

**Leicestershire & Rutland  
Safeguarding Children  
Partnership  
Yearly Report 2025-26**

## Foreword

The child protection and early help landscape continues to evolve, with the Families First Partnership (FFP) a year into its two-year implementation programme. This is an exciting opportunity to reset the way services are delivered and how agencies and practitioners engage children and families. The programme is underpinned by principles and values of whole family working and developing multi-disciplinary teams who contribute to a team around the family.

The SEND Reform is in progress, and changes are imminent as a result of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026, with the aim of strengthening practice around different cohorts of children and young people, including care leavers, those affected by child sexual abuse and child criminal exploitation.

These reforms and changes in legislation will have an effect on multi-agency working nationally and locally. We, the local Safeguarding Children Partners, have a responsibility to support and guide the local workforce through this period of change, acknowledging the context of increased demand and challenging workloads. We thank them for their continued dedication and commitment to local children and young people.

In 2025-26, the Safeguarding Children Partnership of Leicestershire & Rutland, alongside the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership, have implemented and embedded our own significant changes to structure and processes. These have led to improvements to quality assurance, scrutiny, communication and engagement arrangements. This has, in turn, led to encouraging and impactful feedback about our work at both a strategic and practice level, with the Leicestershire Joint Targeted Area Inspection recognising the commitment to support local children affected by child sexual abuse, and at an operational level with positive responses to our training events and learning and development resources.

We are pleased to present this report of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

The Safeguarding Partners for Leicestershire & Rutland

| Key Achievements in 2025-26                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Key Challenges in 2025-26                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant amount of work completed around child sexual abuse and the progress made reflected in the positive result of the Leicestershire Joint Targeted Area Inspection</li> <li>• Changes implemented to the subgroup structure have had a positive impact on understanding of</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes resulting from national reforms, whilst positive, are requiring a lot of local changes which is challenging in terms of timescales and resources required</li> <li>• There is a need to ensure the Partnership remains stable in the context of wider changes, such as</li> </ul> |

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| <p>quality assurance and service improvement, with an increased number of multi-agency audits completed in 2025-26, enhancing the picture around key safeguarding themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two Young Scrutineers have been recruited to work alongside the Adult Independent Scrutineer, strengthening the commitment to ensuring that the voices and lived experiences of children and young people are at the heart of everything the Partnerships do</li> <li>Continued timely implementation of learning resulting from national reviews, published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, and out of area reviews</li> </ul> | <p>the Local Government Reorganisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant and notable increase in demand at the front door across all three Local Authorities (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) and, therefore, there has been a significant demand in multi-agency meetings, with rises in strategy discussions, Section 47s, Initial Child Protection Conferences and Review Child Protection Conferences</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

*"I just wanted to take a moment to say a heartfelt thank you to the worker for everything you have done for me and my children. Your support and guidance have been absolutely incredible."*

Feedback from Leicestershire parent/carer

*"I hope every situation would have social workers like you two. It doesn't feel like you were judgmental, but for (Mum) especially that meant a lot to me that she wouldn't feel judged. You both have been open and honest. You came across as people that understand people and what children need. [...] You were people that knew more than us and we can only ever learn from people like you. [...] You worked with us teaching us, so we learnt too."*

Feedback from Rutland parent/carer

## Observations from our Independent Scrutineer

During 2025-26, I have continued to provide independent scrutiny, constructive challenge, assurance and support to the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership. My focus has been on testing whether the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are effective, whether partners are working together with sufficient pace and impact, and whether the voice and lived experience of children and families are influencing strategic decision-making.

This year, the Partnership has shown clear evidence of strengthening its governance and quality assurance arrangements. The revised subgroup structure, including the introduction of separate Performance and Audit Groups, has improved its ability to understand practice, identify themes and translate learning into action. It has also supported a more focused approach to assurance, enabling partners to consider quantitative data alongside qualitative evidence from audits, reviews and practitioner feedback.

There have also been notable strengths during the year. The Partnership's work on child sexual abuse has been particularly significant, bringing together learning from local reviews, multi-agency audit activity, the NSPCC system-wide snapshot and the Leicestershire Joint Targeted Area Inspection to inform strategic planning and workforce development. The positive findings from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection reflected strong local commitment, skilled frontline practice and effective multi-agency leadership. The challenge now is to sustain this momentum and ensure that the emerging strategy, training offer and pathways lead to consistent practice across all agencies.

