

# Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2024-25

## Foreword

We are pleased to present this report of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

In 2023, there was the publication of the current version of the statutory guidance, Working Together, and national reforms to Children's Social Care began. The implementation of the reforms continues, as set out in the Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive policy paper published in November 2024, and the upcoming Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. In 2024-25, the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership, alongside the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership, has embedded changes at a system and practice level influenced by these national updates.

In December 2024, we published our updated Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. In particular, these better reflect the role that Education and the Voluntary and Community Sector play in safeguarding children and address how these sectors influence work at both a strategic and operational level.

In 2024-25, we have seen our Local Authorities receive strong inspection results. We have also seen excellent examples of evidence-led multi-agency collaborative practice, working to the principle of "a shared responsibility" highlighted in Working Together 2023.

Across 2025-26, we will continue to implement quite significant changes to our quality assurance, scrutiny and communication and engagement arrangements, with a new Performance Group and Audit Group and the commissioning of a Young Scrutineer. This demonstrates our continued commitment to ensuring our work is led both by the voices and lived experiences of the children and families we seek to support and keep safe.

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

The Safeguarding Partners for Leicestershire & Rutland

**Include signatures and logos of partners – Leicestershire County Council, Rutland County Council, LLR Integrated Care Board, Leicestershire Police**

Key Achievements in 2024-25	Key Challenges in 2024-25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formed a new Education Subgroup, which promotes and strengthens the role of local schools, colleges, early years and childcare settings in safeguarding arrangements</li> <li>Expanded the reach and membership of the Leicester,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing the changes required as a result of Working Together 2023 and ensuring that the measures agreed were suitable and proportionate</li> <li>Progressing our Transitional Safeguarding Business Priority. The</li> </ul>

<p>Leicestershire &amp; Rutland Voluntary and Community Sector Forum to strengthen engagement with this sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quickly addressed and started to implement any learning required as a result of national reviews published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel</li> <li>• Delivered high quality and well-attended large scale training events alongside our regular training programme</li> </ul>	<p>issues faced have been addressed and for 2025-26 there will be new vigour and focus to this work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having the capacity to fulfil our audit schedule, in light of competing priorities linked to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection programme. As a result of the issues faced, for 2025-26, the work of the Assurance and Audit Group will be split and taken up by two separate subgroups – the Performance Group and the Audit Group</li> </ul>
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*"I am so beyond grateful for the support that you've given me, the boost in confidence when I've needed it, the way that I know you've championed me to management above you, the way you've never looked down on me with any judgement and the many sleepless nights you've had over our family situations!"*

Feedback from Leicestershire parent/carer

*"To our social worker and social worker assistant, you were awesome today. As hard as it is, you have put this beautiful little girl first and that will be the most important decision anyone has ever done for her. So thank you. I wanted to say it but I would have cried saying it and it was emotional."*

Feedback from Rutland parent/carer

## Observations from our Independent Scrutineer

Throughout the period April 2024 to March 2025, I have continued to work alongside members of the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland (LLR) Partnerships in the role of Independent Scrutineer. The Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships work closely together. This results in the ability to maximise learning to continuously improve safeguarding practice, align processes and use the available resources efficiently. The LLR Partnerships have been very open to scrutiny, which has resulted in reflection and a clear commitment to drive improvements, ensuring the effectiveness and quality of the multi-agency arrangements in effectively safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

In undertaking scrutiny, a scrutiny framework has been established and agreed by partners. The scrutiny framework reflects the functions as described in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and adopts the 'Six Steps to Independent scrutiny' model. The framework aligns with the priorities identified and documented in the [Joint Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Plan](#). The scrutiny plan continues over a two-year period to allow evidence of both progression of areas identified as priorities and impact of the activity.

During the last year of undertaking the role, I have attended a range of meetings of the Partnerships, scrutinised agendas, minutes and a range of reports.

I have participated in a range of meetings with Safeguarding Partners to discuss governance, areas of priority, safeguarding activity, staffing and the funding requirements of the Partnerships.

In undertaking scrutiny, I have had the pleasure of meeting a range of partners, professionals and of hearing the voice of children. This has allowed the opportunity of triangulating the evidence of the effectiveness of the work undertaken by the Partnerships.

As part of the scrutiny framework, I have undertaken a range of scrutiny activity to support my assessment of the strength of the Partnerships' safeguarding arrangements.

Areas of scrutiny have included:

- ❖ Scrutiny of work undertaken by the subgroups to progress the identified priorities
- ❖ Scrutiny of the Partnerships' data and quality assurance processes, providing challenge and advice regarding areas of development
- ❖ Scrutiny of the readiness of the Partnerships to respond to the requirements of Working Together (2023)
- ❖ Scrutiny of the rapid review and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review process and activity undertaken to embed the emerging learning and assess impact
- ❖ Supporting the work undertaken to continually progress a joined up approach across the Safeguarding Children Partnerships (SCPs) and Safeguarding

Adults Boards (SABs) with a focus upon the safeguarding of those transitioning to adulthood

- ❖ Scrutiny of approaches used to hear the voice of children, supporting the plans to develop opportunities for children and those transitioning to adulthood to support the Partnerships as young scrutineers
- ❖ Ongoing scrutiny of the embedding of the developments in response to Working Together 2023
- ❖ Participation in regional and national fora

In triangulating the findings from the range of scrutiny activity, there is clear evidence of robust child focused leadership with commitment to ensuring that children in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.

The system of rotating chairing responsibilities among partners, introduced within the last year, is effective. Education have an increasingly strong voice and all statutory partners are fully committed to the safeguarding ambitions of the Partnerships. There is a culture of openness, respectful challenge, and a willingness to learn and continually improve.

In the coming year, the Partnerships face a number of challenges including the need to consider the local response to implementing the Children's Social Care reforms alongside significant changes within partner organisations. The impact of such changes needs ongoing monitoring.

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. Given the plans to recruit a young scrutineer are progressing, I look forward to working with them to ensure the voices of children, young people and families continue to inform the Partnerships' work.

While challenges lie ahead, I have confidence in the ability of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships to build upon their strengths and I will continue to scrutinise and support the Partnerships in navigating risks and challenges.

Amanda Boodhoo  
Independent Scrutineer

## The Partnership

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) brings together organisations across the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland with a vision.

Our vision is for children and young people in Leicestershire and Rutland to be safe, well and achieve their full potential.

The local Safeguarding Children Partnership was established in 2019 to oversee the multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements under the [Children Act 2004](#), as amended by the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements should be based on Local Authority areas. Arrangements can cover two or more local authority boundaries by agreement. As we share a number of partners with Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), we now publish joint [Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) (MASA). In 2024-25, we reviewed our arrangements in light of the updated government guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#). These were re-published in December 2024, in line with government timescales.

Our principles and aims across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland are:

- for clear accountability
- for clear and demonstrable influence
- for equitable and fair contributions from all partners

Amendments made by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to the Children Act 2004 placed duties on Police, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and Local Authorities, as statutory safeguarding partners. Safeguarding partners are under a duty to make arrangements to work together, and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

In accordance with the requirements and inclusions outlined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#),<sup>1</sup> these arrangements aim to ensure that at a local level:

- there is a clear, shared vision for how to improve outcomes for children locally across all levels of need and all types of harm
- when a child is identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm there is a prompt, appropriate and effective response to ensure the protection and support of the child
- organisations and agencies are challenged appropriately, effectively holding one another to account

<sup>1</sup> [Working Together 2023](#), page 24, paragraph 40.

- the voice of children and families combined with the knowledge of experienced practitioners and insights from data, provides a greater understanding of the areas of strength and/or improvement within arrangements and practice
- information is sought, analysed, shared, and broken down by protected characteristics to facilitate more accurate and timely decision-making for children and families, and to understand outcomes for different communities of children
- effective collection, sharing and analysis of data, enables early identification of new safeguarding risks, issues, emerging threats, and joined-up responses across relevant agencies
- senior leaders promote and embed a learning culture which supports local services to become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- senior leaders have a good knowledge and understanding about the quality of local practice and its impact on children and families

Further information about the structure and governance of the Safeguarding Children Partnership is available in the “Progress against statutory guidance” section of the report.

Working Together 2023 states that “Safeguarding partners must jointly report on the activity they have undertaken in 12-month period”.<sup>2</sup> This Yearly Report fulfils this requirement.

<sup>2</sup> [Working Together 2023](#), page 40, paragraph 106.

## Area profile

### Local Context

Include map used in Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements document

The sources of information for this section are the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs), which analyse the health needs of populations, and the latest statistics on school and pupil numbers published by the Department for Education.<sup>3</sup>

#### Leicestershire

Leicestershire, not including Leicester City, is made up of seven council areas: Blaby District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Harborough District Council, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, Melton Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

The Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2022-2025,<sup>4</sup> specifically the Demography chapter published in August 2024,<sup>5</sup> states that:

- The total population of Leicestershire in 2023 was 734,015, an increase of 1.5% since 2022. There were approximately 8,475 more females (371,245) than males (362,770).
- In 2023 Charnwood was estimated to have the largest population (188,010) of the Leicestershire districts, followed by Hinckley and Bosworth (114,970). Melton had the smallest population (53,237).
- There were 120,090 children under the age of 15 in Leicestershire in 2023 (16.4% of the population).
- In comparison to England, the population of the county is less likely to be very young (under 14s) and younger adults (25-39 age bands) and slightly more likely to be older adults (50-74 age bands).
- The majority of the county population (87.5%) belongs to the white ethnic group (including the white Irish ethnic group). This equates to 623,429 people. The next largest ethnic group in Leicestershire is the Asian ethnic group (8.2%), followed by the mixed or multiple ethnic group (2.2%) and the black ethnic group (1.1%).
- According to the 2019 Indices of Deprivation, Leicestershire is not deprived overall; the county is ranked 137<sup>th</sup> out of 152 upper tier authorities in England for Multiple Deprivation, where 1<sup>st</sup> is the most deprived. However, pockets of significant deprivation exist; four neighbourhoods in the county fall within the

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-and-joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategies-explained> and <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2024-25>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lsr-online.org/leicestershire-2022-2025-jsna>

<sup>5</sup> [Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2022-25, Demography](#) (August 2024), pages ii-v.

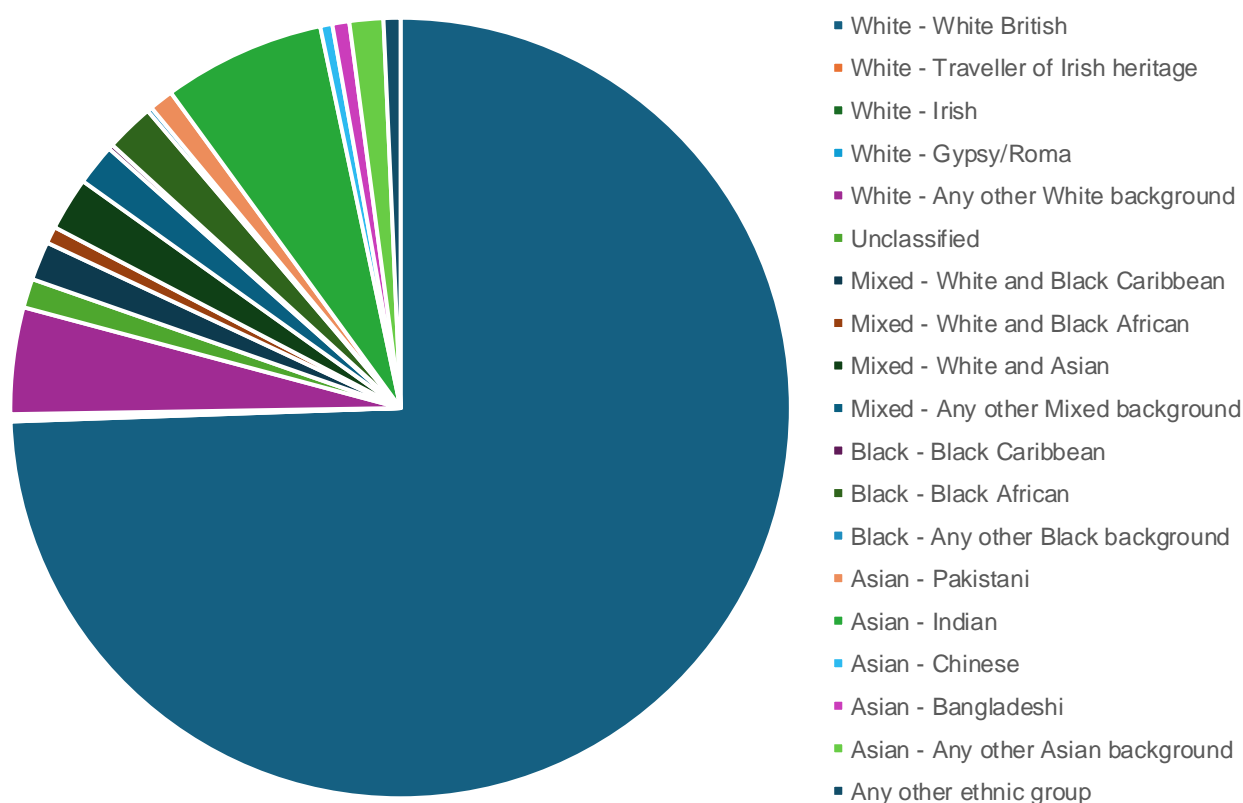


most deprived decile in England. These areas can be found in Loughborough and Coalville.

Statistics on school and pupil numbers for the Academic Year 2024-25, published by the Department for Education,<sup>6</sup> show that:

- There were 100,791 pupils in Leicestershire schools.
- The majority of the school population (74.3%) belongs to the White British ethnic group.
- English is known or believed to be the first language of 88.7% of pupils, with 9.7% of pupils known or believed to have a first language other than English and 1.6% where language is unclassified.

Percentage of pupils in Leicestershire Schools by Ethnicity



<sup>6</sup> See <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2024-25>

## Rutland

The Rutland Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2022-2025,<sup>7</sup> specifically the Demography and Growth chapter published in May 2023,<sup>8</sup> states that:

- According to the 2021 Census, the total population of Rutland in 2021 was 41,049, an increase of 9.8% since 2011. This rate of increase is well above the national increase of 6.6%.
- There were approximately 1,095 fewer females (19,977) than males (21,072).
- In 2021, 4.0% of the population were aged 0-4 (1,639 people), 17.7% were aged 5-19 (7,273 people), 53.0% were working age (21,747 people aged 20-64) and 25.3% were older than 65+. This includes 3.5% of the total population that was aged 85 and over (1,447 people).
- Overall, the Rutland population is weighted towards older adults (those aged 50 plus) with 25.3% in the 65+ age bands compared to 18.4% in England.
- The vast majority of the county population (94.8%) belong to White ethnicities, including White British and White Irish. This equates to 38,909 people. The next largest ethnic group in Rutland is Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group, which constitutes 1.8% of the population, followed by Asian with 1.5%, Black, with 1.3% and Other Ethnic Group with 0.5%.
- Rutland is ranked 303<sup>rd</sup> out of 317 local authorities in England for Multiple Deprivation, where 1<sup>st</sup> is the most deprived. Though there are pockets of rural and other elements of deprivation in areas of the county. One neighbourhood in the county falls within the 50% most deprived in England.

