evening sessions.

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships' training programme is available [here](#) and updates are provided by the SCP Training [X](#), [formerly Twitter](#), [feed](#).

Festival of Learning

The theme of the 2023-24 Festival of Learning, which ran from 1st to 7th November 2023, was “Safeguarding Bumps and Babies”. This was selected to support the safeguarding babies business priority and acknowledge local learning from reviews and audits. 15 courses, both virtual and in-person, were delivered to 284 practitioners from a multi-agency audience. Topics of presentations included Myth of Invisible Men and Coercive Reproduction. Where courses were popular or further requested, they have been run again, such as the Myth of Invisible Men, Coercive Control – including coercive reproduction, Safer Sleep Toolkit and The Voice of Babies and non-verbal children.

Safeguarding Matters Live

Following the successful launch of [Safeguarding Matters Live](#) in 2022-23, two events were held in June 2023 and December 2023. These are live online briefings for all staff across the children and adults multi-agency partnerships. They share learning from reviews and audits, procedure and guidance updates, and resources to support practice. The June 2023 briefing was attended, at points, by over 370 delegates with the December 2023 briefing’s attendance peaking at around 400 people. The slides from the events are made available via the website and sessions are available to watch on the [YouTube Channel](#). Topics covered included trauma-informed practice, Prevent, the local Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool and the Serious Violence Duty. Safeguarding Matters Live June 2023 has been re-watched online 38 times fully and 40 times partially, whilst the December 2023 event has been watched online 69 times.

Trainers Network

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships co-ordinate a Trainers Network to look at development/practice issues in this area. The focus of the network is to look at the trainers’ support needs and offer regular meetups between trainers to share knowledge, skills and to help develop the delivery of safeguarding children training. During 2023-24, there were five in-person Trainers Network events.

Training Impact

“Good to network. Good to have protected time to reflect. Good to remember why we do what we do. Will use the safe sleep toolkit.”

“The explanations and examples were great as I personally feel that an aspect of safeguarding is being confident with the knowledge and how to apply it and when to apply it.”

Feedback from Festival of Learning sessions

“Very useful for updating practice.”

“More training needed to boost staff confidence to raise safeguarding concern and know the appropriate action and approach to take.”

“I found the session very informative across the board as it has given me a broader [view] of different contextual environments that I need to be aware of when engaging in my role.”

Feedback from Safeguarding Matters Live events

During 2023-24, 60 additional people requested they be added to the Safeguarding Matters distribution list, with over 700 people now signed up.

Also, the Safeguarding Children Partnership Learning & Development homepage on the Leicestershire & Rutland website was viewed over 1600 times, with the Competency Framework webpage being viewed over 2200 times.

“This course was delivered very well. (The trainer) was very positive and helped the whole group engage with each other. I found the course very interesting and liked how we got split up into small groups for discussion.”

Evaluation of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training

“Always worthwhile despite your experience as there is always something new to learn. Up to date and relevant.”

Evaluation of Safeguarding Adults and Children training

“Really good training that kept me engaged throughout the day and provided a lot of information for me to take away and use in my practice.”

Evaluation of Child Exploitation training

“This was a completely new topic of training for me and I liked the pace as it was easy to follow and not too rushed – the variety of videos, visual slides and verbal information was useful and kept me interested in the content throughout.”

Evaluation of Fabricated and Induced Illness (FII) training

Before and after training sessions, professionals are asked to rate their own knowledge, skills and confidence and to set themselves three key actions which they will put into practice. These key actions are considered during impact evaluations, which explore how knowledge has been used in day-to-day work. During 2023-24, 527 delegates completed pre- and post-evaluation forms. This is a lower figure than last year and will be addressed by continuing to encourage practitioners to provide feedback.

The learning management system, due to be implemented during 2022-23, continues to be delayed. Once in place, this should help improve understanding of access to and impact of Safeguarding Children Partnership training resources and make collation of evaluation data easier.



Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Local Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The Partnership assesses Serious Safeguarding Incidents as defined by Working Together 2023 and decides whether a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) is required, in order to identify how to improve safeguarding responses in future.