As Independent Scrutineer, I have observed the Partnership's continued focus on learning from reviews, national evidence and inspection findings. There is a clear commitment to embedding learning in practice through briefings, procedures, training and assurance activity. Work on neglect, safeguarding children with chronic health needs, safer sleep, belonging and harm outside the home demonstrates the breadth of the Partnership's safeguarding agenda and its willingness to respond to both local and national learning.

Another important development has been the Partnership's strengthened commitment to hearing from children, young people and families. The establishment of the Communication and Engagement Group and the recruitment of Young Scrutineers are important steps in ensuring that scrutiny is informed not only by professionals, but also by those who experience services. This work should continue to develop so that the voices of children and families are visible in priority-setting, audit activity, service improvement and the evaluation of impact.

Alongside these strengths, there remain areas requiring continued attention. Increased demand across the front door, child protection processes and multi-agency meetings has placed pressure on agencies and practitioners. At the same time, the implementation of national reforms, including the Families First Partnership programme, SEND reform and legislative change, is creating further complexity. The Partnership will need to maintain oversight of the impact of these changes, particularly in relation to thresholds, information sharing, workforce capacity and the consistency of multi-agency decision-making.

This wider context is compounded by ongoing organisational change across partner agencies and sustained budgetary pressures. The impact of these pressures should be kept under close review, particularly in relation to capacity, partnership resilience and the ability to sustain improvement activity.

In response, I have worked closely throughout the year with the Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board. This has supported a more joined-up approach to scrutiny in two key areas: understanding the impact of partnership budget pressures and progressing work on transitional safeguarding.

Looking ahead to 2026-27, the Partnership should maintain its focus on evidencing impact. This means demonstrating how learning from scrutiny, audit, reviews and inspection leads to measurable improvements in practice and outcomes for children. Particular attention should be given to the implementation of the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy, the response to child protection demand, the effectiveness of the refreshed assurance arrangements, and the extent to which children's voices are influencing change.

Overall, the Partnership has made positive progress during 2025-26. It has shown openness to challenge, a willingness to adapt its arrangements and a clear commitment to learning and improvement. Continued independent scrutiny, strengthened by the contribution of Young Scrutineers, will support partners to maintain this focus, challenge each other constructively and ensure that safeguarding arrangements make a demonstrable difference to children and families in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Amanda Boodhoo

Independent Scrutineer

## Area profile

### Local Context

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>1</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) 2026-2029 shows that:<sup>2</sup>

- In 2024, the total resident population in Leicestershire was 745,573. 49.4% (368,446) of the population were male and 50.6% (377,127) were female.
- 22.3% (166,369) of the Leicestershire population were aged 0-19 years. This compares to 22.9% of the East Midlands population and 23.1% of England's population.
- Breaking the data down further into smaller age ranges, most male children/young people in Leicestershire fell within the 15-19 age group and most female children/young people fell within the 10-14 age group

| Age range | % of males of the total Leicestershire population | % of females of the total Leicestershire population |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 0-4       | 2.5%                                              | 2.4%                                                |
| 5-9       | 2.9%                                              | 2.7%                                                |
| 10-14     | 3.0%                                              | 2.9%                                                |
| 15-19     | 3.2%                                              | 2.8%                                                |

- Across the Leicestershire districts in 2024, Charnwood had the largest population (188,385 people), while Melton had the smallest population (54,052 people). Charnwood had a larger proportion of the population in the 15- to 24-year-old age group than the other districts. This was likely due to the student population of Loughborough, both at university and college age. Oadby and Wigston had a higher proportion of the population in the 15 to 19

<sup>1</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/2025-26>.

<sup>2</sup> Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2026-29 – accessible via <https://www.lsr-online.org/leicestershire-2026-2029-jsna>. The JSNA data is taken from the Demography Dashboard, first created by Leicestershire County Council Business Intelligence Service in December 2025 and updated in June 2026.

age year band, perhaps reflecting the younger population of the city and student population.