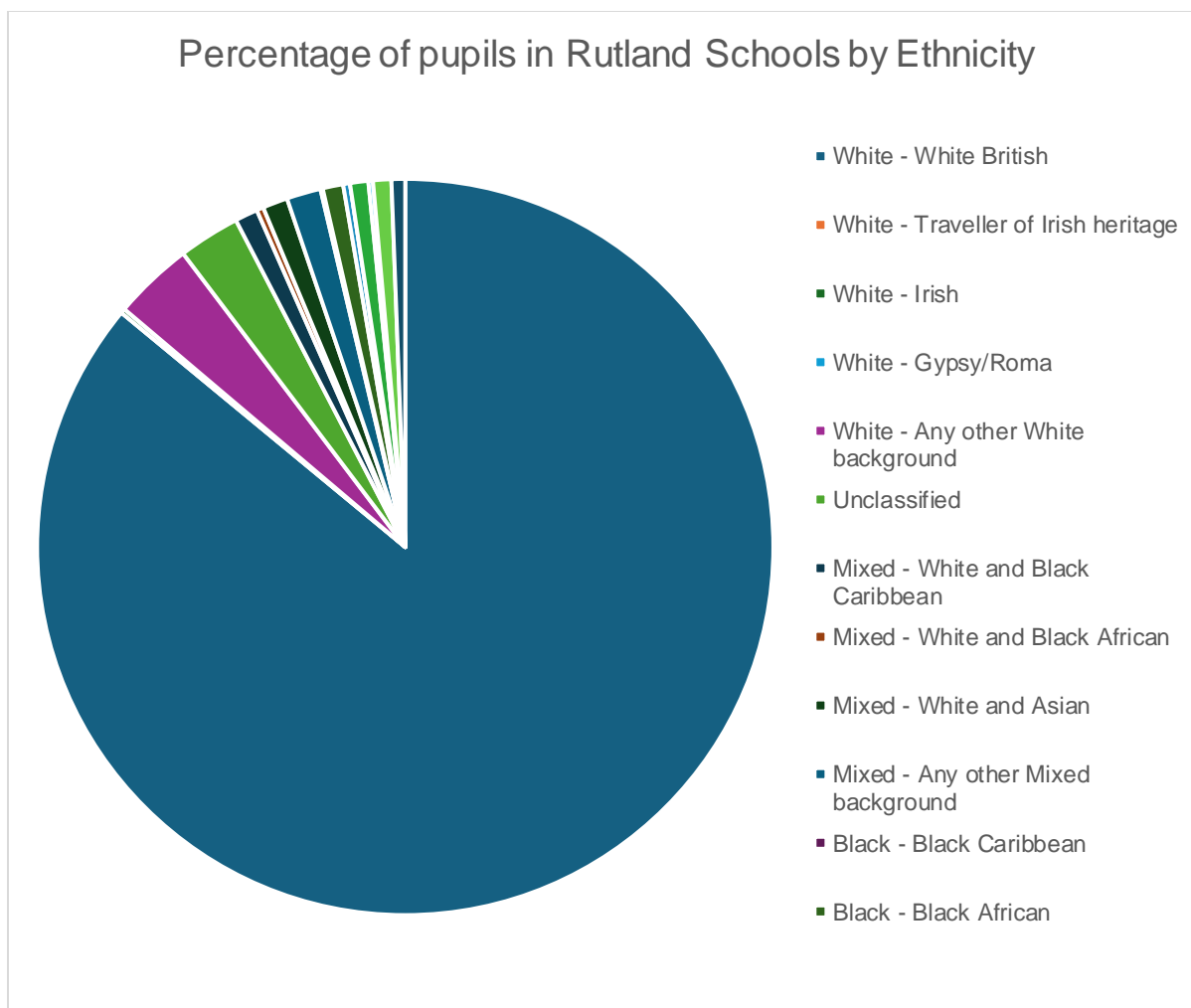
Statistics on school and pupil numbers for the Academic Year 2024-25, published by the Department for Education,<sup>9</sup> show that:

- There were 5,881 pupils in Rutland schools.
- The majority of the school population (85.9%) belongs to the White British ethnic group.
- English is known or believed to be the first language of 94.7% of pupils, with 5.2% of pupils known or believed to have a first language other than English and 0.1% where language is unclassified.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.lsr-online.org/joint-strategic-needs-assessment>

<sup>8</sup> [Rutland Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023, Demography and Growth](#) (May 2023), pages iii, 9 and 19.

<sup>9</sup> See <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2024-25>



### Review of use of restraint in secure establishments

There are no Youth Custody homes within the local authority areas but those which are in the region which house young people from the area will be required to report on arrangements as and when necessary.

### Recent Inspections

#### Leicestershire County Council Children and Family Services

Following an Ofsted inspection that took place in April 2024, Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Services were rated as outstanding by Ofsted.<sup>10</sup>

The [full report](#) was published on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

In the report, inspectors praised work to build “*strong and long-lasting relationships*” with children and families which lead to many families achieving “*positive changes*”

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/news/outstanding-rating-for-leicestershires-children-and-family-services>.

in their lives. They also said a culture has been created by Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Services which puts the "*experiences and progress of children at the heart of social work practice*". Ofsted also looked at the work to protect and safeguard children, work that enables families to stay together and the experiences and progress of both children in care and care leavers.

### Rutland Children's Services

Ofsted reviewed Rutland's Children's Services in April 2024 to look at children and young people's experiences of the help, protection and care given to them by workers at the local authority.<sup>11</sup> The services were rated as good by Ofsted.

The [full report](#) was published on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

These services were last inspected in 2020, when they were judged to require improvement. The Council's new judgement means that more children are now getting better help and support.

The report notes that council workers are skilled at listening and enjoy their work, helping children to become happier and safer. Inspectors also noted that social workers in Rutland have good relationships with the children they support and work with them in a variety of creative ways, depending on their needs. Children in Care and Care Leavers benefit from "excellent" life story work that helps them to understand their history.

The report acknowledges there is more work to be done in this important area and that some children have too many changes in social worker. In both cases, senior leaders are already aware and actively working to address these challenges.

## **Multi-Agency Collaborations**

### Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs)

Joint Targeted Area Inspections are carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).<sup>12</sup>

Locally, a JTAI has not been requested or carried out since the process was implemented. However, supported by the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships, multi-agency partners carry out audits on current JTAI themes to measure their effectiveness and consider improvements.

In Summer 2024, the Planning & Delivery Group received the findings from the Serious Youth Violence and Child Exploitation audit – see the section on the

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/council-news/2024/07/ofsted-report-highlights-quality-childrens-services-rutland>.

<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-targeted-area-inspection-of-the-multi-agency-response-to-identification-of-initial-need-and-risk-2/joint-targeted-area-inspection-of-the-multi-agency-response-to-identification-of-initial-need-and-risk>.

“Keeping Adolescents Safe / Supporting Safe Adolescents” business plan priority for further information.

A new programme of Joint Target Area Inspections (JTAs) started in autumn 2024, with the focus being on the multi-agency response to children who are victims of domestic abuse. Since JTAs last focused on this theme in 2016, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has made clear that children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right if they have seen, heard or experienced the effect of the abuse.

As a result, Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland agencies carried out an audit of domestic abuse cases in December 2024. Single agency learning has been identified and is being taken forward.

### **Strengthening multi-agency collaboration**



An excellent example of effective partnership collaboration has been showcased by Leicestershire Family Help and a Primary Care Network. As a result of community engagement activity across 2023-24, the Family Hubs' Engagement Workers established a relationship with a Practice Manager from a Primary Care Network, who has responsibility for a number of surgeries across Melton and South Charnwood. It was agreed that there could be an opportunity for a collaborative approach to support a universal cohort of families who typically might book clinical appointment time to seek advice often linked to key public health messages.

As Family Hubs already ran universal stay and play sessions run by volunteers, it was proposed that these sessions became the natural forum to host general information sessions, which would be delivered by key health staff.

The first session was attended by approximately 38 parents and children. Topics covered were vaccinations, in particular whooping cough (due to a rise in cases in Nottinghamshire) and measles, delivered by a Doctor and Lead Vaccination Nurse. The session was felt to be a success, so much so that additional sessions were agreed, and the focus was on winter illnesses, self-care at home and the different services available (GP, Pharmacy, 111). 18 families attended the winter illness session, which also covered sleep patterns, constipation, potty training, viral infections, ADHD/Autism concerns and eczema. The Doctor who hosted the session estimated that, from the group of parents that attended, approximately a third would have typically made an appointment. These appointments were no longer required as a result of this information sharing opportunity.

The team are having conversations to consider how to further develop this offer that ensures they can continue to raise community resilience, increase awareness of Family Hubs and how to access support, but more importantly to continue to develop

collaborative approaches in local areas to maintain effective working relationships that benefit children and their families.

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## Progress against statutory guidance

### Implementation of changes set out in statutory guidance

In 2024-25, the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership, alongside the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership, reviewed their [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) in light of the updated government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The review particularly considered:

- Reflecting the role that Education plays in safeguarding children
- Reflecting the role that the Voluntary and Community Sector plays in safeguarding children
- The role of Safeguarding Partners – Lead and Delegated
- The role of Partnership Chair
- Updating Scrutiny arrangements.

### Activities achieved

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships have strengthened the role of Education within the partnerships, with schools, early years and other settings now a core part of their arrangements.<sup>13</sup> An LLR Education Group has been formed. Further information is provided below.

The reach and membership of the LLR Voluntary and Community Sector Forum has been expanded. It runs three times within each business year, and jointly with the local Safeguarding Adults Boards. It shares safeguarding updates with the Voluntary and Community Sector, faith-based organisations, and sport clubs / organisations, promoting the welfare of local children and adults with care and support needs. The qualitative feedback that members of the Forum provide can shape future agenda items and areas of focus for the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Strategic leadership, and accountability within the Safeguarding Children Partnerships, is provided by the Lead Safeguarding Partners. Working Together 2023 defines Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) as Chief Executives of Local Authorities, Chief Executives of Integrated Care Boards, and Chief Officers of Police forces.<sup>14</sup> Each Lead Safeguarding Partner should appoint a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) for its agency, sufficiently senior to make decisions on behalf of the Lead Safeguarding Partner and hold their organisation to account.<sup>15</sup> The Lead Safeguarding Partners and Delegated Safeguarding Partners are documented in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.<sup>16</sup>

Previously, the Safeguarding Children Partnerships were chaired by an Independent Chair. As advised in Working Together 2023, a clearer distinction has been made between the leadership and scrutiny roles.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the Lead Safeguarding Partners have appointed the role of Partnership Chair for the local multi-agency

<sup>13</sup> [Working Together 2023](#), page 33, paragraph 76.

<sup>14</sup> [Working Together 2023](#), page 24, paragraph 48.

<sup>15</sup> [Working Together 2023](#), page 28, paragraph 56.

<sup>16</sup> [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) (December 2024), page 8.

<sup>17</sup> [Working Together 2023](#), page 29, paragraph 61.

arrangements to individual Delegated Safeguarding Partners, rotating on an annual basis.

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships are now supported by an Independent Scrutineer, rather than an Independent Chair.

### Impact of the activities

The new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements recognise the central role that Education play in safeguarding children and ensure a more rigorous and effective independent scrutiny function, which provides challenge to local safeguarding partners.

### Future Plans

A Young Scrutineer will be appointed to work alongside our Independent Scrutineer to ensure the views and experience of a range of children across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are at the centre of the work of the partnerships. They will provide independent scrutiny from the perspective of a young person within a broader independent scrutiny framework and hold partnership members to account bringing challenge from a young person's perspective.

### **Updates to published arrangements**

In line with Working Together 2023, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements will be updated when there are key changes, such as changes to the Lead Safeguarding Partners, or the list of relevant agencies, and any updates will be sent to the Department for Education.<sup>18</sup>

### **Representation of Education sector**

#### Operational level

In the earlier part of 2024-25, the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships continued to run their LLR Independent Schools Forum. It met every six months and its purpose was to share information, with the schools selecting safeguarding topics for discussion that were specific to them.

The advent of the LLR Education Group recognises that all local schools (including independent schools, academies, and free schools), colleges, early years and childcare settings, and other educational providers (including alternative provision) are relevant agencies for the purpose of our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. They are included in the local safeguarding arrangements through this subgroup, which promotes education engagement within the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and coordinates what is done across the education sector for the purposes of safeguarding. Safeguarding themes already discussed include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and healthier screen time.

<sup>18</sup> [Working Together 2023](#), page 40, paragraph 105.



For several years, a representative from the Leicestershire Safeguarding in Education team has been a standing member on other subgroups, including the Case Review Group, Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group, and the Assurance and Audit Group. The plan is for this to continue. They support schools in submitting Rapid Review responses and audit information, as well as working to develop the learning which is taken from these processes. In 2024-25, they have been a key member of a Task & Finish Group working on a new procedure on safeguarding children with complex health needs.

### Strategic level

For many years, the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership has included representatives from primary and secondary schools and further education from both areas on its membership.

The new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements strengthen the role of Education on the partnership. The Chair of the LLR Education Subgroup will now join the Delegated Safeguarding Partners at the LLR Meeting of Safeguarding Partners.

### **Partnership Chair**

The Lead Safeguarding Partners appoint the role of Partnership Chair to individual Delegated Safeguarding Partners, rotating on an annual basis. Chairs and Deputy Chairs have been agreed until 2029-30 and their names are available via the LLR Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.<sup>19</sup>

### **Partnership Governance Structure**

The membership of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership comprises of Safeguarding Partners and other relevant agencies, including Education, 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.

Delegated Safeguarding Partners and the Chair of the LLR Education Subgroup attend the LLR Safeguarding Partners meeting. This meeting considers shared matters of governance, funding, and sharing intelligence as well as setting the forward agenda for meetings of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships. The Independent Scrutineer and Business Managers are invited to these meetings, where appropriate. Up to half of these meetings are joint with the statutory partners

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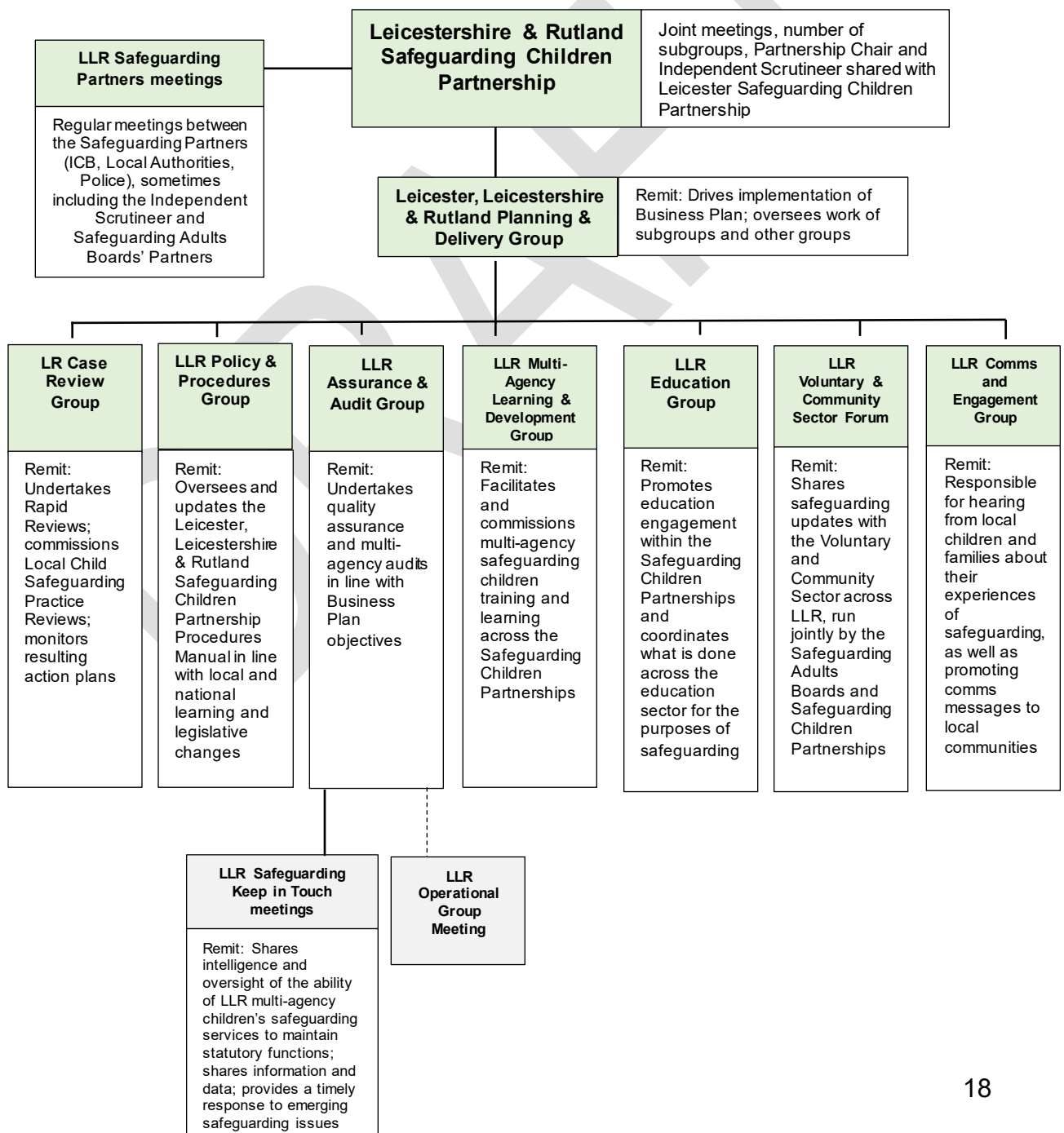
<sup>19</sup> [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) (December 2024), page 8.

of the local Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) and the Independent Chair of the local SABs is invited to join these meetings, where appropriate.