During 2023/24, ten notifications/referrals for potential Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) were received by the Leicestershire & Rutland Children's Case Review Group (CRG), up from the three in 2022/23 and more in line with the eight in 2021/22. The higher number in 2021/22, at the time, was thought to be linked to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Of the ten cases, eight were Local Authority notifications and two were referrals from another Safeguarding Children Partnership agency. One was a Leicestershire notification with the Rapid Review carried out by a sub-regional Safeguarding Children Partnership; one was withdrawn following a post mortem and there being no signs of abuse or neglect.

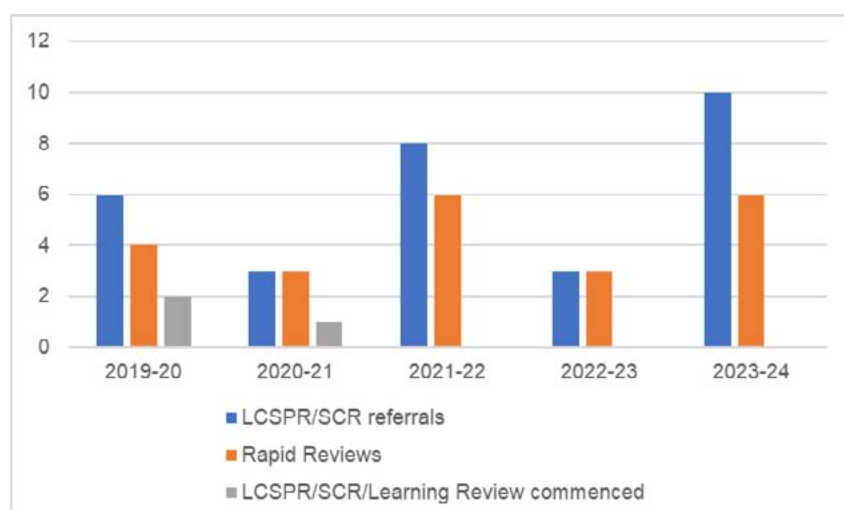
The Partnership carried out six Rapid Reviews following a Serious Incident Notification in the period of this report:

- One of the Rapid Reviews involved two children.
- The subjects of all but one of these cases were female.
- One was a baby; one was a young child; and the rest were over 10 years old.
- Most of the children were White British, with one case involving a child from another White background, one involving a Black British child and another a child with mixed heritage.
- Two of the children were looked after children.

It is noted that previously, in line with the national picture, children under 12 months of age accounted for the majority of local notifications. In 2023-24, the number of notifications about babies fell. Locally, we continue to see the majority of notifications related to females, which is not in line with the national picture.

One Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR), commissioned in 2021, remains on hold with an interim report because of an ongoing criminal process. Learning from the review has been progressed and has influenced procedural change and awareness raising.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are published on our website for 1 year. Past reviews are still available and accessible via the NSPCC's [National Case Review Repository](#).



The Safeguarding Partners are analysing the increased number of notifications/referrals and Rapid Reviews in 2023-24 and will continue to monitor numbers to identify any longer-term trends.

Identification and dissemination of learning

The Partnership was able to identify learning to improve safeguarding systems from all of the Rapid Reviews. It identified no further learning was to be gained from further review of any of these cases and therefore no Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews were required. This view was supported by the Independent Chair to the Partnership and by the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

The Rapid Reviews identified examples of good single and multi-agency working to prioritise, see and respond to children at risk of harm.

They also identified the following key areas:

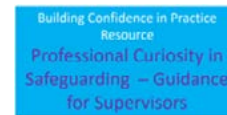
- Practitioners should address a parent's support needs which may affect their ability to safely parent their baby and take opportunities to explore these with parents.
- When working with children in care, there is a need to recognise patterns or an increase in dysregulation. Practitioners should not assume that this is related only to past trauma but could be an indicator that something is wrong now. Professional Curiosity about current harm will strengthen the understanding of day-to-day life for the child and provide a wider perspective of their lived experience.
- It is essential that fathers / male carers / carers are not hidden figures. Records need to capture more than attendance.
- A strategy discussion can provide an essential opportunity to share information and evaluate risk in response to sexual harm. It is essential that the Local Authority holding responsibility for a subject child is able to contribute to the meeting so that historical information can assist in understanding risk.
- Practitioners should support, talk to, listen to and respond to young people who present with emotional need including self-harm and suicidal ideation. Understanding how services can be coordinated and the benefits of multi-agency responses are key to ensuring referral pathways are implemented consistently to get the right help to children, without barriers. Supporting carers' understanding and access to this support will likely lead to better outcomes.
- Practitioners across agencies should understand in appropriate detail the level of risk associated with health conditions in the context of neglectful parenting. Any plan supporting the child must have clear roles and responsibilities. This will include support to both child and parent specifically related to compliance with recommended treatment and responding when health is deteriorating, key trigger points and expected actions in response.