- In 2021, the majority (87.5%) of the resident population of Leicestershire was of white ethnicity.<sup>3</sup> The figure for the East Midlands was 85.7% and the figure for England was 81.0%. Those residents from an Asian ethnic background constituted 8.2% of the population; those residents from a mixed ethnic background constituted 2.2% of the population; and those from a black ethnic background constituted 1.1% of the population.
- There are differences between age groups. A smaller proportion of people in the age groups under 50 years old in Leicestershire identified as white compared to those in the age groups over 50 years old.
- Looking at the 0-24 age range, in Leicestershire, 82.6% of people were of White ethnicity; 9.2% of Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh ethnicity; 5.1% of Mixed or Multiple ethnicity; 1.7% of Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African ethnicity; and 1.3% of other ethnicity.
- Across the seven districts, the majority of each population was of white ethnicity. With the exception of Oadby and Wigston, all districts had a larger proportion of people of white ethnicity than England. For the majority of the districts (other than Melton and North West Leicestershire), those residents from an Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh ethnic background constituted the second largest proportion of each district's population. In Oadby and Wigston, the proportion of the population that identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh (27.9%) was over two times larger than any other district. The proportion of the population that identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh ethnicity in Oadby and Wigston (27.9%) and Charnwood (12.4%) was larger than the proportion for England (9.6%).
- According to the 2025 Indices of Deprivation, Leicestershire is ranked 136<sup>th</sup> out of 153 Upper Tier Local Authorities in England. None of the districts within Leicestershire fall within the top half of deprived local authority districts within England. However, despite this positive high-level picture, some pockets of deprivation exist. Three areas in Leicestershire fall within the most deprived decile nationally; these areas can be found in Loughborough and Coalville.

Statistics on school and pupil numbers for the Academic Year 2025-26, published by the Department for Education,<sup>4</sup> show that:

- There were 107,577 pupils in Leicestershire schools.
- The majority of the school population (73.3%) is of white British ethnicity.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This is the most recent data available on the Leicestershire JSNA.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2025-26>.

<sup>5</sup> Note that this total includes state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. It does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

- English is known or believed to be the first language of 88.5% of pupils, with 10.2% of pupils known or believed to have a first language other than English and 1.3% where language is unclassified.<sup>6</sup>

## Rutland

The Rutland Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2026-2029 shows that:<sup>7</sup>

- In 2024, the resident population estimate for Rutland was 41,443. 51.2% (21,237) of the population were male and 48.8% (20,206) were female.
- 21.6% (8,959) of the population were aged 0-19 years. This compares to 22.9% of the East Midlands population and 23.1% of England's population.
- Breaking the data down further into smaller age ranges, most children/young people in Rutland fell within the 15-19 age group.

| Age range | % of males of the total Rutland population | % of females of the total Rutland population |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 0-4       | 1.7%                                       | 1.7%                                         |
| 5-9       | 2.3%                                       | 2.3%                                         |
| 10-14     | 3.1%                                       | 2.7%                                         |
| 15-19     | 4.2%                                       | 3.6%                                         |

- In 2021, the majority (94.8%) of the resident population of Rutland was of white ethnicity. A larger proportion of the population were of white ethnicity in Rutland than in the East Midlands (85.7%) and England (81.0%). Those residents from a mixed ethnic background constituted 1.8% of the population; those from an Asian ethnic background constituted 1.5% of the population; and those from a black ethnic background constituted 1.3% of the population.
- There are differences between age groups. A smaller proportion of people in the age groups under 50 years old in Rutland identified as white compared to those in age groups over 50 years old.
- Looking at the 0-24 age range, 91.7% of people were of White ethnicity; 3.9% of Mixed or Multiple ethnicity; 2.2% of Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh ethnicity; 1.6% of Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African ethnicity; and 0.7% of other ethnicity.
- According to the 2025 Indices of Deprivation, Rutland is ranked 150<sup>th</sup> out of 153 Upper Tier Local Authorities in England. Rutland has low levels of deprivation across most of the measured domains, but Rutland is more deprived for the domains of living environment and barriers to housing and

<sup>6</sup> As above.

<sup>7</sup> Rutland Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2026-29 – accessible via <https://www.lsr-online.org/rutland-2026-2029-jsna>. The JSNA data is taken from the Demography Dashboard, first created by Leicestershire County Council Business Intelligence Service in December 2025 and updated in June 2026.



services. One of Rutland's areas falls within the 10% most deprived areas nationally for the living environment domain and nine of Rutland's areas fall within the 10% most deprived areas nationally for the barriers to housing and services domain.

