

**CABINET – 12 SEPTEMBER 2025****DRAFT LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
PARTNERSHIP YEARLY REPORT 2024-2025****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to bring to the Cabinet's attention the Yearly Report 2024-25 for the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) for consultation and comment.
2. The final Yearly Report is the report of the identified Safeguarding Partners who must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children.
3. Any comments or proposed amendments made by the Cabinet will be addressed in the final report before it is published at the end of September 2025.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the Cabinet notes and comments on the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report for 2024-25.

Reasons for Recommendations

5. Leicestershire County Council is one of the statutory Safeguarding Partners which have a shared and equal statutory duty with the local Integrated Care Board, Leicestershire Police and Rutland Council to agree and make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Leicestershire and Rutland.
6. It is a statutory requirement, as set out in Working Together 2023, that the Safeguarding Partners publish a report at least once every twelve months on the arrangements and their effectiveness.
7. In Leicestershire and Rutland, the Yearly Report has traditionally been presented to the Cabinet and the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
8. Presenting the Yearly Report enables the Cabinet to comment on the content of this document and consider whether it identifies matters that it wishes to address in relation to the effectiveness of safeguarding within the work of the Authority.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

9. The Yearly Report of the LRSCP was considered by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 September 2025. Its comments will be reported to the Cabinet meeting.
10. Any proposed additions or amendments to the Yearly Report made by the Cabinet will be considered by the Safeguarding Partners for incorporation into the final document which will be published by the end of September 2025.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

11. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties for Local Authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the Local Authority to provide services to children in need in their area; section 47 of the same Act requires Local Authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
12. These duties can only realistically be discharged with the full co-operation of other partners, many of whom have individual duties when carrying out their functions under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
13. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2023 (statutory guidance on multi-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children) give responsibility for this join-up locally to the safeguarding partners, the Police, the Integrated Care Board and the Local Authority, which have a shared and equal duty to agree and make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
14. The LRSCP manages the statutory multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland. The arrangements were originally published on 28 June 2019 and commenced on 29 September 2019. These arrangements replaced the former Local Safeguarding Children Board. They have been updated in 2024-25 (see below).
15. It is a statutory requirement, as set out in Working Together 2023, that the Safeguarding Partners publish a report at least once every twelve months on the arrangements and their effectiveness.

Resource Implications

16. There are no resource implications arising from this report, as this is a retrospective report.
17. The LRSCP operates within a budget to which partner agencies contribute.
18. Safeguarding partners have, along with the Safeguarding Adults Board partners, set a single agreement of principles to share the operating costs of the LRSCP and Safeguarding Adults Board for Leicestershire and Rutland.

19. As part of this agreement, Leicestershire County Council contributed £66,258 to the LRSCP in 2024-25. This is 33% of the total funding for the LRSCP (£203,092). This matches the contribution provided in 2023-24.
20. Expenditure overall was £246,270. Although costs have risen, evidence suggests that the output of the Partnership demonstrates value for money. The difference between funding and expenditure was covered by the LRSCP's reserve funds.
21. As of 1 April 2025, the LRSCP's reserve funds stand at £117,721. This amount has been held due to a foreseen increase in costs and has meant that partners have not been asked for an increase in contributions; however, this surplus will eventually be used and therefore all partners will be expected to ensure that the LRSCP is self-sufficient.
22. Leicestershire County Council also hosts the Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office that supports the LRSCP and Safeguarding Adults Board.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

23. None.

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PART B

Background

24. In 2024-25, the arrangements were reviewed in light of the updated government guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#). Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements should be based on Local Authority areas. Arrangements can cover two or more local authority boundaries by agreement. As a number of partners are shared with Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership, joint [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) are published now. They were published in December 2024, in line with government timescales.
25. The LRSCP shares some operational arrangements with the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board and some partnership structures with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Yearly Report 2024-25

26. The key purpose of the Yearly Report is to assess the impact of the work undertaken in 2024-25 on safeguarding outcomes for children in Leicestershire and Rutland. Specifically, it evaluates performance against the priorities that were set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships' [Business Plan 2023-25](#).
27. A pre-publication draft of the Yearly Report 2024-25 can be found as the Appendix to this report.
28. The report outlines the learning, assurance, training and improvement activity of the LRSCP and its partners and the impact this has had on safeguarding children. Key messages from the LRSCP to Leicestershire are:
 - 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 ICON¹, 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. It is evident that this business priority has achieved a good level of assurance and so it has not been 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 always be seen as a key cohort of focus for the LRSCP.
 - Since its inception in 2021-22, it is felt that the “Child Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing” business priority has achieved a good level of assurance and so it has not been carried over to the 2025-27 Business Plan. It is

¹ ICON is an evidenced-based programme focused on reducing abusive head trauma (AHT) triggered by crying. The mnemonic **ICON** outlines the key messages of the programme: **I**nfant crying is normal, **C**omforting methods can help, **I**t's **OK** to walk away, and **N**ever, ever shake a baby.

acknowledged, though, that children's mental health continues to be a subject of both local and national importance. Therefore, the Planning and Delivery Group of the LRSCP will continue to seek assurance that mental health and safeguarding are effectively addressed together locally by receiving Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) highlight reports.

- 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 the "Keeping Adolescents Safe / Supporting Safe Adolescents" 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, 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 coming into force for social media, search and gaming apps and websites in July 2025.² Assurance around the local response to these themes continues to be required.
- 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 the "Safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds" priority. This will continue to seek assurance around the work already in progress and address the questions for SCPs raised in the briefing from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel – "[It's Silent': Race, racism and safeguarding children](#)".
- It is evident that the "Effective Safeguarding in independent and out of school settings" 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" has been carried forward to both the LRSCPs' Business Plan for 2025-27 and [Safeguarding Adults Boards' Business Plan for 2025-27](#). It has been incorporated into a thematic priority, on "Belonging" for the LRSCP and "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion" for the Safeguarding Adults Boards, so that the cohort of children and young people to be addressed can be clearer and more targeted.

Consultations

29. The Yearly Report includes a summary of the consultation and engagement work the LRSCP has carried out with children, young people and families.
30. All members of the LRSCP have had opportunities to contribute to and comment on drafts of the Yearly Report.

² <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/protecting-children/new-rules-for-a-safer-generation-of-children-online>

31. As stated above, the Yearly Report has also been considered by the County Council's Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 2 September and its comments will be reported to the Cabinet.

Equality Implications

32. Safeguarding children and young people concerns individuals who are likely to be disadvantaged in a number of ways. Information on the differing needs of and impacts on different groups of individuals with regard to safeguarding is considered as part of the process to develop the Partnerships' Business Plan. The Partnerships' initiated a specific priority in 2021-22 to explore the safeguarding of children from diverse backgrounds. The work on this continued into 2024-25. It will now be overseen under the "Belonging" priority included in the 2025-27 Business Plan.

Human Rights Implications

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

Crime and Disorder Implications

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

Health Implications

35. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Health and care needs can be linked to safeguarding risk for adults and children and the health and care system can support the prevention of, identification of, and response to safeguarding risk.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 13 September 2024: [Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023/24](#).

Appendix

Draft Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2024-25.