Learning from Leicestershire & Rutland reviews has been shared and has influenced:



Leicester and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual

Festival of Learning: Safeguarding Bumps & Babies



Nurturing professional curiosity and challenge are a fundamental aspect of working together to keep children, young people and adults safe from harm.

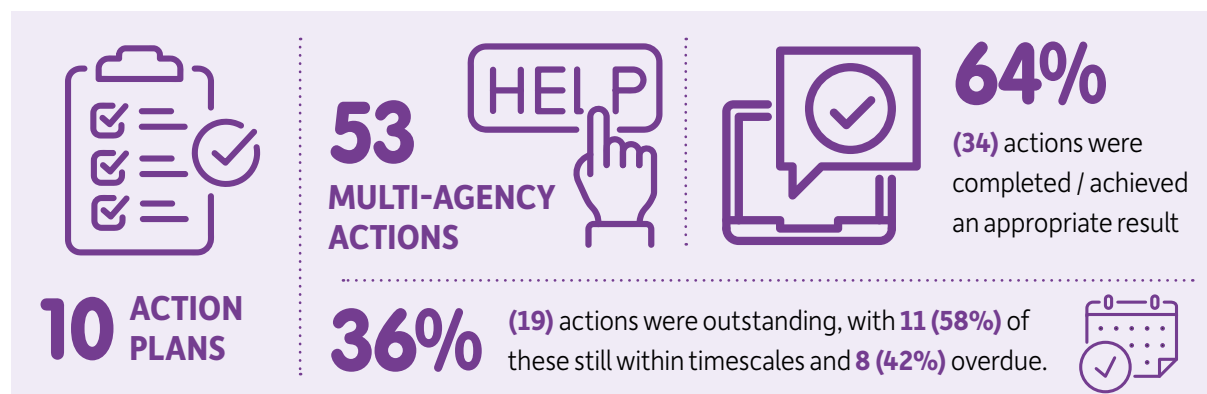
| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool, launched in November 2023 | “Practice Principles – engaging fathers and male carers in effective practice”, launched in September 2023 | Recent updates of the local “Children of Parents who Misuse Substances” procedure, “Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning” procedure and “Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment” procedure | Content during the Festival of Learning 2023 on “Safeguarding Bumps and Babies” | Building Confidence in Practice Resource on Professional Curiosity for Supervisors and Managers, launched in January 2024 |
|--|--|---|---|---|

Additionally, in response to learning from reviews:

- The “Practice Points – Learning from Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) Reviews and Audits” document was launched and published on the Leicestershire & Rutland website in October 2023. It provides a set of key learning points, which all practitioners and managers need to be aware of from audits and reviews. It also includes messages from national reviews and resources. This is a live document and will be updated on a quarterly basis. The latest version was published in March 2024.
- An end of year resource that summarised learning from 2023-24 cases, including anonymised case details/context, was disseminated to safeguarding leads that sit on the Case Review Group. This can be used as a PowerPoint for guided discussion, for example, in team meetings or turned into a PDF for individual practitioners to read through in their own time. It has been agreed it will be provided on an annual basis.
- The statutory partners and Case Review Group chairs from Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland came together in December 2023/January 2024 to consider any shared learning and next steps. The following themes were identified across the sub-region: professional curiosity, information sharing, trauma-informed practice, escalation procedures, voice of the child and hidden males. Actions are being progressed to develop a learning offer across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. It will be reviewed every 6 months whether it would be beneficial to pull partners together again to consider any new / existing shared themes. If a more urgent need arises, this will be considered earlier.
- The local “Practice Guidance: Supporting Children and Young People who Self-Harm and/or have Suicidal Thoughts” is being updated, particularly around referral pathways.

Learning is shared with practitioners across organisations through multi-agency training, briefings and learning events, including to communicate updated guidance and changes in procedures. Also, the Safeguarding Children Partnership communicates learning to the workforce through the [Safeguarding Matters newsletter](#) and live events, the Safeguarding Digest and through '7-Minute Briefings', which are designed to convey key messages from reviews and encourage managers and workers to reflect on their practice.