Statistics on school and pupil numbers for the Academic Year 2025-26, published by the Department for Education,<sup>8</sup> show that:

- There were 7,772 pupils in Rutland schools.
- The majority of the school population (85.9%) is of white British ethnicity.<sup>9</sup>
- English is known or believed to be the first language of 94.8% of pupils, with 4.9% of pupils known or believed to have a first language other than English and 0.3% where language is unclassified.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2025-26>.

<sup>9</sup> Note that this total includes state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. It does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

<sup>10</sup> As above.

## 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 the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership shares a number of partners with Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), joint [Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) (MASA) are published.

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

## Partnership Governance

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.

As set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), each safeguarding partner identifies a Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP) and a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP).<sup>11</sup>

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 Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership can be found on the website: <https://lrsb.org.uk/scp-membership-list>.

<sup>11</sup> Department for Education, [Working Together 2026: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children](#), March 2026, page 29, paragraph 52 and page 31, paragraphs 60 and 61.

## 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 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.<sup>12</sup>

## Scrutineers

Working Together states that “Safeguarding partners must ensure that there are arrangements for effective independent scrutiny in place for their local area.”<sup>13</sup> Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships jointly commission an Independent Scrutineer and Young Scrutineers. More information about the Young Scrutineers is included later in the Yearly Report.

## Updates to published arrangements

In line with Working Together 2026, updates to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements are required when there are key changes, such as changes to the Lead Safeguarding Partners, or the list of relevant agencies. Updates are sent to the Department for Education.<sup>14</sup> In 2025-26, updates were implemented to reflect:

- The change of Lead Safeguarding Partner for the Integrated Care Board, Police and Leicestershire Local Authority
- The change of Delegated Safeguarding Partner for the Police, Rutland Local Authority and Leicestershire Local Authority
- The changes to the subgroup structure (further detail provided later in the report).

## Yearly Report

Working Together 2026 states that “Safeguarding partners must jointly report on the activity they have undertaken in a 12-month period”.<sup>15</sup> This Yearly Report fulfils this requirement.

## Purpose of the Partnership

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026:<sup>16</sup>

The purpose of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements is to ensure that, at a local level, organisations and agencies are clear about how they will work together to safeguard all children and promote their welfare. This means:

- there is a clear, shared vision for how to improve outcomes for children locally across all levels of need and all types of harm

<sup>12</sup> [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) (December 2024), page 8.

<sup>13</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), page 39, paragraph 95.

<sup>14</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), page 43, paragraph 111.