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



The interface between the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and other local strategic boards ensures assurance and joint work, where appropriate. The Safeguarding Children Partnerships receive the Annual Report of the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). They are provided with annual updates, within dedicated agenda items in meetings, from Domestic Abuse Boards and the Adolescence Safety and Diversion Board, which sits under the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) and works to prevent and reduce involvement in violence through safeguarding, early intervention and diversion. The Yearly Report of the Safeguarding Children Partnership is shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board to highlight safeguarding matters relevant to their work and to support understanding and effective partnership working across systems. The 8 Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Leicestershire and Rutland commission the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) to manage the Domestic Homicide Review process. Relevant learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews is fed into the work of the SCP Subgroups.

### **Financial breakdown and value for money**

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 was 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 for 2024-25 can be seen below alongside contributions for the previous year:**

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
Leicestershire County Council	£66,258	£66,258
Rutland County Council	£30,000	£30,000
Leicestershire Police	£53,417	£53,417
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Integrated Care Board (LLR ICB)	£53,417	£53,417
<b>Total income for SCP</b>	<b>£203,092</b>	<b>£203,092</b>

**Expenditure for the SCP was apportioned as follows:**

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
Staffing	£130,010	£147,121
Independent Advisor/Chair*	£10,396	£13,973
Support Services	£3,600	£1,920

Operating Costs	£7,605	£10,665
Training	£54,660	£70,341
Case Reviews	£0	£2,250
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£206,271</b>	<b>£246,270</b>

\*In 2023-24, the Safeguarding Children Partnership commissioned an Independent Chair, but in 2024-25 it commissioned an Independent Scrutineer.

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 Advisor was higher in 2024-25. Their contract started part way through the previous year hence the lower cost. Throughout the year, the Scrutineer also completed additional work in relation to Working Together 2023. Whilst there was no expenditure on Case Reviews in 2023-24, there was a small cost in 2024-25 in relation to work stemming from a Rapid Review case. Training costs have increased due to the commissioning of a large scale multi-agency training event.

Costs have risen and we spent more than we received from partners' contributions. The shortfall was made up from reserves. Although costs have increased, we believe that the output of the Partnership demonstrates value for money. Despite budget constraints, we have still achieved developments to enhance engagement of Education, the Voluntary Sector, and the Faith and Sports sectors and have introduced new Subgroups into our governance structure.

## Implementation of national reforms

### Children's Social Care reforms

In 2023, reforms to Children's Social Care began, supported by the Stable Homes, Built on Love strategy. The implementation of the reforms continues, as set out in the [Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive](#) policy paper, published in November 2024, and the upcoming Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.<sup>20</sup>

### Family Help

#### Leicestershire

In 2024, Leicestershire County Council's Children & Families Department created a new service – [Family Help](#). It sits alongside Family Safeguarding. This new service was created in response to wider national agendas, such as the [Independent Care Review](#) and [Stable Homes Built on Love](#). Nationally, there were concerns that children on a Child in Need plan had a less consistent approach to those children on Child Protection or those in receipt of targeted early help services.

Family Help was developed to ensure that all Child in Need work flows seamlessly between what was the old Children & Family Wellbeing Service and the old Children's Social Care Locality teams. Family Help focuses on timely support at appropriate levels of intervention for families, with elements of practical hands-on

<sup>20</sup> See Community Care Inform Children: <https://www.ccinform.co.uk/practice-guidance/childrens-social-care-reforms/>

approaches. For more intensive 1-1 support, where possible, there is a focus on matching families with workers who have specific skills needed to meet the needs of the families they support.

- **Family Help** is a service that is relationship-based, offering consistency for children and their families. Where Child in Need level support is required, this work may be allocated to either a Social Worker or a Keyworker from the Targeted part of the service. Where it is a Keyworker, the work will always have social work oversight and direction from the Senior Social Work Oversight Practitioner.
- **Targeted Family Help** is what Leicestershire calls the side of the service that has a focus on targeted earlier intervention. Targeted Family Help is one of many services that makes up the wider early help system in localities – many organisations, such as schools, health visiting, voluntary sector, faith communities, district councils, deliver early help to families.

The different teams that come under the Family Help umbrella are:

- Five Locality Teams, which deliver the Targeted Family Help activities such as family support, 0-2 Pathway and group work
- Family Help Triage Team, which forms the “Front Door” alongside the First Response Children’s Duty team; they work closely together to ensure families get the support that best meets their needs
- [SEND Information, Advice and Support Service](#) (SENDIASS), which is managed through the Family Help Triage Team, and provides independent information, support and advice to parents and young people who are experiencing difficulties with education
- [Family Hubs Team](#), see below
- [Teen Health](#) 11-19 Service, which supports young people through a range of group offers, one-to-one support and drop-in sessions, via all secondary schools in Leicestershire and in community settings
- Extended Domestic Abuse Team, which works all over the county with families involved with First Response, Family Help and Family Safeguarding as well as other agencies including schools, to try and promote a way of working which better supports the whole family where there are concerns about domestic abuse.

### Rutland

In late 2023-24, Rutland changed their structure so that their Targeted Support / Early Help service and front door service became one under a service manager. Whilst they operated a ‘joint’ front door for some time, the structure change strengthened this approach. The purpose of this was to enable more consistency for children and families and to ensure that more support was offered at the right time. As a result, they have offered more consistency to families with workers.

Their Family Help Team have continued working with families for longer and they have co-worked with more families when they have transferred for social work assessment. Through 2025-26, they will continue to strengthen this approach. Through 2024-25, they have strengthened their working relationships in this part of the service further and will continue this work as they implement their Families First.

### Family Hubs

[Family Hubs](#) aim to support any family with children aged 0-19 years, or 25 years for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), who may need help. A Family Hub is not a single service; it is a group of services working together to make sure the right person with the appropriate skills offers their support.

There is a national framework for the delivery of Family Hubs,<sup>21</sup> and this sets out expectations of the types of activity and partnership working that is expected by the Department for Education.

### **Leicestershire**

For Leicestershire families, [Family Hubs](#) are there to present a joined-up approach to requests for support. Many organisations, such as schools, health visiting, voluntary sector, faith communities, district councils, deliver early help to families from their Family Hubs, and they work in partnership to provide the right support at the right time.

For Leicestershire, their developments have indeed included buildings that are known as Family Hubs which can be a 'one stop shop' for advice, information and support where it is needed at the heart of local communities. Targeted Family Help delivers the Family Hubs programme, and many of the Targeted Family Help activities, such as 0-2 Pathway and group work, take place within the Family Hub. The Hubs are also used by other agencies to deliver services – for example, Midwifery, Health Visiting, housing advice, Local Area Coordinators, Police Community Support Officers, voluntary sector groups. This varies from area to area. Within five of Leicestershire's Family Hubs, they also have Community Fridges; these are all run by their volunteers and support reduction of food waste plus are a source of free food for anyone that needs it. Family Help social work teams are co-located or integrated with the Family Hub model to provide expertise to support coordinated and timely responses to emerging safeguarding concerns. Additional more focused safeguarding expertise is available by regular communication with the Family Safeguarding teams which are also aligned to the model.

### **Rutland**

In Rutland, the [Family Hub](#) brings services together in one place to improve access, strengthen connections between families and professionals, and place relationships at the heart of community wellbeing. It is built around a strong Start for Life offer that

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<sup>21</sup> [Family hub model framework 2025-26: Family Hubs and Start for Life programme guide](#), Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education (February 2025).

ensures families get the best possible support from pregnancy through to young adulthood.

The Rutland Family Hub offer includes:

- **Buildings**  
[Oakham Family Hub](#) sits in the Living Well Rutland Service along with the libraries and Adult Learning Service. Together they provide communities and Rutland residents of all ages with support. The Family Hub offers local support for all families, young people, parents and carers. Living Well Rutland spaces, such as the hub and libraries, offer welcoming, inclusive spaces for families to access information, learning opportunities, support services, and community events.
- **Outreach**  
 The Family Hub delivers health and family support services in the community, bringing services to families in their locality because it might be difficult to get to one of the main building-based sites. This might be because someone lives in a more isolated, rural area or perhaps on one of the military bases in the county.
- **Services and support**  
 Services and support are provided which all families can access. These services include face-to-face activities and some digital services and support, including online groups and virtual, interactive learning activities.

### **Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)**

As well as the six priorities set out in the 2023-25 LLR Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Business Plan, it stated that the Assurance and Audit Group would undertake a partnership wide self-assessment in relation to Child Sexual Abuse, linked to national findings on local multi-agency leadership from the [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#) (October 2022). Since the implementation of that Business Plan, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published their national review, [“I wanted them all to notice”: Protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment](#), in November 2024. Consequently, for 2025-26, the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships have signed up to work with the NSPCC (funded by the Home Office) to undertake a local system-wide child sexual abuse (CSA) snapshot. This will be completed to inform the work of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' subgroups to evidence the effectiveness of the local response.

### **National Care Records Service**

The National Care Records Service (NCRS) is a service that allows Health and Social Care professionals to access and update a range of patient and safeguarding information across regional integrated care system (ICS) boundaries. This is being rolled out across LLR: [National Care Records Service - NHS England Digital](#). This



work is progressing at an appropriate pace in line with Information Governance criteria.

### **Moving Forwards**

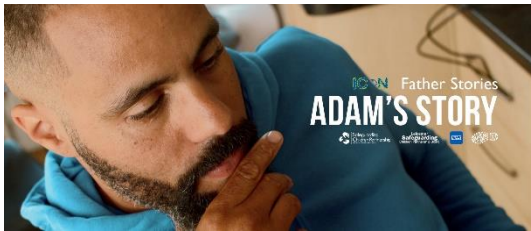
Locally, we will work towards the delivery expectations for safeguarding partners set out in [The Families First Partnership \(FFP\) Programme Guide](#), published in March 2025. Safeguarding partners will receive updates and assurance on the local transformation activity for Family Help, multi-agency child protection, and Family Group Decision Making. The Policy and Procedures Group will lead on publishing a refreshed Thresholds document by the end of the transformation year (March 2026), confirming changes and setting out a broad continuum of Family Help.



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

During 2024-25:

- A range of Father Stories were launched in May 2024. These are short films, performed by actors, which have been scripted by local fathers to reflect their experiences of becoming parents, the impact on their mental health and how to seek support and to manage crying babies. These have been promoted widely with practitioners so that they reflect on working with Dads and use these resources to support them.



- The local Safer Sleep Champions continued to monitor any family feedback provided to frontline practitioners regarding the local [Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool](#). The Tool was updated in January 2025, taking into account feedback from a practitioner survey which sought their experiences of using the tool with families.

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. To acknowledge that engagement could be improved, two new initiatives have been introduced.

A Communication and Engagement Group has been introduced. It is responsible for hearing from local children and families about their experiences of safeguarding, as well as promoting comms messages to local communities. The group does not promote comms to practitioners as this is the role of the Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group.

In the future, the Safeguarding Children Partnership will commission a Young Person Scrutineer.

### **In Leicestershire Children and Family Services:**

- They have a strong focus on voice underpinned by a Departmental Voice Strategy led by the Voice Strategic Group, chaired by the Assistant Director. This sets out a clear vision to embed the voice of children and young people across all services, ensuring they are central to decision making and practice and assists in the development of their services.
- Grounded in the Lundy Model of Participation, it promotes a rights-based, inclusive approach that values lived experiences and cultural identity. The strategy outlines practical tools and principles for practitioners, emphasising collaboration with families, early years settings, and multi-agency partners. It aims to create a culture where listening to children is not only expected but meaningfully acted upon to shape services and improve outcomes.
- Voice champions in each service area play a key role within their teams by keeping a focus on the importance of the voice of the child in team meetings, sharing good practice and resources. All new starters have an introduction to the strategy as part of their induction.
- They maintain direct links with children and young people, through forums including the Corporate Parenting Board, Children in Care Council, After Care Council, Supporting Young People After Care, SEND Youth Forum and County Youth Council for Leicestershire, to make sure that their voice is strongly heard and acted upon. Their Corporate Parenting Board provides opportunity for young people to challenge both their own, but also partner agencies, with a key focus on Health services, Housing and developing a sense of belonging as part of the promise to children. This has, for example, led to care leaver status being accepted as a protected characteristic by the County Council and its District Council partners.
- They hold bespoke drop-in Voice events for young carers and their families across the County, which provide a safe space for them to share their experiences, shape and influence Leicestershire's offer to young carers and allow them to gain insight into their young carers' needs. The Youth Service holds post work evaluations with both children and their parents and carers to gain insight into their perspectives on the impact of work and to identify any areas of improvement in the offer.
- Direct work with children in Leicestershire is a strength. The relationships social workers and professionals across Education and SEND build with children and young people supports Leicestershire to have a better understanding of the child's world and helps them capture their voice. Children's voices are embedded in their assessment process and plans and their practitioners ensure that children's voices and their wishes and feelings are recorded. Leicestershire take time to observe and record their behaviour and experiences, use creative methods to listen and involve children and young people and, through network mapping and safety meetings, ask other professionals or family members for their knowledge of the child or young person. Leicestershire know that no child is too young to have a voice, and

children are involved regardless of age or ability – with understanding what life is like for the child central to analysis of need and risk.

- In March 2024, Leicestershire had their first Voice Week with a number of workshops to support staff skills gathering but also embedding voice into all aspects of work, with key areas of learning focused on voice of fathers, voice of babies and what young people tell them about their lived experiences. Young people regularly form part of their recruitment processes with all senior management roles including a young people's panel. In June 2025, they will be holding a Voice Month with lots of sessions for staff to come together to share how they capture voice and showcase direct work.
- Their thematic audits in Children's Social Care and Targeted Family Help include feedback from children, young people, and their families, where appropriate. They are invited to score the support they receive, and their perspectives directly contribute to the overall audit outcomes. This approach not only strengthens accountability but also reinforces their commitment to co-production, ensuring that lived experience shapes their understanding of practice quality and informs their continuous improvement.
- Their Quality Audits for Children and Young People's Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) focus on the child's voice being pivotal to the plan and a golden thread throughout each section, to ensure professionals are effectively capturing the voice and children and young people are encouraged to help design how they want to be supported. This model is embedded throughout Education and SEND services who are directly working with children and young people.
- An example of how children's views have helped to influence Leicestershire's practice is the development and implementation of the 'Language that cares' approach. Developed and refined and signed off by their Children in Care Council, this has become a toolkit for capturing the views of children about their life in care. This approach is now embedded into the Review of Arrangements process with children telling them what they call the place they live; what they call their carers and what they call the time they spend with their birth family. This has become a central part of the child's care plan overseen by the Independent Reviewing Officer and sets the scene for avoiding jargon and being led by the child.
- They regularly use parents' feedback to develop their services with parental views actively sought to develop and shape their post Adoption support offer, "Brighter Futures". In addition, they have used the voice of parents to support staff training and development, particularly learning from complaints but also capturing what worked well. For example, they have used a video message from a father to demonstrate how important their voice is to engagement and what works best. They seek feedback routinely via the use of QR codes in their closure processes and use this to give an insight into parents' experiences.
- They are currently embarking on the implementation of the Government's new policy requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive

and incorporating the views of parents and children is built into their Families First programme. There is recognition that a number of co-design workshops will be required which will include children, families and partner agencies, to help Leicestershire to understand the level of support currently provided and what this could look like in the future. This will be done by making use of existing groups, surveys and specific events to ensure they engage with a wide range of people representing local communities.