Action plans are in place to respond to and monitor areas of learning from reviews. During 2023/24, the Partnership tracked:



All multi-agency actions are categorised with one of the following labels: Assurance, Comms, National Matters, Policy/Procedure, Service Provision and Training. In 2023/24, policy/procedure was the most common category of action.

Impact

As a result of learning from a review in 2022, work was completed around Fabricated and Induced Illness (FII), including an updated procedure and training course. A year later, an exercise was completed, considering outputs (what we implemented / updated / amended), outcomes (what we achieved that could affect practice) and impact (what positive changes were made and if those changes had been sustained). Training data was analysed and a short survey was compiled to gauge practitioners' and managers' views on the updated procedure. It was found that skills, knowledge and confidence scores all increased following the training and narrative feedback from the survey indicated further improvements that could be made in practice.



National Reviews

We continue to incorporate the learning from national reports and out of area reviews into our work. For example, they are considered during Rapid Reviews; national learning influenced the updates of local document templates; and other Partnership subgroups continue to incorporate national learning into their work.

Following the annual publication of national Serious Incident Notifications data in May 2023, a report allowing for comparison of Leicestershire and Rutland notification data with that of other areas for 2022-23 was presented to the Case Review Group meeting.

In June 2023, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and Foundations – What Works Centre for Children and Families published “Working with male carers to reduce non-accidental injury to infants under one year old”. This further informed local work already in progress around the myth of invisible of men.

In response to the publication of Working Together 2023 in December 2023, all Leicestershire & Rutland templates have been updated so that they are in line with Working Together 2023. The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Framework and Practice Guidance is being updated so that it reflects Working Together 2023.