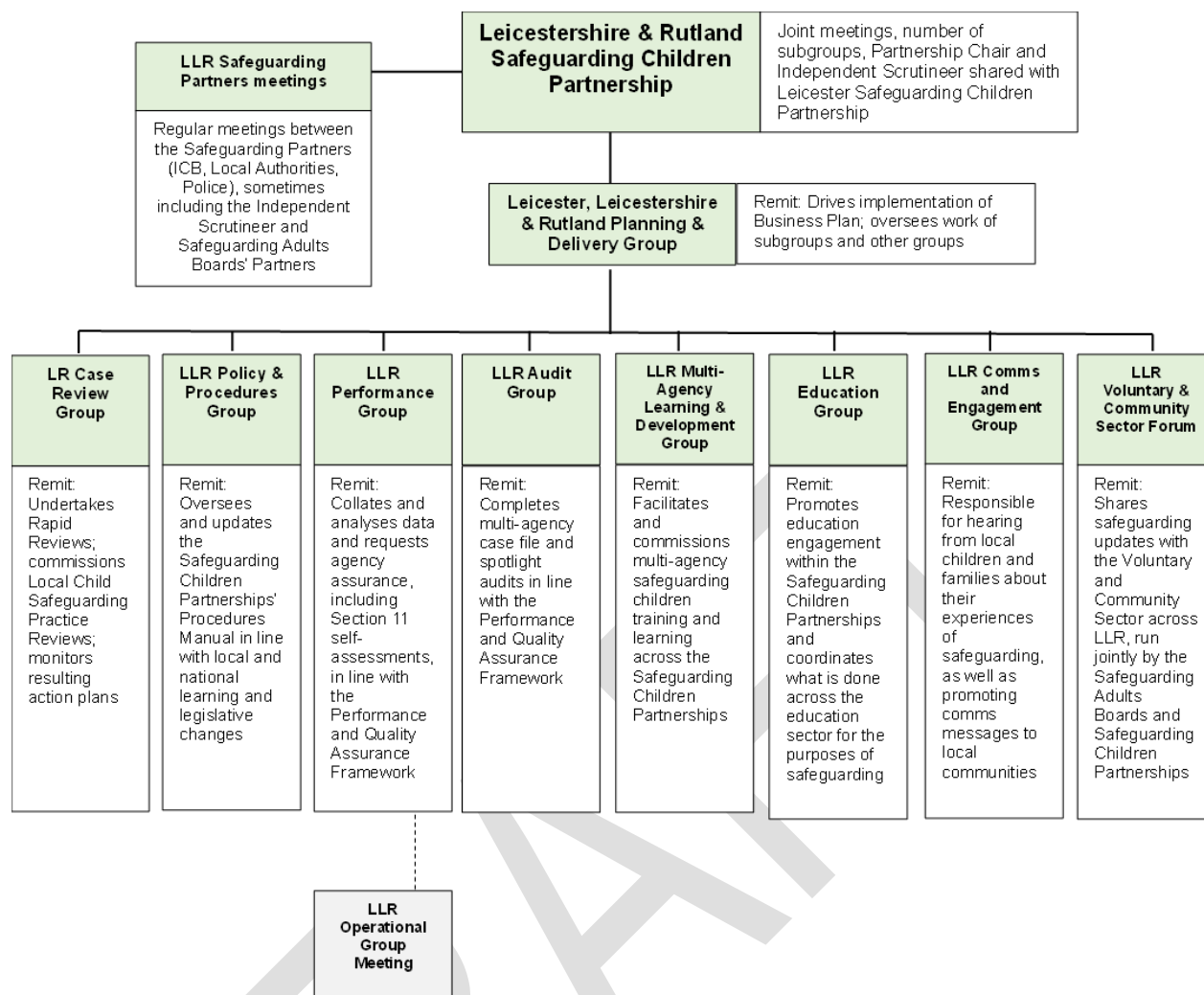
<sup>15</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), page 43, paragraph 112.

<sup>16</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), page 27, paragraph 44.

- 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
- 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 through this the identification of groups of children who may be disproportionately over- or under-represented in services, 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, including the identification of groups of children who may be disproportionately over- or under-represented in services, so that services are adapted to address these issues
- 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

### **Partnership structure**

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



Delegated Safeguarding Partners attend the 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 of the local Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) and their Independent Chair 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.

Further information about the subgroups of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships is available throughout the Yearly Report.

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.

## **Representation of Education sector**

### Strategic level

For many years, the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership has included representatives on its membership from primary, secondary and special schools from both local authority areas. In 2025-26, the Partnership welcomed several new Schools representatives.

The Chair of the Education Subgroup also sits on the Safeguarding Children Partnership and, when required, joins the Delegated Safeguarding Partners at the meeting of Safeguarding Partners.

### Operational level

2025-26 saw the first full year of the running of the Education Group. The formation of the Education Group recognised 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 discussed by the group in 2025-26 covered self-harm and suicide, including support for local children and young people during school holidays; the effect of the Netflix Adolescence TV drama, including the production of guidance and an emoji guide for schools; and the key findings from Warrington Safeguarding Children Partnership's 'Scarlett' Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, including work on managed moves.

Presentations were also delivered to the Education Group by the Violence Reduction Network, regarding the assets they have, including Live Safe, the School's Network and the Prevention Panels, and Project Echo. This is run by Safelives alongside Living Without Abuse, and puts the voices of survivors at the heart of local responses to domestic abuse.

The membership of the Education Group has grown throughout 2025-26. The group continues to strengthen its identity and deepen its understanding of the diverse educational settings it represents, as well as the safeguarding challenges these settings encounter.

Moving forwards, the aim is to increase the group's breadth and reach, with the intention of including more representation from secondary schools, early years, post 16 provisions and virtual schools. Also, the Education Group will discuss the

Operation Encompass changes implemented in 2025-26. Operation Encompass aims to directly connect Police and Schools, to secure better outcomes for children living with domestic abuse. Schools have raised issues and questions about the information now provided in notifications.