- The Leicestershire SEND Parent Carer Forum is a key strategic partner. The feedback they regularly gather from their parent/carer membership, as well as feedback that is gathered from other parent carer groups, feeds directly into changes in process and services.

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

*"During what has been a very difficult time for myself and the children, both workers have been invaluable. When first approached by this service, I was a little anxious and perhaps had fears of the stereotype that I would be branded a bad mother. I was never made to feel this way. Instead I was supported and encouraged and never judged."*

*"I know from every social worker we have come into contact with that you are amazing at your job and they are extremely lucky to have you within their team. Your passion and drive is rare...don't ever change no matter the work load they put on you because you have been a breath of fresh air to us since meeting you and we never dread your visits like others that come. You have gone above and beyond and whatever we ask of you, you are on it!"*

Feedback from Leicestershire parents/carers

*"This group has helped me flourish and grow. It has changed myself to be a positive and bright person. The worker was a great person to help if I came in really upset. I would definitely recommend this group to anyone. Thank you."*

*"I decided to work with Teen Health because talking about my feelings to someone who I didn't really know made me feel more secure. I felt overwhelmed before coming to Teen Health and speaking to the worker made me feel stronger within myself."*

Feedback from young people about Teen Health Service

#### **In Rutland Children's Services:**

- They reviewed their Corporate Parenting Board with feedback from young people and now have a co-chair arrangement.
- They use feedback from young people to shape activities for all their Aiming High and Young Carer groups. They regularly plan with the groups to listen to their feelings and wishes around session plans and trips.

- Relating to Short Break activities, for the Step To It Group, parents gave feedback that they wanted their children to be included in Social Media posting by Rutland Dance Youth Academy so that they felt more included. This was addressed. Also, parents gave feedback that activities relating to trains would interest children. They are trialling an event with “Trainmaster” this summer, who will provide an interactive track building session.
- Feedback from parents was used to shape the ADHD service that they deliver. They had feedback that it was daunting for some people to attend a support group and that there were parenting issues they needed help with but did not want to share in public. From this, they set up 1-2-1 consultations for parents to access.
- A forthcoming Life Skills Course has also been shaped by the needs of the cohort. Previously, they had delivered a set Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) programme. For this course, they have asked parents and carers to prioritise the needs of their young people. The course has been tailored around the output of this feedback with a stronger emphasis on social skills.
- Rutland has listened to parental feedback around the quality of Personal Assistants to produce the Rutland Personal Assistant Quality Award training.

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

*“I can’t fault my social worker. She is always there when we need her. The kids have phoned her from school when they have needed to talk to her. She seems like she is on top of it and working with us.”*

*“Our social worker is an outstanding social worker and I genuinely cannot say this about many people. He should be absolutely proud of the job he does.”*

*“My social work assistant is amazing. Nothing is ever too much of an ask. If I don’t know where to turn, she always does. This lightens the mental load when you have someone like her to help with tricky tasks, appointments or general questions.”*

Feedback from Rutland parents/carers

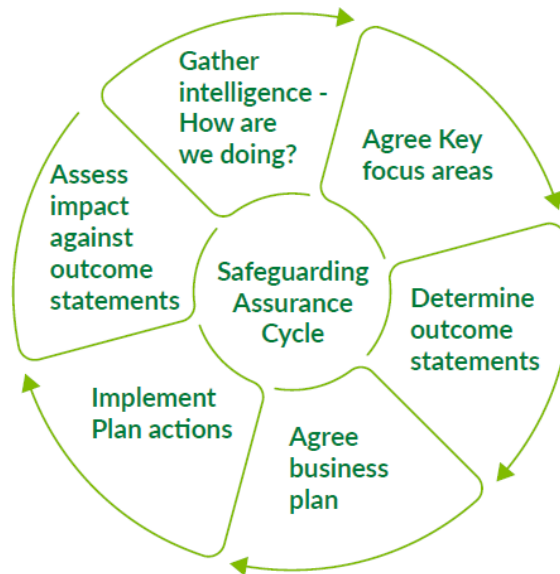
*“I would scale my social worker 9 out 10 as they understand me and I know that they are trying to help me.”*

Feedback from Rutland young person

## The Business 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](#). 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.

Updates on the joint business plan are provided throughout the business year to the Safeguarding Children Partnerships.



Progress on the following priorities was monitored throughout the year and assurance secured that actions were making a positive difference to the lived experience of local children and families.

**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 in 2024-25:

- Continued to raise awareness of the LLR SCP [Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning procedure](#), last updated in April 2024 to reflect learning from local reviews and a [multi-agency audit](#) completed in 2023-24. The procedure was relaunched in June 2024. There were two in-person launch sessions held at County Hall, followed by a session at City Hall in September 2024. There was also a section on the procedure at Safeguarding Matters Live in July 2024. The [video of the session](#) is available on the LLR SCP YouTube Channel.
- Continued to promote and monitor the impact of [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,



Comforting methods can help, It's OK to walk away, and Never, ever shake a baby.

In 2023-24, it was recognised that further assurance of touch point messages being recorded by Maternity and GP services was still required. In 2024-25, an audit was carried out to continue to analyse the embedding of ICON in frontline practice and its impact. There remains issues with the recording of maternity ICON touch points and those for the GP final touch points. These are due to how they can be recorded with maternity systems changing and where the GP touch point is recorded. This is being monitored.

In May 2024, the ICON Father Stories were launched at the Phoenix Cinema and Arts Centre. These are 6 short films performed by actors that have been scripted by local fathers to reflect their experiences of managing crying babies. Research evidence indicates that 70% of AHT is perpetrated by men and, therefore, it is of importance to ensure men are given the ICON message as well as the support and resources to help them manage a crying baby and reduce AHT. Full and shortened versions of the stories are available on the YouTube Channel here: [LLR Safeguarding Children Partnerships - YouTube](#).

The DadPad App, commissioned by Perinatal Mental Health, was made available to all fathers across the sub-region from Summer 2024 and includes national and local ICON information.

An [“Invisible” / “Hidden” / “Unseen” Men: Engaging fathers and male carers in effective practice Resource Pack](#) was published in September 2024 to collate information on local and national resources available.

- Undertook a spotlight audit of babies up to one year old, subject to Child Protection Plans, across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to consider whether there has been an improvement in safeguarding babies in recent years. Further detail on the audit is available in the “Quality Assurance and Service Improvement” section of this report.
- Considered the impact of the local [Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool](#) in Summer 2024, six months after its launch. A frontline practitioner survey was disseminated by the Safer Sleep Champions across the multi-agency partnership to understand how the tool works in practice and how it could be improved and further promoted.
- Through the Section 11 self-assessment process, this year completed using a frontline practitioner survey, assessed evidence of the impact of the Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool and improved approaches to working with males, in response to the publication of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review’s third national review on [“The Myth of Invisible Men”](#).
- Supported “Baby Fortnight” in April 2024, which was held across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. There were two different strands to the fortnight: one for the whole workforce, with a variety of workshops for those working with parents/carers and children from pregnancy into the early years, and the other with a variety of sessions delivered to parents/carers in

Family Hubs. These sessions were delivered by the Family Wellbeing Workers in the Family Help Service, and colleagues working for Active Together.

### Outcomes and Impact:

- ICON is well embedded locally with review and audit work evidencing that ICON messages are being shared widely and appropriately by local agencies. ICON messages are delivered by health staff to **all parents** through the 6 touch points and ICON is **targeted in greater detail** to families with specific vulnerabilities, for example, parents who misuse substances, young parents, and parents of premature babies. The voluntary sector support ICON messages through parenting sessions and ICON is also promoted to male prisoners.
- The ICON Father Stories have been well received with over 500 views on YouTube since their launch.

*“Powerful, beautiful, moving, important. Thank you to you and the team for creating these films. A personal note to the actor who did an incredible job. My partner was a mess after the film. His delivery and authenticity is superb. I’m very honoured to be part of this truly groundbreaking project. Thank you. It’s remarkable and I’m positive it’ll have an impact on many lives.”* – feedback from a father who provided his story for one of the films

- Across the county, 108 families with 126 children attended the Baby Fortnight sessions. At the end of the session, parents were given a QR code so they could give feedback. Over half of those attending completed the survey.

*“It is so important for the babies to interact with other babies and to build on their social skills. I needed this for my baby as we do not go out very much.”*

*“Today has made me think how I can do some activities at home with my Baby that do not have too cost much.”* – feedback from parents/carers attending Baby Fortnight sessions

- The feedback from the survey disseminated by local Safer Sleeping Champions informed the updates to the Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool which was republished in January 2025. The update did not require extensive changes. The updated tool was widely promoted via the Safer Sleeping Champions and the Safeguarding Matters Digest to tie in with national Safer Sleep Week 2025 (10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> March).

The results of the Section 11 frontline practitioner survey, completed in late 2024, indicated that further promotion and awareness raising around the tool is required. 44% of respondents to the online survey<sup>22</sup> answered that they were aware of the tool, with 42% of those saying they had used it in

<sup>22</sup> The majority of practitioners completed the online practitioner survey, but GP Practices participated in a different way, via an Integrated Care Board managed process.



practice. Of those that had used the tool, there were some positive responses, with 58% saying they found it very useful.

*“Good conversation point for parents and also identifies risk in a clear manner and enables practitioners to document their concerns.”*

*“It is a protective measure to help both the child and parents whilst giving useful advice on sleeping arrangements to keep the baby safe. This tool can be used with the parents to also help recognise the pitfalls to co sleeping and how it could impact them and their baby.”* – comments made by survey respondents

- The results of the Section 11 frontline practitioner survey indicated more limited knowledge than hoped of the [“Practice Principles – Engaging Fathers, and Male Carers in Effective Practice”](#), launched in September 2023, with 39% of respondents to the online survey<sup>23</sup> saying they were aware of them. Around a third of those that were aware of the principles had used them and most found them useful.

*“I find the Practice Principles helpful because they guide me in effectively engaging fathers and male carers in a child’s life. They promote inclusive, strength-based approaches, ensuring fathers are active participants in care and support, benefiting the child’s overall well-being.”*

*“Helpful to focus on engaging fathers in all care from checks to consultations. Gives us a better understanding of family situations.”* – comments made by survey respondents

### **Moving Forwards:**

The Safeguarding Babies priority has been in place since 2021-22 and a lot of work has been completed in this time, with the implementation of ICON, an updated Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning procedure and the launch of the Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool. Also, during this time, there have been numerous training events and individual courses, both in person and online, and a range of learning and development resources have been produced and disseminated.

The national analysis of Serious Incident Notifications for 2023-24, published in May 2024, noted that *“Despite the fall in notifications for under 1s, this remained the most common age group in 2024, accounting for 1 in 3 notifications (33%).”*<sup>24</sup> In a change from previous years, and out of line with the national picture, under 1s did not account for the majority of Leicestershire notifications in the same time period.

It is evident that this business priority has achieved a good level of assurance and so it will not be carried over to the 2025-27 Business Plan. It is acknowledged, though, that further awareness raising is required around key guidance and resources, particularly with a large and dynamic workforce. Therefore, babies will

<sup>23</sup> As above.

<sup>24</sup> Serious Incident Notifications: Reporting year 2024, Child Characteristics section (May 2024) – <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/serious-incident-notifications/2024>

always be seen as a key cohort of focus for the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

**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 in 2024-25:**

- Received information and assurance, via the Planning & Delivery Group, regarding the Complex Care Escalation Process, which supports leaders within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to access timely support to progress the care arrangements of local children and young people. This includes the management of care for children and young people with mental health, learning disabilities and/or autism and/or placement needs.
- Formed a Task & Finish Group on “Capturing the Voice of the Child in the Child Protection process”, which considered the experiences of local children subject to safeguarding arrangements and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- Recommendations and learning from the LLR Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) themed review informed the review and update of the LLR SCP [“Practice Guidance: Supporting Children and Young People who Self-Harm and/or have Suicidal Thoughts”](#).
- Continued to consider 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.
- Following the multi-agency audit of referrals to Children’s Social Care (CSC) across the three Local Authorities where the contacts were labelled as ‘child’s mental health’, the Assurance and Audit Group have initiated a follow-up audit on young people open to CAMHS and subject to Child Protection Plan.

**Outcomes and Impact:**

- The CAMHS Young Person’s Team provided information to the Voice of the Child Task & Finish Group on the activities undertaken in capturing the voice of the child. CAMHS sessions, which are in the main face-to-face, include the voice of the child. Several approaches are used to facilitate engagement and communication such as play and alternate communication forms, such as written or flashcards. Also, events have been held such as the ‘my voice’ event, where young people were invited to join poetry and rap

music workshops to share their views on mental health. This was followed by an 'Active' event where young people were invited to join CAMHS staff for professional led physical activities such as yoga and kickboxing with themes of emotional wellbeing fed through and staff available to talk during physical movement. A Learning Disability Nurse is embedded within the team, who offers consultation and support around adapting communication and resources. For young people for whom English is not their first language, interpreters are booked to ensure communication needs are met.

The CAMHS Young Person's Team reported that this work has enabled an understanding of the impact for our young people of often having multiple professionals in their lives. They have voiced that they feel unheard at times or that their paperwork is shared and people draw judgement from this rather than getting to know them. Groups and events such as 'my voice' and 'active' have helped them to break down some of these barriers. They recognise, though, that these were one-off events rather than an ongoing resource they can offer. Having a Learning Disability Nurse in their team has made a huge difference in enabling them to expand their ability to offer differing layers of communication.

*"The nurses in the Young Person's Team have changed my life."*

*"We can't thank you enough for the amazing care, kindness, sensitivity and professionalism you have given to our family especially our child over the last 12 months. When we really needed it, you were there and we felt so supported when things didn't always feel great. You are the epitome of the NHS at its best and we wish you all the very best for the future."* – feedback provided to the CAMHS Team

- The LLR SCP "Practice Guidance: Supporting Children and Young People who Self-Harm and/or have Suicidal Thoughts" includes more information on referral pathways to the Children and Young People Mental Health Triage and Navigation Service which now has a self-referral portal. The updated guidance and procedure were re-launched at the Safeguarding Matters Live event in December 2024.

*"Learning more about self-harming behaviour as I am working with a young person that is displaying these behaviours."* – feedback from attendee of Safeguarding Matters Live regarding what went well and what impact this will have on my work

*"It's brilliant to have. We use with families and children to look at what self-harm means."* – feedback from attendee of VCS Safeguarding Forum

### **Moving Forwards:**

The learning from the audit on young people open to CAMHS and subject to Child Protection Plan will be reported to the Safeguarding Children Partnership and any procedural or training needs will be considered.

Since its inception in 2021-22, it is felt that this business priority has achieved a good level of assurance and so it will not be carried over to the 2025-27 Business

Plan. It is acknowledged, though, that children's mental health continues to be a subject of both local and national importance. Therefore, the Planning & Delivery Group will continue to seek assurance that mental health and safeguarding are effectively addressed together locally by receiving CAMHS highlight reports.

