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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 SEPTEMBER 2025

DRAFT LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP YEARLY REPORT 2024-25

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which sought views on the draft Yearly Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) for 2024-25. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 13', is filed with these minutes.

The Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Family Services emphasised that the reported demonstrated both the scale and the seriousness of safeguarding and highlighted the importance of early intervention.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) The Director explained that local authorities and statutory safeguarding partners had both a statutory obligation and a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. This included the reporting of safeguarding concerns. Elected Members also had a duty as corporate parents. In terms of the wider responsibility for safeguarding, the Department regularly undertook work through safeguarding partnerships on recognising the signs of abuse and campaigns focussed on helping communities to identify children at risk of abuse.
- (ii) In response to a question regarding group based sexual exploitation, the Director advised that it could not be possible to state that such activity was not taking place at any given time. However, members were assured that whilst the Director was not aware of any ongoing investigations or high-profile incidents relating to large scale grooming gangs in Leicestershire, robust methods of identification and monitoring continued to be utilised in order to respond to instances whereby exploitation was suspected and to support children at risk of exploitation.
- (iii) With regards to health information sessions which had been delivered by doctors and other healthcare professional within Family Hubs, members noted that the sessions had been piloted within a specific location in order to prevent unnecessary GP referrals relating to specific health issues. The sessions had a positive outcome, but it was not clear whether the sessions

had been delivered in Family Hubs in additional locations. Members noted that the Director would discuss with the Service the approach for ongoing delivery.

- (iv) Concern was raised regarding the sustainability of funding for the Partnership's work, as a shortfall had been reported. This shortfall had been made up from reserves. The Director stated that funding arrangements for the Partnership continued to be reviewed on an annual basis. Members received assurance that as part of the local implementation of national reforms to children's social care, the Department would review whether service delivery could be undertaken more efficiently. If savings could not be delivered within the Department, negotiations with partners regarding contributions would take place in order to address the shortfall in funding.
- (v) Members noted that a Race, Ethnicity and Excellence Forum (REEF) had been established in order to ensure that the best level of support was being provided to children from Black, Asian or Multi Ethnic backgrounds. The additional safeguarding needs of this group needed to be considered as a result of intersectionality, racism or discrimination. The forum allowed staff across the Department to bring cases to discuss in order to ensure the needs of black, Asian and Multi Ethnic children and young people were being fully considered and to analyse broader issues relating to race which could impact on safeguarding children.
- (vi) In response to a question asked of the Lead Member for Children and Families regarding his support for the work undertaken by the REEF, he stated that his most important priority as designated Lead Member for Children and Young People was that all children, regardless of background, were safeguarded. He assured members that he supported the best interests of all children and that this was fundamental in ensuring that he and the Director of Children and Family Services delivered their safeguarding responsibilities.
- (vii) With regards to the Partnership's priorities for 2025-27, members noted that work focusing on child exploitation would be delivered as part of work to be delivered as part of Harm Outside the Home. The Director stated that this would be made clearly within the final version of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2024-25.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft yearly report assessing the impact of the work undertaken in 2024/25 on safeguarding outcomes for children in Leicestershire and Rutland be noted.
- (b) That the views expressed by the Committee would be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 12 September 2025.