In addition to the Education Group, a representative from the Leicestershire Safeguarding in Education team is a standing member on other subgroups, including the Case Review Group, Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group, and the Audit Group. 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. Rutland Education is also very engaged in subgroup work.

### Interface with other local strategic boards

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). In 2025-26, the Partnerships were also presented with the results of their Thematic Review into Suicide and Self-Inflicted Harm in children and young people.
- Are provided with annual updates, within dedicated agenda items in meetings, from Domestic Abuse Boards and the Adolescence Safety and Diversion Board. This sits under the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) and works to prevent and reduce involvement in violence through safeguarding, early intervention and diversion.
- Share the Yearly Report of the Safeguarding Children Partnership 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 and Safeguarding Children Partnership to manage the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) process, formerly the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process. Relevant learning from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews is fed into the work of the subgroups of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

### 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 Abuse Related Death 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.

**The contributions from partners for the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership for 2025-26 can be seen below alongside contributions for the previous year:**

|                                                                     | <b>2024-25</b>  | <b>2025-26</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         | £55,122         |
| Probation                                                           | N/A             | £2,192          |
| <b>Total income for SCP</b>                                         | <b>£203,092</b> | <b>£206,989</b> |

**Expenditure for the Safeguarding Children Partnership was apportioned as follows:**

|                        | <b>2024-25</b> | <b>2025-26</b> |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Staffing               | £147,121       | £157,779       |
| Independent Scrutineer | £13,973        | £13,439        |
| Support Services       | £1,920         | £1,740         |
| Operating Costs        | £10,665        | £13,144        |
| Training*              | £70,341        | £63,108        |



|                          |                 |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Case Reviews             | £2,250          | £0              |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b> | <b>£246,270</b> | <b>£249,210</b> |

\*The training figure includes half the cost of two members of staff who are shared with Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Staffing costs increased as a result of the agreed Leicestershire County Council pay award (as the staff are hosted by this Local Authority).

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

## Progress against statutory guidance

### Review of use of restraint in secure establishments

Working Together 2026 states that “Where there is a secure establishment in a local area, safeguarding partners should undertake a review to assure themselves of the appropriate use of restraint within the secure establishment and include the outcomes of the review in the Annual Report.”<sup>17</sup>

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.

### Implementation of changes set out in statutory guidance

#### Working Together 2026

In March 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) published a new edition of its statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children. Working Together 2026 replaced Working Together 2023. This guidance applies to all organisations and agencies in England who have functions relating to children and sets out the governance for Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

The NSPCC highlighted that the key changes in the 2026 edition include updates around:

- identifying, understanding and challenging racism and discrimination
- recognising the specific needs and experiences of babies
- understanding the impact of domestic abuse on children and families
- consideration of children experiencing simultaneous harms or multiple harms
- strengthened inclusion of children in care
- the link between online harm and harm experienced in person.<sup>18</sup>

Locally, the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships are in the process of updating their Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, multi-agency procedures and learning and development resources in line with this updated statutory guidance.

### 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

<sup>17</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), page 44, paragraph 114.

<sup>18</sup> NSPCC, “Working together to safeguard children 2026: summary of changes” CASPAR briefing, March 2026, <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2026/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2026-summary-of-changes>.

2024, and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. The reforms are designed to shift the balance of children's social care away from late intervention – child protection and the care system – towards early intervention.<sup>19</sup>



### **Families First Partnership (FFP) programme**

Families First Partnership is the name given by the Department for Education to the national programme of reforms across Children's Social Care. Locally, agencies have been working towards the delivery expectations for safeguarding partners set out in the Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide, published in March 2025.<sup>20</sup> This Year 1 Guide supported the first wave of reforms. The expectation set out in the guidance was that, in 2025-2026, ongoing business as usual service delivery would take place alongside transformational activity. [The Families First Partnership \(FFP\) Programme Guide](#) was updated in March 2026 to set out what should happen in Year 2, 2026-27.

Locally, it has been acknowledged that, for both Police and Health, there is the additional challenge of needing to work in partnership with the three different Local Authorities of the sub region. To assist the process, a Clinical Lead from Health and a Detective Inspector from Leicestershire Police have been seconded to the three Local Authorities to support the programme.