**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 in 2024-25:**

- 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). It has been agreed that the Adolescence Safety and Diversion Board Chair will attend the Safeguarding Children Partnership meetings each year to present, within a dedicated agenda item, the progress of the ASD Board and delivery plans.
- Representatives from the Business Offices and several partner agencies of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships attend meetings of the Child Criminal Exploitation and Serious Violence Delivery Group.
- Received the findings from the multi-agency Serious Youth Violence and Child Exploitation audit, completed as part of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) preparation. Learning was identified regarding the link between school exclusion and exploitation, support required for neurodiverse children, risk assessment and screening and transitional safeguarding. Recommendations have been taken forward with awareness raising with schools and work around risk assessment tools.
- Supported promotion to schools and wider partners of '[Tips for a Healthier Screen Time](#)', which is a useful guide for parents, carers, children and young people produced by Dr Sanjiv Nichani OBE, Senior Consultant Paediatrician at the East Midlands Congenital Heart Centre and Leicester Children's Hospital. It raises awareness of the effects of screen time on the health, well-being and safeguarding of children and young people.
- Linked to the national discussion regarding online harm and abuse, in relation to both children and adults, the December 2024 Safeguarding Matters Live Event was focused on Safeguarding and the Internet, with a presentation on the impact of social media on children, delivered by [Warning Zone](#), and a presentation on Prevent.

**Outcomes and Impact:**

- Assurance work informs training requirements and procedural reviews, with procedures on "Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation" and "Online Safety" being updated in April 2025.

- The focused Safeguarding Matters Live led to some positive feedback about how the information presented will help professionals in practice:

*“Interesting information about online platforms and I will be able to use this knowledge in direct work and safety planning with children and young people.”*

*“Increased knowledge and understanding about online platforms, in particular how many very young children access these.”* – feedback from attendees of Safeguarding Matters Live.

### **Moving Forwards:**

A priority on Harm Outside the Home has been included in the [Business Plan for 2025-27](#), which will build on the progress made since 2022-23 around this priority.

This acknowledges the continued prevalence of this theme nationally, with persistent concern about the themes raised in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), including group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and grooming gangs. Implementation of the Online Safety Act 2023 is also at the forefront of national interest, following the release of the Netflix drama Adolescence, and with Ofcom’s child safety measures due to come into force for social media, search and gaming apps and websites in July 2025.<sup>25</sup> Assurance around the local response to these themes continues to be required.

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

### **What we did in 2024-25:**

- Continued to promote 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.
- Ensured that the impact of abuse and neglect on protective characteristics is analysed during the Rapid Review process.
- Continued to plan 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.

A Task & Finish Group is researching data and information about the demography of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) and engaging with key contacts within those communities who can become advisors. It is recognised that the required learning and development cannot be achieved

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/protecting-children/new-rules-for-a-safer-generation-of-children-online>

through one training course. The group is planning a multi-faceted approach, including consideration of a practitioner workbook/tool/resource of where to go for help/support; delivering some basic awareness information courses/sessions about different communities that live in LLR and the experience of being a migrant – what that journey might have looked like/what some of the terms mean – such as ‘no recourse to public funds’; and providing practice forums and/or resources for building confidence for practitioners working in child protection/safeguarding, informed by local and national learning.

- Started to promote the learning from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s Briefing [“It’s Silent”: Race, racism and safeguarding children](#), published in March 2025. This has been included in the annual Learning from Reviews resource disseminated to Case Review Group members to share within their individual agencies.

#### **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. It is acknowledged, though, that further work is required to improve this understanding, particularly in light of the questions raised by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s Briefing.

#### **Moving Forwards:**

A priority on Belonging has been included in the [Business Plan for 2025-27](#), which will build on the progress made since 2021-22 around this priority. This will continue to seek assurance around the work already in progress and address the questions for Safeguarding Children Partnerships raised in “It’s Silent”: Race, racism and safeguarding children’.

**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.

During 2022-23, a Task and Finish Group, chaired by Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs), developed and promoted [information leaflets for parents and carers](#) about keeping children safe in out of school settings. These leaflets were added to the websites of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

#### **What we did in 2024-25:**

- Safeguarding in out of school settings and the associated leaflets were promoted via schools, as well as at the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Safeguarding Forum at their July 2024 meeting.



- Continued engagement via the local Independent Schools Forum, with the schools selecting topics for discussion that were specific to them. The Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway was a featured theme.
- Continued to expand the reach and membership of the LLR Voluntary and Community Sector Forum, which includes voluntary and community organisations, faith-based organisations, and sport clubs / organisations. Topics covered in 2024-25 included the Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway, delivered by a guest speaker from the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse; Healthier Screen Time; and resolving safeguarding disagreements and how to escalate concerns.
- Received assurance from each Local Authority around the local picture regarding Electively Home Educated children. In May 2024, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published a [Panel Briefing on Safeguarding children in Elective Home Education](#), which highlighted that *“figures from the Department for Education show that as many as 92,000 children were taught from home at the date of the census in England in autumn 2023. This is an increase from an estimated 80,900 in the previous autumn term. It also represents a 67% increase to the estimated 55,000 highlighted in the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) 2019 Elective Home Education Survey.”*<sup>26</sup> The recommendations from the Briefing helped to structure the assurance questions posed to the Local Authorities.

A presentation on Electively Home Educated Children was given at Safeguarding Matters Live in July 2024 and referenced this national report.

In response to national and local learning, in September 2024, the Policy and Procedures Group published new guidance entitled [“Elective Home Education: An Approach to Safeguarding for LLR”](#). Four training briefing sessions were delivered by the Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group, with the last one taking place in February 2025. A [video of one of these sessions](#) has been made into a learning resource.

- Following publication of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s report on [“Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings”](#) (October 2022 and April 2023), the Local Authorities provided the Department for Education with assurance that children within this cohort were safeguarded in their accommodation. In 2024-25, Health audited records of out of area children living in educational residential settings. The audit was undertaken to further this assurance via a review of health records of those children previously audited by the 3 LLR Local Authorities. The outcome was a good piece of assurance in that ongoing review of these children’s health files is now taking place. For further information on this work, please see the section on National Reviews.

<sup>26</sup> [“Safeguarding children in Elective Home Education: Panel Briefing 3”](#), Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (May 2024), page 2.

**Outcomes and Impact:**

- In line with 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, the updated local [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) enhance the systems to engage and collaborate at both the operational and strategic level with these organisations.

The Independent Schools Forum is no longer required, as all local schools (including independent schools, academies, and free schools), colleges, early years and childcare settings, and other educational providers (including alternative provision) are recognised as relevant agencies for the purpose of our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and come together as part of the LLR Education Group. The formation of the subgroup enhances the scope of engagement to encompass awareness raising and operational and strategic influence.

The Voluntary & Community Sector Forum has encouraged and provided better links and increased engagement with faith organisations, sports groups and community organisations. The Forum dedicates time to hearing feedback and input from those organisations about their experiences and knowledge of helping, protecting, and promoting the welfare of local children.

**Moving Forwards:**

It is evident that this business priority has achieved a good level of assurance and has led to the embedding of key, and ongoing, forums and so it will not be carried over to the 2025-27 Business Plan.

The role of Local Authorities around safeguarding and supporting home educated children is due to increase, in light of the new duties and responsibilities to be introduced through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. This includes the creation of a Children not in School Register. These national changes will inform any required changes to local policies and procedures.

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

**What we did in 2024-25:**

- The Task & Finish Group formed to consider if transitional safeguarding is being managed in the most appropriate and effective way continued to meet. To improve governance, the Terms of Reference and membership were refreshed and the group includes representatives from both children's and adults' services. It has been agreed that the group will map the progress made in response to the work plan produced following a previous report on transitional safeguarding.



- Due to issues around the remit of the group and what would be required for an overarching Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland strategy/policy for transitional safeguarding, the work has not progressed as intended.

### **Moving Forwards:**

Transitional safeguarding will be carried forward to both the [SCP Business Plan for 2025-27](#) and SAB Business Plan for 2025-27. It will be incorporated into a thematic priority, on “Belonging” for the SCP and “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion” for the SAB, so that the cohort of children and young people to be addressed can be clearer and more targeted.

Further information on assurance processes, procedures and training, informed by the business priorities, is outlined in the following sections of this report.

### **Analysis of areas with limited progress**

It has been acknowledged above that three existing business priorities will be carried forward to the 2025-27 Business Plan. This is due to both progress locally and additional national learning and reform. Transitional safeguarding saw limited progress. The issues were escalated and the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Boards and the Independent Scrutineer of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships have been engaged to support this work.

## Quality Assurance and Service Improvement

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



### Performance data

Indicators of performance in multi-agency safeguarding have been identified by the Assurance and Audit Group to monitor effectiveness of the operation of the multi-agency safeguarding system. Data is reported by agencies with analysis, utilising existing reports where possible.

#### Leicestershire

<b>Snapshot at end of year 2024-25</b>	<b>Leicestershire</b>
Number of Early Help assessments	1371
Number of Children in Need	3302
Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Education	1071
Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Health	1171
Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Housing	61
Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Police	1841

<b>Snapshot at end of year 2024-25</b>	<b>Leicestershire</b>
Number of Strategy Meetings	2961
Number of Section 47 enquiries	1778
Number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs)	389
Number of Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPCs)	683
Number of Child Protection Plans	506
Number of Children Looked After	694
Number of Care Leavers	711

### Design to make the data above into an infographic

The number of referrals and requests for information from different sectors evidence strong information sharing across partners.

The number of Strategy Discussions rose from 2560 in 2023-24 to 2961 in 2024-25. This was matched by an increase in Section 47 enquiries, from 1660 in 2023-24 to 1778 in 2024-25. 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.

In 2023-24, the numbers of children in care increased. There were 726 children in care on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, an increase of 45 children (6.6%) from 681 children in care on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This was the first annual increase of children in care in Leicestershire since 2021. In 2024-25, the number decreased to 694 to be more in line with the 2022-23 figure.

There has been a further drop in early help assessments – from 3677 in 2021-22, to 2673 in 2022-23, 1415 in 2023-24 and to 1371 in 2024-25. This demonstrates the impact of the measures undertaken by the Family Help Service to support the management of demand and ensure families received the most appropriate support according to their needs. Initiatives, which may have had an impact on the number of early help assessments completed, have included: changes to process on case recording systems; the role of the “Early Responder” at the front door; enhanced provision of information, advice, and signposting to families at the front door, including sending out information packs and onward referral to other agencies; and the embedding of Teen Health, which may have provided alternatives to early help assessments.

Leicestershire have a strong focus on children and families who access their service, with a clear commitment to their experience set out in their Achieving Excellence Plan. This includes their pledge to put children at the centre of everything they do, celebrating their uniqueness and diversity.

During the year 2024-25, Leicestershire have continued to embed specific questions focused on children’s diverse cultural and identity needs, including how ethnicity is

considered in delivering their interventions, as part of a quarterly audit programme. In addition, they have developed specific pieces of work for their children in care who are seeking refuge in the UK to ensure their trauma and specific needs are represented in strategic planning and in their case work. This group of children is overrepresented in their care leaver population and forms 8% of their children in care. To meet this objective, Leicestershire have piloted specific engagement work focused on hearing the voice of children escaping war. This includes both children in care and care leavers who are unaccompanied and children being hosted locally with their families from Ukraine.

Leicestershire know that they have gaps in their ability to report routinely how children from different ethnic groups are represented in service provision beyond these specific groups, who have defined service delivery embedded into their structures. They acknowledge that some groups of children from global majority groups are underrepresented in their Targeted Family Help service, whilst being slightly overrepresented in those children subject to child protection planning. This is particularly the case for children from dual heritage background. Most children in receipt of services are from White British backgrounds.

To support challenge in their approach to meeting children's diverse needs, Leicestershire have established the Race Ethnicity and Excellence Forum (REEF), which provides support and challenge to practitioners, using the expertise based on the lived experience and professional expertise of the panel. Going forwards into 2025-26, they are engaging in the national reform agenda (Families First Programme) and will use specific data from local needs assessments and feedback from families to inform their services offer and structure, to build services that are responsive to the diverse needs of children, young people and families in the county.

#### Rutland

<b>Snapshot at end of year 2024-25</b>	<b>Rutland</b>
Number of Early Help assessments (episodes)	47
Number of Children in Need	58
Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Education	81
Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Health	42
Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Housing	3
Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Police	92
Number of Strategy Meetings	149
Number of Section 47 enquiries	94
Number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs)	41

<b>Snapshot at end of year 2024-25</b>	<b>Rutland</b>
Number of Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPCs)	72
Number of Child Protection Plans	28
Number of Children Looked After	33
Number of Care Leavers	39

### Design to make the data above into an infographic

The number of contacts received in Rutland Children's Social Care has increased in 2024-25 to 1098. The increase in contacts is not of concern to Rutland but is in line with what they would expect. Across the board, they saw more contacts from partner agencies. They saw fewer individuals making referrals and a slight decline in anonymous referrals.

In 2024-25 Rutland progressed more to referral. The number of referrals has begun increasing with 381 referrals. This was in line with a greater complexity of need. They have seen ongoing and increasing concerns regarding mental health and emotional wellbeing for parents and young people. Domestic abuse features widely in the referrals received. Through 2025-26, Rutland will be recruiting a domestic abuse specialist worker and will be looking at what their support offer is around these areas and question what they could do differently to support families earlier who have these presenting issues.

There have been gradual increases in 2024-25 in numbers of children on child protection plans and children looked after.

Again, there has been an increase in care leaver numbers. This is, in part, due to the consistent number of young people from overseas seeking asylum via the national transfer scheme.

There has been a further decrease in Early Help assessments, from 63 in 2023-24 to 47 in 2024-25. This, again, is 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.

Most of the families Rutland work with (86%) are White British. As per the census, 94.8% of their population is White British. The data includes children seeking asylum via the national transfer scheme. Rutland have identified that the proportion of children/families accessing their services in terms of ethnicity is representative of the local population; although more can always be done to engage families from global majority groups.

### Use of data and information sharing

Quantitative data and qualitative information are shared to evidence that safeguarding arrangements are effective. An Annual Assurance Statement is delivered to the LLR Safeguarding Children Partnerships, in line with the Performance and Quality Assurance Framework, to enable the Safeguarding Children Partnerships to hold local agencies to account for their safeguarding work,

including prevention and early intervention. The Safeguarding Children Partnerships can request additional data and narrative from partners to strengthen assurance, where required.

The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards have a local [Information Sharing Agreement \(ISA\)](#).

An example of how information sharing has improved practice and outcomes in 2024-25 are the changes to how Domestic Abuse notifications are screened in Leicestershire. There was consultation between Leicestershire Children's Social Care and Leicestershire Police, particularly in relation to developing a standard response to stalking, harassment and coercive control in the context of potential harm to the child. Leicestershire Children's Social Care routinely have all Public Protection Notices (PPN) from the Police in response to Domestic Abuse incidents which have DASH risk assessment.<sup>27</sup> They have a strong response to standard risk incidents which have proactive preventative response. Leicestershire Children's Social Care has also started the process of building DASH and S Dash into their standard recording process – the S DASH specifically addresses the risk of stalking. Leicestershire Children's Social Care has developed new guidance for staff, which includes reference to stalking and harassment, and has run "Lunch and Learn" events. Leicestershire Children's Social Care and Leicestershire Police are satisfied that they have a strong screening process. They are sighted on similar issues and can identify issues together to resolve and develop joint approaches.

### Self-Assessment

Section 11 self-assessments are undertaken by agencies as part of their duties under Working Together 2023.<sup>28</sup> In previous years, the safeguarding partners and specific relevant agencies have carried out a Section 11 self-assessment audit of their safeguarding effectiveness. For 2024-25, to enhance the process of obtaining safeguarding assurance from agencies, it was agreed to undertake Section 11 self-assessments using a different methodology.