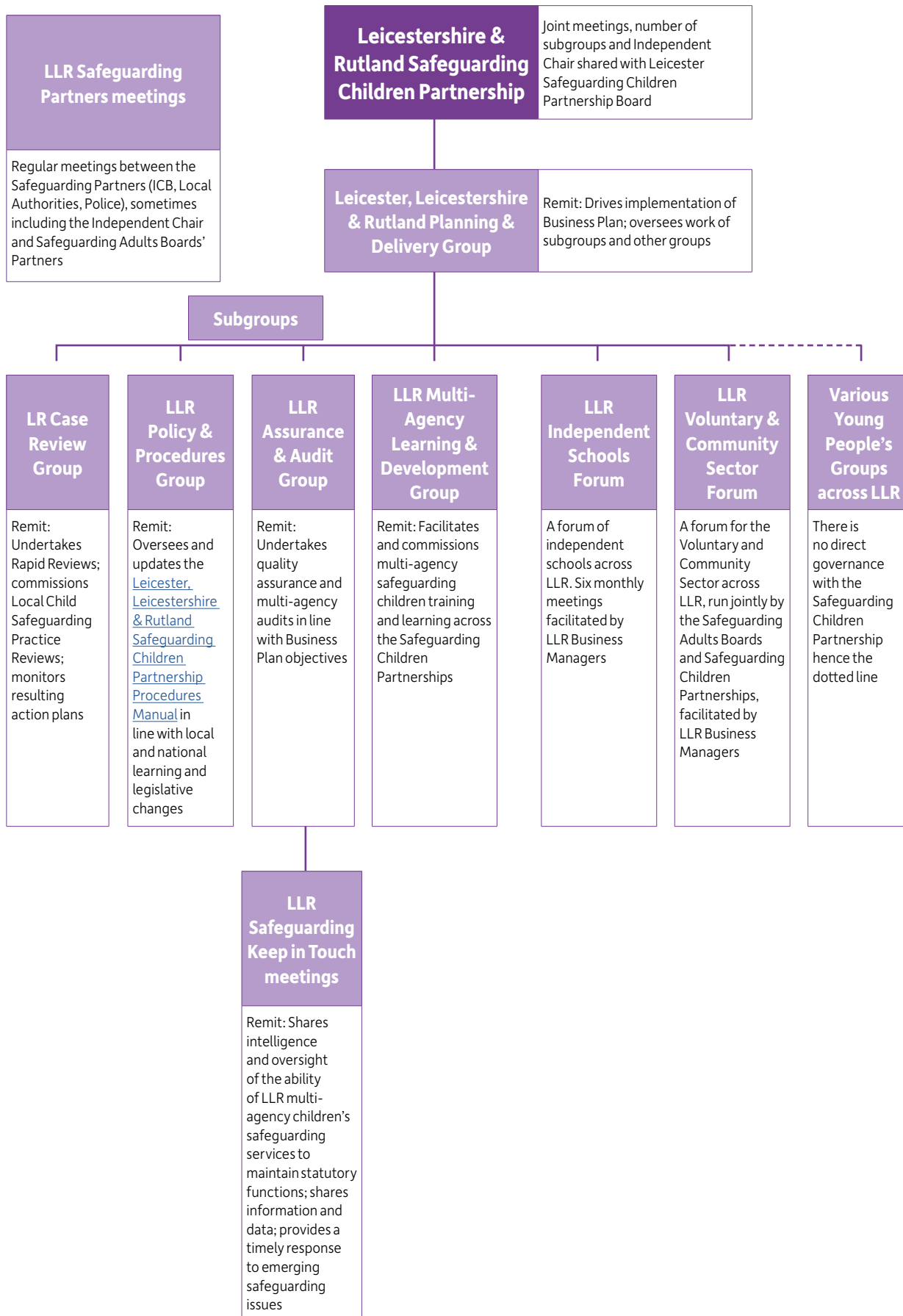
Appendix 1

Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership and its subgroups

The table below provides details of agencies that are represented on the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership and their attendance at Partnership meetings in 2023-24. It may be that the Lead Officer delegated attendance to another officer.

| Agency | Attendance at meetings | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------|------------|
| | July 2023 | October 2023 | March 2024 |
| Leicestershire Children's Social Care | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Rutland Children's Social Care | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Leicestershire Police | ✓ | ✓ | Apologies |
| Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Integrated Care Board (LLR ICB) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) | Apologies | Apologies | Apologies |
| Districts and Borough Councils | ✓ | ✓ | Apologies |
| East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) | ✓ | Apologies | Apologies |
| Leicestershire Adults Social Care | ✓ | ✓ | Apologies |
| Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service (LFRS) | Apologies | Apologies | ✓ |
| Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| National Probation Service (NPS) | ✓ | ✓ | Apologies |
| Schools | Apologies | Apologies | Apologies |
| University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) | ✓ | Apologies | ✓ |
| Leicestershire Lead Member | Apologies | Apologies | ✓ |
| Rutland Lead Member | ✓ | Apologies | ✓ |

The structure chart below demonstrates the governance of the Partnership and its subgroups.



Appendix 2 - Finance

The work of the Safeguarding Children Partnership is supported by the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office that also supports the Safeguarding Adults Board and carries out Domestic Homicide Reviews for Community Safety Partnerships in Leicestershire & Rutland. The Safeguarding Children Partnership is funded by contributions from its partners.

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

The contributions from partners for the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board as a whole for 2023/24 can be seen below alongside contributions for the previous year:

| | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Leicestershire County Council | £119,266 | £119,266 |
| Rutland County Council | £50,367 | £50,367 |
| Leicestershire Police | £97,500 | £97,500 |
| Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Integrated Care Board (LLR ICB) | £97,500 | £97,500 |
| Total income for SCP and SAB | £364,633 | £364,633 |

Overall expenditure across the SCP and SAB for 2023/24 was £356,749. Expenditure for the SCP was apportioned as follows:

| | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Staffing | £115,357 | £130,010 |
| Independent Advisor | £6,562 | £10,396 |
| Support Services | £1,090 | £3,600 |
| Operating Costs | £8,055 | £7,605 |
| Training | £48,550 | £54,660 |
| Case Reviews | £5,800 | £0 |
| Total Expenditure | £185,414 | £206,271 |

*In 2022-23, the Safeguarding Children Partnership commissioned an Independent Advisor, but in 2023-24 it commissioned an Independent Chair.

Staffing costs increased as a result of the agreed Leicestershire County Council pay award (as the staff are hosted by this Local Authority). The cost of the Independent Chair was lower in 2022-23 because there was a vacancy for part of the year. There was no expenditure on Case Reviews because no Rapid Reviews resulted in the commissioning of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and the only existing review of this type is on hold.

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