During the implementation, local conferences are being held, led by the statutory safeguarding partners – Children's Social Care, Police, Health and Education – to inform the wider partnership of the progress being made. The November 2025 conference saw representatives from across the Voluntary and Community sector, District Councils, Public Health, CAMHS, Healthy Together, Integrated Care Board, Police, Probation, local authority services, Safeguarding Partnership, and Education Services.

The key pillars of the government's programme of reform are: Family Help, Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams, and Family Networks. The diagram below presents the Government's vision for the reformed system:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See Community Care Inform Children: <https://www.ccinform.co.uk/practice-guidance/childrens-social-care-reforms/>.

<sup>20</sup> Department for Education, The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide: Delivery expectations for statutory safeguarding partners in England, March 2025 (Year 1).

<sup>21</sup> Department for Education, [The Families First Partnership \(FFP\) Programme Guide: Delivery expectations for statutory safeguarding partners in England: Year 2 \(2026 to 2027\)](#), March 2026, page 8.



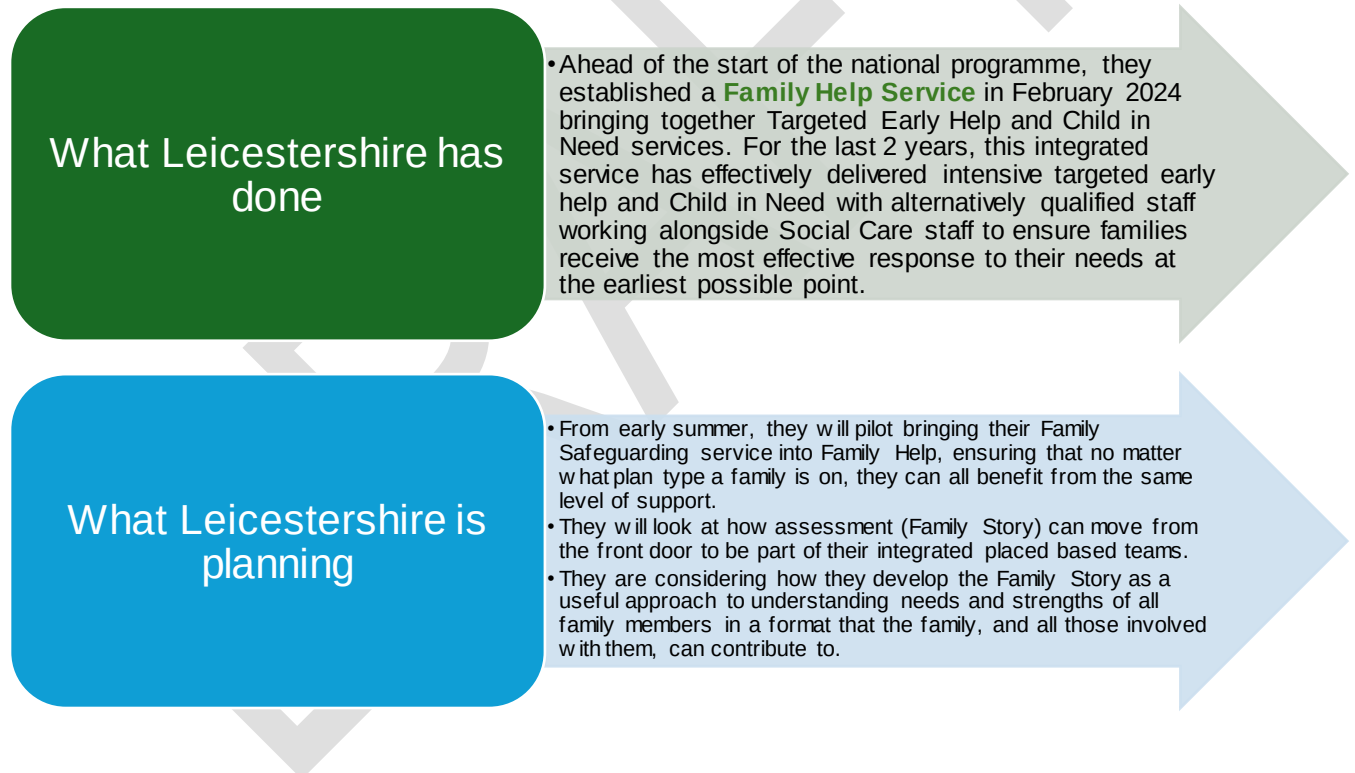
\*FGDM = Family Group Decision Making and FNSP = Family Network Support Packages

There is a deadline of March 2027 for full implementation of the changes.