A survey of frontline staff and managers was carried out to enable the Safeguarding Children Partnerships to obtain assurance of the impact of recommendations and actions resulting from safeguarding reviews and multi-agency audits.

- There was a total of 344 responses to the Section 11 online practitioner survey.
- A further 62 GP Practices participated in the Integrated Care Board (ICB) managed process.
- There was a good mix of responses across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland agencies and departments.
- Schools throughout the sub-region were included for the first time in this Section 11. Their inclusion was managed by Local Authority School Liaison departments.

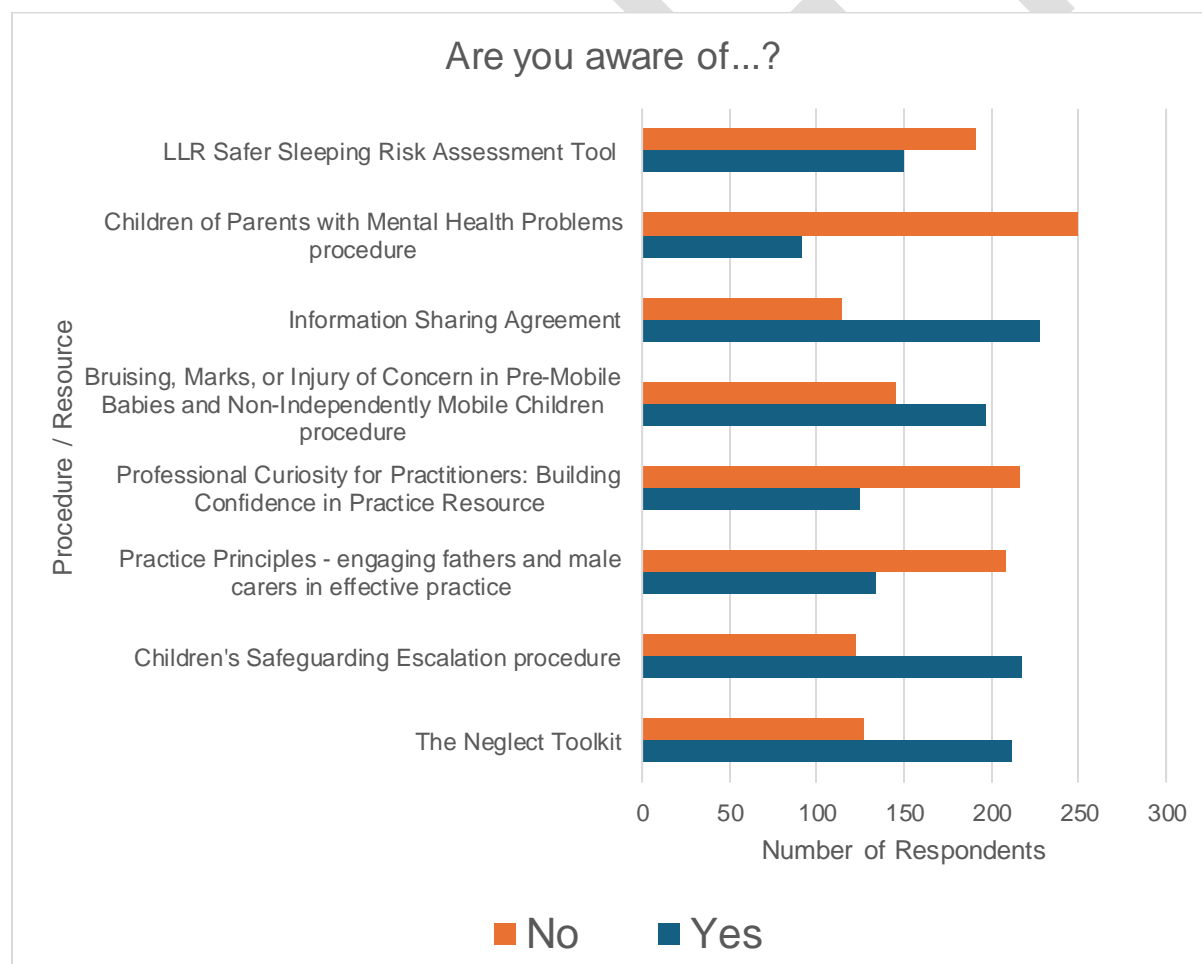
<sup>27</sup> DASH = Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence.

<sup>28</sup> [Working Together 2023](#), Chapter 4, pages 104-107.

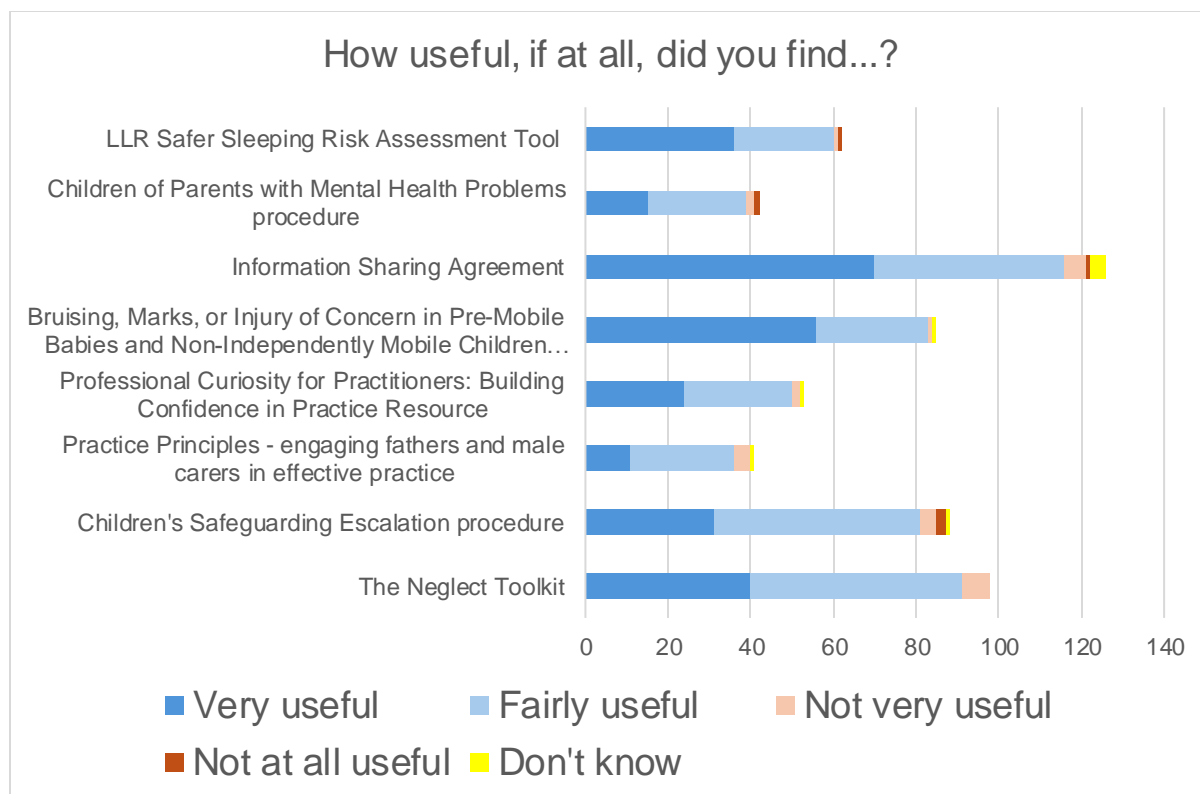
- The survey was used as an awareness raising tool by including links to the relevant resources within the questions.
- Questions were asked about awareness, use and usefulness of key resources and procedures.

The majority of online respondents were aware of the Neglect Toolkit (63%), the Escalation procedure (64%) and the “Bruising, Marks or Injury of Concern in Pre-Mobile Babies and Non-Independently Mobile Children” procedure (58%), and the Information Sharing Agreement (67%). Less were aware of the “Practice Principles on Engaging Fathers and Male Carers in Effective Practice” (39%), the “Building Confidence in Practice Resource on Professional Curiosity for Practitioners” (37%), the Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool (44%) and the “Children of Parents with Mental Health Problems” procedure (27%).

The awareness of some of these resources was less than expected. Positively, though, where these figures were lower, the majority of people who used the procedure/resource stated that they found it useful.







The Planning and Delivery Group considered the results, in terms of identifying areas to inform the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' priorities for 2025 onwards and if any further partnership action was required across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Whilst the majority of online respondents were aware of the Neglect Toolkit, the percentage of people still seemed low considering the Toolkit was originally launched in July 2016 and was updated and re-launched in 2021 to include adolescent neglect. A lack of awareness of the Toolkit has also been identified in multi-agency audit learning. Moving forwards, Neglect is a business priority for 2025-27 and further work will be completed on promoting the Neglect Toolkit.

We will continue to raise awareness of the suite of resources available to practitioners through learning and development.

## 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.



### Repeat Contacts Spotlight Audit

In 2022-23, the Safeguarding Children Partnerships carried out a dip sample audit of referrals to Children's Social Care (CSC) across the three Local Authorities. The audit was focused on children with more than one contact recorded by Children's Social Care.

The aim of this 2024-25 spotlight audit was to understand improvements to responses to initial contact, following the learning identified from the previous audit on this theme. Ten cases were audited: four from Leicester City Council, four from Leicestershire County Council and two from Rutland County Council.

#### The audit found that:

- There was evidence that LLR procedures had been applied in all the cases and that the intervention made a difference for the child and family.
- There was appropriate intervention and Local Authorities, in most cases, completed appropriate children and family assessments.
- In some cases, children and family assessments were not as thorough as they could have been, and this led to the re-referral.
- The Local Authorities demonstrated contact with the family and network to explore issues; more needs to be done, though, to strengthen this through seeking the voice of the whole family and child, and in particular separated partners.
- There was evidence of multi-agency collaboration, but there were pockets where this could be further strengthened. For example, professionals were not always sharing information in Health services around Adult Mental Health, resulting in gaps, incomplete information and impact on assessments and planning.

There is continuous work to improve the quality of assessments and to promote the recording of the voice of the child and whole family. Regarding the learning around health information sharing, “Best Practice Guidance for Health Staff: Sharing health information with Children’s Social Care and partner agencies” is due to be published in 2025-26.

#### Babies under 1 year on a Child Protection Plan Spotlight Audit

Linked to the Safeguarding Babies business priority, a spotlight audit was carried out looking at cases involving babies under 1 year on a Child Protection Plan. Ten cases were audited: four from Leicester City Council, four from Leicestershire County Council and two from Rutland County Council.

Pre-birth planning was a feature of six of the cases. Four cases had not had a pre-birth plan; in some cases, the foetus/infant was referred just prior to birth or soon after birth. For six of the cases, the category of abuse for the Child Protection Plan was Neglect; for two of the cases the category was Physical Abuse; the category for one case was Sexual Abuse; and Emotional/Sexual Abuse was the category for the final case.

The audit found that:

- All the babies were deemed to have been safeguarded and the intervention had made a difference for the child and family with progress being made, leading to many of the families being closed to Social Care.
- There was evidence in many of the cases that the intervention was timely and ensured the child has the right service at the right time without delay.
- There was good information sharing across agencies, particularly Children’s Social Care and Health, in many of the cases, with relevant agencies attending meetings or providing reports.
- There was consistent and timely use of the procedures, thresholds and plans were noted in most of the cases.
- There was evidence of consistency in speaking to mothers and including mothers and the wider family network in processes.
- There was poor use of the Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool. There was too much reliance on Health staff, either the Midwife or Health Visitor/Public Health Nurse talking to parents and carers about safer sleep.
- The voice of the child was not consistently evidenced and/or captured.
- Although there was evidence of the father of the baby being known in many of the cases audited, there was a lack of consistency in them being engaged and involved in the processes and plans.

Work continues to embed use of the Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool and Practice Points on Engaging Fathers in everyday practice. To extend the training already offered, as well as the resulting learning and development videos, there

will be further training on the Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning procedure in 2025-26.

## **Other assurance work**

### LLR Safeguarding Keep in Touch Meeting

There is direct governance between the Safeguarding Keeping in Touch meeting and the Assurance and Audit Group.

The Safeguarding Keeping in Touch meetings bring together senior safeguarding leads to share intelligence and joint oversight of the ability of LLR multi-agency children's safeguarding services to maintain statutory functions in relation to safeguarding children. They share information and data and provide a timely response to emerging safeguarding issues with partnership support.

Discussions in 2024-25 have included how each agency has managed significant workforce issues and how these are being resolved. For example, there has been successful recruitment of qualified international social workers in Children's Social Care in Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council, which has had a positive impact on providing stability of staffing and decreasing the need to employ agency Social Workers. Other positive messages communicated include the Looked After Children Nursing Team managing to deliver all review health assessments within timeframes. They have also managed to add in an additional keeping in touch point at 6 months for children.

Each agency has provided monthly assurance that safeguarding work is prioritised and they have maintained full engagement with required safeguarding processes.

### LLR Operational Group Meeting

The LLR Operational Group is a standalone group that feeds into the LLR Assurance and Audit Group.

The remit of the Operational Group is to allow managers, responsible for safeguarding children from across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, a forum to discuss and work through identified issues.

### Internal Quality Assurance Processes

The Assurance and Audit Group seeks annual assurance from partner agencies around their internal quality assurance processes. The aim is 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.

## Safeguarding in Education

### **Leicestershire**

Safeguarding in Education Leicestershire County Council support schools with all safeguarding concerns and signposting to Safeguarding Children Partnership safeguarding procedures.

They deliver:

- Initial Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training and Refresher DSL training in partnership with Leicestershire County Council First Response
- The Safer Recruitment Consortium – Safer Recruitment training
- Allegation Management training in partnership with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Additionally, they:

- Host the Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum once a term to share local and national safeguarding updates to include learning from case reviews
- Create termly safeguarding newsletters
- Co-ordinate Designated Safeguarding Leads drop-in sessions at the Family Hubs
- Undertake safeguarding audits of schools
- Advocate for schools in multi-agency meetings
- Deliver safeguarding conferences for Leicestershire with specific focuses, such as Cyber Security
- Respond to Ofsted complaints about Leicestershire schools
- Undertake new Headteacher safeguarding visits
- Speak at the DSL conference for educational trusts.

### **Rutland**

At Rutland County Council, they deliver training to the Education Sector throughout the year. The following events have taken place throughout 2024-25:

- Safeguarding Information Briefings (three times a year) – the Safeguarding Information Briefing is delivered by Rutland County Council Children's Social Care Team. The purpose of the briefing is to deliver key safeguarding updates and develop a Signs of Safety approach to practice.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum (three times a year) – the Safeguarding Leads Forum is delivered by Rutland County Council Children's Social Care Team. These sessions are attended by Designated Safeguarding Leads based in schools or early years settings. The purpose is to deliver safeguarding updates and present information from a range of professionals including the Virtual School, Fostering Team and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The SEND, Inclusion and Learning Service send regular updates to the education sector around safeguarding through regular bulletins. These updates happen on a weekly basis.

## **Moving forwards**

It has been acknowledged that the remit of the Assurance and Audit Group is very large. To address this and to reflect the structure successfully employed by the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Adults Boards, from 2025-26, two new groups will be implemented to replace the Assurance and Audit Group. There will be a Performance Group and an Audit Group, which will fulfil the requirements of the Performance and Quality Assurance Framework of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

The Performance Group will analyse performance data; plan, scope and task multi-agency assurance processes; and analyse findings from multi-agency assurance processes, including findings from agencies' internal assurance processes and Section 11 audits. The LLR Safeguarding Keep in Touch Meeting and LLR Operational Group Meeting will feed into the Performance Group.

The Audit Group will complete multi-agency audits as informed by the Performance Group and Business Plan priorities, learning from case reviews, national learning and Section 11 audits and analyse the findings from multi-agency case file and spotlight audits.

It is anticipated that this change will allow for more audits to be completed and improve our ability to evidence how information sharing has improved practice and outcomes.

## **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures**

Together, the Leicestershire & Rutland and Leicester Safeguarding Partnerships ensure that procedures are in place for multi-agency safeguarding in line with Working Together 2023.

Throughout 2024-25, the Policy and Procedures Group has revised procedures and created new guidance in response to learning from local and national reviews and assurance processes.

The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Procedures Manual can be found online: <https://llrscb.trixonline.co.uk/>

A full list of amendments made can be found on the '[Amendments](#)' page of the manual. Individuals who want to sign up for alerts regarding the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' procedures can [register for updates](#).

## Workforce development through multi-agency learning and development and training

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

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships provide:

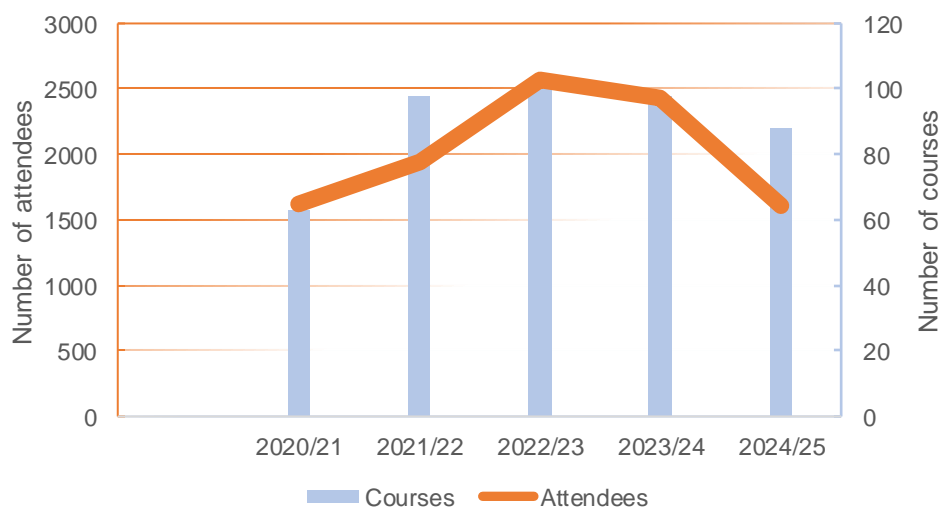
- A [Multi-Agency Training Programme](#), which offers high quality training, with a core programme focusing on basic safeguarding / business as usual training, supplemented by commissioned training on key safeguarding themes and specific types of abuse/neglect, as well as large scale events
- A [Competency Framework](#) to support individuals and organisations to undertake their safeguarding roles and responsibilities in a confident and competent manner
- A [Trainers Network](#) that offers regular meetups between trainers to share knowledge, skills and to help develop the delivery of safeguarding children training.

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

### Training Delivery

The Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group (MALDG) are responsible for the sharing of learning across the children's workforce in support of the Business Plan Priorities and learning from reviews.

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland  
Safeguarding Training Attendees and Courses



This year the Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Programme delivered 88 courses to over 1609 attendees. There are events where data is not available. Firstly, because of a cyber-attack in April 2024, impacting on the systems and ability to



collect information, and also because, when sessions are commissioned, the data is not always effectively shared. It is fair to say that there must have been over 2,000 practitioners who were able to attend events from the multi-agency safeguarding children programme.

The 88 courses included a Conference on Child Sexual Abuse which was hosted by the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and delivered by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse in May 2024. Over 180 practitioners attended this event from agencies across the partnership including Police, Health, Early Help and Social Care and aligned services in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). In support of this area of work, there was also a session delivered on disclosure of child sexual abuse by The Reign Collective, which was attended by 43 practitioners. The Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group is looking to include sessions on sexual abuse in their programme moving forward.

Also, four sessions were delivered to 102 people to inform them of the new Elective Home Education guidance uploaded to the local procedures.

Training has been delivered in person and online. Obviously, online it is possible to share information with greater numbers, as there is no room space barrier; however, evaluation has shown that participants welcome a return to in-person sessions.

#### Training linked to the Business Plan Priorities

- Safeguarding Babies

The Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group supported the delivery of Baby Fortnight in April 2024. This was a series of events for practitioners working with those expecting and new parents to support the first critical 1001 days of life. In particular, there were sessions on “Involving and Supporting Dads and Partners”, “The Voice of Babies and Non-Verbal Children”, “ICON”, and “Safer Sleeping for babies in LLR”, all of which reflect learning locally and nationally. The event had sessions for expectant and new parents that ran alongside and was a great success.

The Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group supported the launch of the new “Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning” procedure, providing two launch sessions in June 2024 for 51 participants and a further session in September where 13 people attended.

In addition, for this priority, to support the ICON message and in support of working with fathers, films were commissioned which are a collection of experiences of new fathers. The films are called “Father Stories” and are available in short or long format. There was a launch of the films at the Phoenix Cinema which some of the dads who shared their stories were able to attend with the actors who committed them to film, as well as practitioners.

- Child Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing

To support this business plan priority, the Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group shared the training that is available from CAMHS and agencies such as Papyrus with the wider workforce.

It is also an area that is covered in other sessions, such as “Hidden Sentence”, “Child Exploitation” and core safeguarding courses.

The Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group worked with ADHD Solutions to deliver sessions on how to work with and understand children with ADHD. This will continue even though the charity ceased to exist from the end of 2024. Over this period, 3 sessions were delivered with 48 participants.

- Keeping Adolescents Safe/Supporting Safe Adolescents

The programme of safeguarding children training offers a session on “An Introduction to Child Exploitation” and two courses were delivered on this topic in the last year for 38 attendees.

- Safeguarding Children from diverse backgrounds

This priority had a specific action for the Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group which was to “provide multi-agency learning and development around immigration status, culture, faith, and parenting.” To help meet this action point, a Task & Finish Group has been established and a proposal with an action plan to fulfil this action by the end of 2026.

- Effective Safeguarding in independent and out of school settings

The Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group, in support of this Business Plan Priority, has been trying to extend its reach by using social media and voluntary sector networks to encourage agencies to book onto training. Twilight and evening sessions have been delivered too to reach a different audience.

In addition, there have been more Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) sessions because every agency that works or volunteers with children must have a Designated Safeguarding Lead, who would need to complete this training. The programme has delivered 16 sessions, including refresher sessions, to 268 participants in a mixture of different formats such as online, in person and 2-part with e-learning. This should help to keep children safe who are attending out of school settings.

#### Safeguarding Matters Live

In addition to the 88 courses, the Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group also supported the delivery of Safeguarding Matters Live events. Two [Safeguarding Matters Live](#) are held each year. These are live online briefings for staff across the children and adults multi-agency partnerships. They share learning from reviews and audits, procedure and guidance updates, resources to support practice, and share messages around key national issues and from key national reports. The slides from the events are made available via the website and sessions are available to watch on the [YouTube Channel](#).

Over the 2 events delivered in 2024-25, with one in June and one in December, 795 practitioners attended.

Topics covered in July 2024 included the Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning procedure, Child Sexual Abuse and Electively Home Educated children. The

December 2024 event focused on safeguarding and the internet, with presentations including the impact of social media on children and Prevent.

### 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.

### Training Impact

The link between training and change in behaviour is difficult to measure although we do try to do this through evaluation.

The evaluation returns from the multi-agency safeguarding children programme have been much poorer this year, with only 288 completed forms. Although the Conference on Child Sexual Abuse and Safeguarding Matters were evaluated separately, this equates to roughly one fifth (20%) of training being evaluated which is down from a third last year. This could be because there have been more in-person courses and the evaluation is online. There was also a pilot where certificates were linked to the evaluation form but this was unsuccessful and so a return to a manual system was required.

The evaluation asks participants to assess their level of knowledge, skills and confidence before and after the training session. The results are as below:

Average Scores of	Knowledge	Skills	Confidence
Before	6.4	6.4	6.2
After	8.5	8.4	8.4
Average Increase	2.1	2	2.2

It can be seen that, for every area participants assessed, their knowledge, skills and confidence had increased by at least 2 points. There is also feedback that supports this data.

*"The trainer was very knowledgeable and I enjoyed the interactive elements. It was a very engaging workshop, thank you."*

*"I am from a very small, independent organisation. It was good to share this training with more skilled and experienced practitioners from social care settings. I learnt from their knowledge during the case study section."*

*"The use of real life examples enhanced my understanding."*

Feedback from participants of Core Awareness training

*"I liked the fact that it was held in the evening, so it was more inclusive for people who work during the day. Online at night did help for those who can't travel to a*

*venue. More short courses, e.g. the signs of safety, would be very useful if was held online of an evening."*

*"The case studies (although difficult due to the nature of the content) made the training relevant and brought it to life."*

Feedback from participants of Designated Safeguarding Lead training

*"Fantastic, really interesting and inspiring. A subject that hasn't had the time or acknowledgement that it needs. Lots of food for thought and definitely the start of an ever-growing conversation."*

*"Such honesty and sharing from a place of knowledge and experiences creates a culture of confidence to make changes."*

*"The talk from [the expert by experience] was incredibly insightful. It's very rare that you would have the opportunity to hear first-hand from a survivor of sexual abuse."*

Feedback from attendees of the Conference on Child Sexual Abuse

*"I found the course to be very informative especially the facts and figures which were quite astounding."*

Feedback from attendee of Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning procedure launch

*"Really interesting session in which I increased my knowledge and skill set in relation to ADHD. Makes me reflect and reevaluate some of my practices for the better. Thank you to the trainer who made the training enjoyable, manageable and accessible."*

Feedback from participant in Practitioners ADHD Toolkit training

Of respondents that completed a survey on the Conference on Child Sexual Abuse, 80% felt it would lead them to do things differently in their role. Several described improving their own practices in relation to child sexual abuse, increasing awareness amongst their own and other teams, and supporting colleagues to use the CSA Centre's resources.

During 2024-25, more than 80 people requested they be added to the Safeguarding Matters distribution list, with nearly 800 people now signed up.

*"Some of the content may be helpful for safeguarding training. I can merge it into my existing content, update, review, refresh etc. I can also cascade to staff using our comms channels for awareness raising."*

*"The presentations were brilliant. It's made me aware of services available."*

*"Really great information – find these really useful to share with providers/settings."*

*"Really useful categories, mixed content and very relevant in trend topics – will share through safeguarding effectiveness meetings."*

## Feedback from Safeguarding Matters Live Events

Also, the Safeguarding Children Partnership Learning & Development homepage on the Leicestershire & Rutland website was viewed over 1400 times, with the Competency Framework webpage being viewed nearly 2300 times.

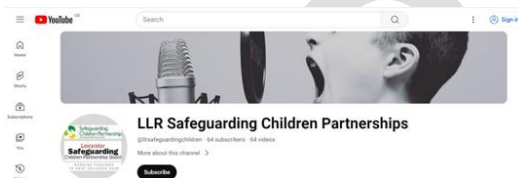
### Learning and Development Resources



During 2024-25, three print issues of the [Safeguarding Matters newsletter](#) were published, including special issues on [Learning from Safeguarding Children Reviews and Audits](#) and the [Mental Capacity Act](#). The Safeguarding Matters newsletter focuses on disseminating local and national safeguarding learning and promoting procedural updates.

Updates on local and national safeguarding information are also delivered in a concise email format via the Safeguarding Matters Digest.

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 [lrsbpo@leics.gov.uk](mailto:lrsbpo@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](mailto:lscpb@leicester.gov.uk).



The [LLR SCPs' 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.

The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards also offer a set of [Building Confidence in Practice Resources](#). These resource packs aim to focus on often complex issues that arise for practitioners when they are working with people whether they are children or adults.

### Moving forwards

Commencing in June 2025, the LLR Safeguarding Children Partnerships will be extending their Trainers' Network to include colleagues who are in safeguarding supervisory roles. It will then be known as the SCP Supervisors' and Trainers' Network. Meetings will take place three times a year. Membership will be by invitation, and only available for staff who are named in their agency as a Safeguarding Trainer or a Safeguarding Manager/Supervisor.

The reason for the change is to ensure that those who are in responsible supervisory positions are fully briefed about the learning from the children's Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, audits, national safeguarding

recommendations and the work that underpins the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Business Priorities.

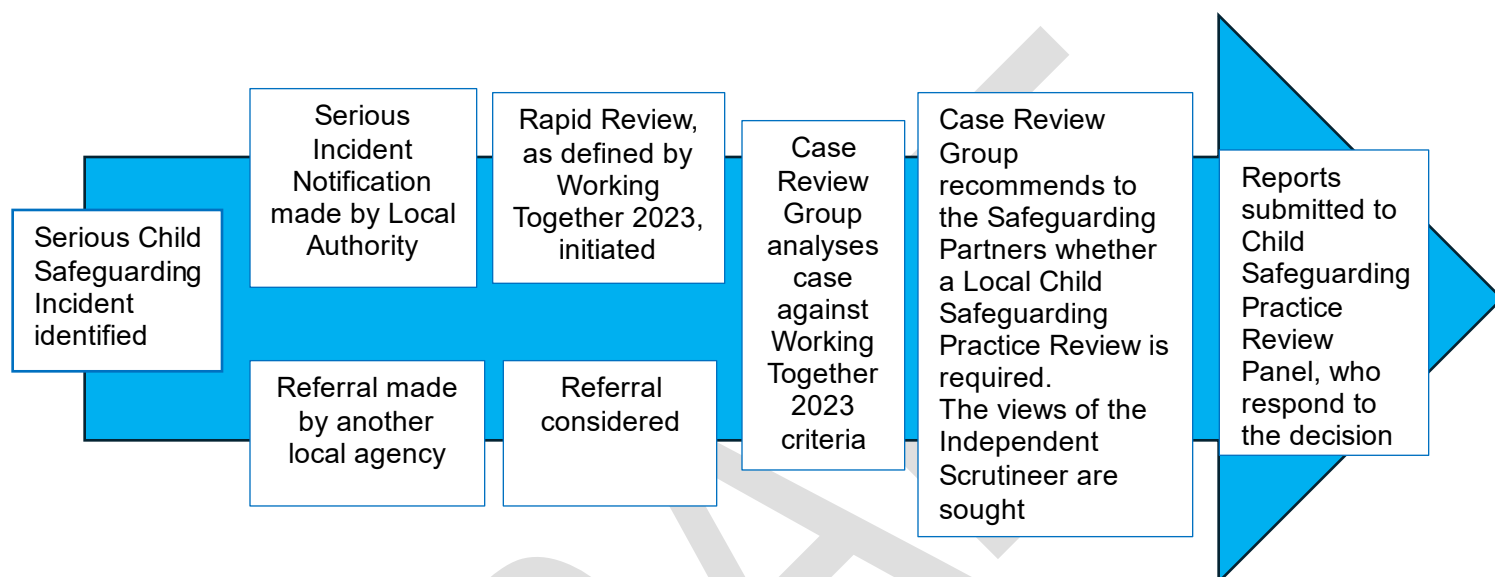
It is anticipated that having the opportunity to discuss and explore the learning will facilitate the sharing of this information during supervision, team meetings and when advising on specific safeguarding issues.

DRAFT

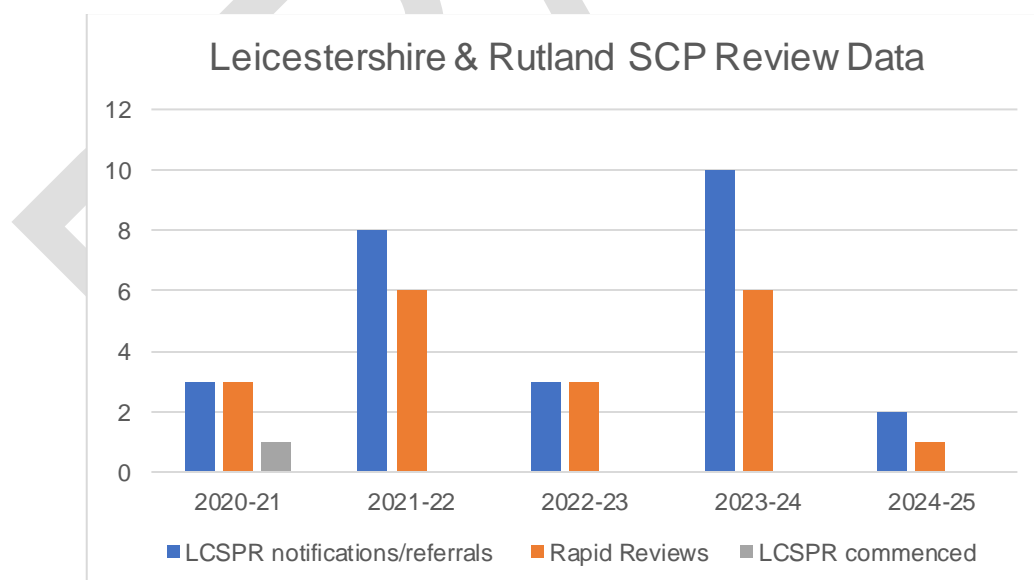
## Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

### Local Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Responsibility for how a system learns lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents rests at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and at a local level with Safeguarding Partners. The Safeguarding Children Partnership assesses serious safeguarding incidents, as defined by Working Together 2023, in cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected, and the child has died or been seriously harmed.



### Key decisions and actions taken



During 2024-25, two notifications/referrals for potential Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs), both in relation to Leicestershire children, were received by the Leicestershire & Rutland Children's Case Review Group (CRG), down from the 10 in 2023-24 and more in line with the 3 in 2022-23.



One case was referred by the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). Subsequently, Leicestershire Children's Social Care (CSC) made a serious incident notification.

With the other case, Leicestershire Children's Social Care made a notification regarding the death of a care leaver.<sup>29</sup> The case is currently sat with the Joint Case Review Group, which includes representatives from both adults' and children's safeguarding teams.

Therefore, the Partnership carried out one Rapid Review following a serious incident notification, in line with Working Together 2023, in the period of this report. This is a significant reduction from the six Rapid Reviews carried out in 2023-24.

One Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR), commissioned in 2020-21, 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](#).

#### Themes and learning identified from Rapid Review completed in 2024-25

The Rapid Review completed involved a White British premature baby girl. It included agencies from the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership and out of area agencies. Themes included pre-birth work around the child and family, including out of area, and non-engagement and resistance in light of a complex safeguarding history.

The Rapid Review discovered:

- Examples of good single and multi-agency working to prioritise, see and respond to the risk of harm
- Non-engagement from the parents was identified and there was information gathering between the two areas
- Some agencies were proactive in following up with the mother when she was avoiding contact. Support was offered with appointments and suitable adjustments considered
- Risk was identified as high and there was a plan for a strategy discussion emerging, involving both of the involved areas, at the time of the baby's death.

The Rapid Review did not result in a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR), with the case meeting the criteria but the decision being taken that an appropriate level of learning had been established as a result of the Rapid Review,

<sup>29</sup> [Working Together 2023](#), page 133, paragraphs 331-332. Working Together 2023 states that "The local authority must notify the Secretary of State for Education, and Ofsted of the death of a looked after child. The local authority should also notify the Secretary of State for Education and Ofsted of the death of a care leaver up to and including the age of 24. [...] The death of a care leaver does not require a rapid review or local child safeguarding practice review. However, safeguarding partners must consider whether the criteria for a serious incident have been met and respond accordingly, in the event the deceased care leaver was under the age of 18."

meaning a LCSPR was not required. Both the Independent Scrutineer and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel agreed with this decision.

It was agreed to:

- Disseminate a reminder to practitioners that a pre-birth referral should be made as early as possible to give maximum time for building relationships and providing optimum support in the context of significant safeguarding history.
- Produce a 7-Minute Briefing, focused on working with non-engagement and resistance.

### Actions from reviews

Action plans are in place to respond to and monitor areas of learning from previous reviews.

In the last year, the Partnership has completed 6 of the 10 review Action Plans in place. Overall, only 7 multi-agency actions, which represents 19% of actions from these 10 plans, are ongoing.

In 2023-24, the Safeguarding Partners recognised the increased number of notifications/referrals and Rapid Reviews. Learning from these Rapid Reviews has been implemented across 2024-25:

- It influenced numerous procedural updates, including to the “Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviour” and “Working with Sexually Active Children and Young People Under the Age of 18” (previously called “Underage Sexual Activity”) procedures.
- It led to the publication of seven new 7-Minute Briefings, based on review learning.
- It is informing a system change, which is in progress, around how Health shares more detailed health information with Children’s Social Care and details the impact / potential impact of abuse and neglect upon a child’s health needs. The guidance for this will be detailed in the forthcoming new LLR SCPs procedure on “Safeguarding children with Long-Term Chronic Health Needs who require ‘additional child safeguards’”, which will be supported by a suite of three pro formas and some “Best Practice Guidance for Health Staff: Sharing health information with Children’s Social Care and partner agencies”, which will be published on the LLR SCPs Procedures Manual.
- It informed the “[Pick up the Phone](#)” campaign, launched regionally by Health in September 2024. All practitioners were requested to go “back to basics” and “pick up the phone”, including to out of area colleagues, to share information about emerging concerns and referral to children’s and adult social care.
- It fed into work completed around Child Sexual Abuse. A training course, entitled “Following the Breadcrumbs: Understanding and working with disclosures of child sexual abuse”, continued to be delivered. It is designed for any adult with a role to play in protecting children and is about the

disclosure of abuse, and potential responses that would support children. It is delivered by The Reign Collective, who are survivors of child sexual abuse. Also, the LLR Safeguarding Children Partnerships worked with the Centre of Expertise for Child Sexual Abuse to deliver a Conference/‘Roadshow’ on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024. This event was attended by over 180 people from over 15 agencies across LLR

### Ongoing work

Following the Conference/Roadshow delivered in 2024-25 and the publication of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s National Review on Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment, the Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group has been looking at how they can include an offer of multi-agency child protection training focused on sexual abuse as part of their regular offer. This analysis is being informed by work with the NSPCC (funded by the Home Office) that the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland SCPs have signed up to for 2025-26 to undertake a local system-wide child sexual abuse (CSA) snapshot.

Until June 2024, Trauma-Informed Practice training was delivered by Barnardo’s, on behalf of the Violence Reduction Network (VRN), but this commissioned training has now ended. Discussions about a long-term, sustainable training model moving forwards are ongoing and the issue has been escalated to the LLR SCP Planning & Delivery Group (PDG).

The new procedure on “Safeguarding children with Long-Term Chronic Health Needs who require ‘additional child safeguards’” will be launched in the latter part of 2025.

### Dissemination of learning

Learning is shared with practitioners across organisations through single and 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](#) and the Safeguarding Matters Digest
- ‘[7-Minute Briefings](#)’, which are designed to convey key messages from reviews and encourage managers and workers to reflect on their practice.
- The Leicestershire & Rutland “[Practice Points – Learning from Safeguarding Children Partnership \(SCP\) Reviews and Audits](#)” document, which was launched and published on the website in October 2023. It provides key learning points for all practitioners and managers from audits and reviews, both local and national. This is a live document. The latest version was published in March 2025.
- An end of year “Learning from Reviews” document that summarises learning from local cases, including anonymised case details/context, and Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel publications. 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 was first agreed in 2024 that this would be provided on an annual basis.

In recognition of the increased number of notifications/referrals in 2023-24, the Safeguarding Children Partnership published a [Special Issue of Safeguarding Matters on Learning from safeguarding children reviews and audits](#). It also ran Curious Practitioner training in August 2024 to share some of the Rapid Review learning that had been similar or the same across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR). It was open to anyone who works with children and families across LLR. A [video of the training](#) is available via the LLR SCP YouTube channel.

### How we are measuring impact

The Section 11 in 2024-25 was completed using a frontline practitioner survey. Some of the questions posed related to learning from Rapid Reviews and resources linked to learning, such as the “Practice Principles – Engaging fathers and male carers in effective practice”, the “Bruising, Marks, or Injury of Concern in Pre-Mobile Babies and Non-Independently Mobile Children” procedure, and the LLR Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool.

The Curious Practitioner Training was attended by 168 practitioners from across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. At the end of the training, attendees were asked “In your opinion what went well and what impact will this have in your work”. Some of the responses are listed below:

*“Really good information. Will make me think more when doing assessments.”*

*“The session was very informative. It was good to take time to reflect and hear other agencies’ views. Very useful to hear the learning from rapid reviews.”*

*“This was informative training and hearing the examples of using professional curiosity will help me to gain the confidence to ask further questions.”*

*“Gave me lots of thinking for the team I manage and how in a very brief intervention we still ensure we work in-depth.”*

*“It made me think about triangulating information, which I did after the training; contacting the school to ask if the information mum reported was correct.”*

Agencies were asked to document how they disseminated the Learning from Reviews resource. All agencies responded and there was positive feedback. For example, one agency stated that the format of it really helped their practitioners understand the wider picture. Education reported that it had a really good impact, particularly with the reference to actual cases.

### **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 our Rapid Reviews; key learning from them is included in our Practice Points; and other SCP subgroups continue to incorporate their learning into their work. National reviews are used for benchmarking and ensuring best practice.

Date	Publication	How national learning has been considered in local work
May 2024	Serious Incident Notifications	A report allowing for comparison of Leicestershire & Rutland notification data with that of other areas for 2023-24 was produced and shared with the Case Review Group.
May 2024	Safeguarding Children in Elective Home Education: Panel Briefing 3  Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel	A presentation on Electively Home Educated Children was given at Safeguarding Matters Live in July 2024 and referenced this national report.  The new LLR SCP <a href="#">“Elective Home Education: An Approach to Safeguarding for LLR” guidance</a> was published in September 2024.  Four training briefing sessions have been delivered by the LLR SCP Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group (MALDG), with the last one taking place in February 2025. A video of one of these sessions has been made into a learning resource.
November 2024	“I wanted them all to notice”: Protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment – National Review  Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel	A report on how the recommendations for SCPs are going to be addressed locally was presented to the Case Review Group in February 2025.  For 2025-26 Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland SCPs have signed up to work with the NSPCC (funded by the Home Office) to undertake a local system-wide child sexual abuse (CSA) snapshot.  There was a presentation on the report in Safeguarding Matters Live in December 2024, with a follow up article in the April 2025 print issue.  The Briefing for Practitioners was shared via the Learning from Reviews 2024-25 resource.
December 2024	Annual Report 2023/24: Patterns in practice, key messages and 2024 to 2025 work programme	A paper on key points from the Annual Report was presented to the Case Review Group in their February 2025 meeting.  The Briefing for Practitioners is to be shared via the April 2025 print issue of Safeguarding Matters and was shared in the Learning from Reviews 2024-25 resource.

Date	Publication	How national learning has been considered in local work
	Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel	
March 2025	<p>“It’s Silent”: Race, racism and safeguarding children: Panel Briefing 4</p> <p>Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel</p>	<p>The Briefing for Practitioners is to be shared via the April 2025 print issue of Safeguarding Matters and was shared in the Learning from Reviews 2024-25 resource.</p> <p>Further guidance is awaited from the LLR SCP Planning &amp; Delivery Group (PDG) regarding further work.</p>

### Spotlight on “Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings”

With the publication of the Phase 1 report by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on [“Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings”](#) in October 2022, all Local Authorities were required to act on recommendations to provide reassurance in response to learning. This included undertaking audits of the circumstances of all children living in these settings and providing assurance in respect of the process of managing allegations in the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). These actions aimed to provide immediate assurance about the welfare and safety of some of the most vulnerable children and prompted all Local Authorities and Health commissioners to strengthen their assurance system for children in residential settings.

### Leicestershire

In Leicestershire, in November 2022, the Departmental Management Team were provided with an overview of the local audit activity, confirming that the local audit was submitted nationally and had provided reassurance that all children placed by Leicestershire were safeguarded; no further actions were required; there was evidence of participation, parental engagement and regular reviews in place. A further audit on all children with a disability living in residential care was undertaken in 2023. The findings were shared at the Planning and Delivery Group and Health colleagues (Integrated Care Board) carried out a similar audit of these children across the 3 Local Authorities (Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland) to ensure that the health needs of the children were being met.

Additionally, as the host authority, the Allegations Management Service had completed checks for each of 3 establishments located in the area, including a review of all information linked to LADO referrals, complaints and concerns over the last 3 years relating to the workforce in these establishments, and have assurances that everything has been appropriately actioned.

Since the response to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s report, further assurance has been embedded into standard processes. In August 2023, further



peer audits were completed between Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland in LADO teams. The aim of the audit was to consider the LADO input in relation to allegations made about people working/volunteering with children who have disabilities and responses to organisational culture. This provided further confidence to the Safeguarding Children Partnerships in threshold application for LADO and safeguarding procedures being applied including reporting to regulatory bodies.

The Leicestershire LADO Service continues to work closely with the Service Manager for the Disabled Children Service and commissioning and has strengthened liaison with LADOs in neighbouring authorities where Leicestershire children are placed under Section 20/Care Orders, with consideration to organisational harm and complex mapping where repeat referrals are made. There are LADO checks for agency or bank workers in residential care for employment history. If the LADO is contacted about a Leicestershire child by LADO outside of the area, following the investigation, information should be recorded on the child's record and shared with commissioning for quality assurance processes. Leicestershire LADO notify the placing authority LADO of the outcome of the allegations process.

Commissioning have embedded quality assurance processes for all provisions providing care to children, which includes a minimum of an annual visit. Any new provision is quality assured within 9 weeks of placing the young person so that record keeping can be checked and also, where possible, this allows for the capture of the voice of the young person. Before placing with an unknown provider, Leicestershire would seek references from placing Local Authorities and also check their latest Ofsted report.

In 2024, a further audit was completed to consider children's specific circumstances with no identified concerns raised. This audit is intended to be an annual piece of assurance work and is being repeated in summer 2025.

In September 2024, an implementation plan was shared with the Children and Young People Partnership Group to provide multi-agency perspectives. The progress of the plan is being considered as an outcome of the audit work taking place in 2025.

### Rutland

Rutland were part of the assurance work and the learning activity but did not have children that met the criteria for the audit. They played an active role in audit activity and learning across LLR and have taken the learning to ensure safeguarding of their children with disabilities and complex health needs placed in residential settings and to ensure they have robust safeguards and assurances in place to safeguard their welfare.



## Future planning

Throughout the Yearly Report, future changes to be implemented have been highlighted around scrutiny, engagement with children and families, quality assurance and training.

### **Priorities for 2025-27**

Having reviewed learning from local and national reviews, and from local assurance and engagement work, as well as considering the impact of the 2023-25 priorities, the Safeguarding Children Partnerships have determined that its priorities for 2025-27 will be:

- Child Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Harm Outside the Home
- Belonging

For each of these areas, we have set out our rationale for prioritising the topic, and presented the key deliverables, leads, timescales and impact measures. This will enable 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 [Joint Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Plan for 2025-27](#) is published on our website.

## Conclusion

In 2024-25, we have achieved a lot both strategically and operationally in light of significant national reforms, changes to statutory guidance and pressures linked to workforce capacity. Agencies have reported that, despite challenges with workforce capacity, safeguarding children has remained a priority. Our approach is system-led but child-focused. We are improving how we adapt to and adopt changes required as a result of both national and local learning. Moving forwards, we are aware of our strengths and the challenges we face. We have initiated implementation of changes to address some of these challenges. In particular, in the future, we believe that our quality assurance processes will be both increased and have more of an impact on our decision making and priority identification. Our new Young Person Scrutineer and Communications and Engagement Subgroup will make sure that we are driven by the views and wishes of the people we work to support and see thrive.

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