### Leicestershire

In Leicestershire, work has been underway since summer 2025, focused on the three core pillars:

#### **Family Help**



## Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT)

### What Leicestershire has done

- They have been working closely with seconded colleagues from Police and Health, together with Education, to explore how they will design and implement a Multi-Agency Child Protection Team in the county.
- They have also worked closely with the City and Rutland to ensure they are developing a very similar model.

### What Leicestershire is planning

- They are working towards signing off a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland model by the end of June 2026.
- They hope to be piloting their approach soon after.

## Family Group Decision Making

### What Leicestershire has done

- They have based their thinking around the use of Family Network Meetings at the earliest possible opportunity.
- They have undertaken case audits to understand their current use of the model, and have been reviewing how they support practitioners and managers to achieve a consistent approach.
- They have also talked to partners across EarlyHelp about the concept of Family Networks and the role they have to play in supporting this way of working.

### What Leicestershire is planning

- They have a seconded practitioner undertaking the role of Family Network Meeting Facilitator. This role will support practitioners to increase their confidence and develop their skills through a coaching approach, and will also work with partner agencies to identify ways in which talking about family networks becomes common practice across a range of services.

## Rutland

### Family Help

#### What Rutland has done

- Rutland have had an integrated front door with Family Help since 2024. They have developed this further to deliver a co-working pilot within Family Help, focusing on more joined up working for Child in Need families. The pilot is currently being prepared for evaluation.
- They have completed a system health check, alongside a single assessment workshop, and have begun implementing agreed actions.
- They have developed work to improve family friendly assessment summaries.
- They have undertaken a meeting mapping exercise to inform the development of more effective multi-disciplinary meetings.
- They have increased capacity across Family Help to support more families.
- They have offered co-working with practitioners so that families have a consistency of service.
- They have increased the support offer to partners with a panel to aid early support to families.

#### What Rutland is planning

- They will increase screening capacity and introduce an additional social work post.
- They will make changes to the recording systems so that they are seamless.
- They will host a workforce co-design event to finalise the shape of the Family Help Lead Practitioner role.
- They will use the evaluation to design the final model and approach.
- They will continue to work closely with SEND and Best Start in Life to ensure a coherent offer to families.

### Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT)

#### What Rutland has done

- They worked with multi-agency partners to design a model that works for Rutland and designed an operating procedure.
- They have worked in partnership with Leicester and Leicestershire to co-design and test a Multi-Agency Child Protection Team model.

#### What Rutland is planning

- They will launch the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team test and learn in September 2026.
- They will evaluate and adapt the model for full implementation by April 2027.
- They will ensure there is an appropriate multi-agency training and induction offer for the MACPT.

## Family Group Decision Making

### What Rutland has done

- They had a working group to design the model.
- They have developed a high-level proposal which sets out their intended approach to Family Group Decision Making.

### What Rutland is planning

- They will train at least 50% of the workforce as Family Group Conference (FGC) facilitators.
- They will commission advocacy support.
- They will review and further develop information and guidance materials for practitioners and families.
- They will work on data relating to Family Group Decision Making and look at how they track the impact.

### Moving forwards

It will be ensured that there are links between the Families First Partnership programme across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group so that any system changes can be reflected in training, including how to access services. Any training requirements that are multi-agency can be delivered, where appropriate, through the subgroup.

### Best Start in Life Strategy



The government's [Best Start in Life](#) campaign, delivered by the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Social Care, aims to help break down barriers to opportunity for every family, supporting parents and children from pregnancy through to age five and beyond. "Giving every child the best start in life" is the government's strategy for improving child health and development and meeting the ambition that 75% of 5-

year-olds in England have a good level of development by 2028.<sup>22</sup>

Both [Leicestershire](#) and [Rutland](#) have developed and published Best Start in Life Plans.

<sup>22</sup> See UK Government, "[Best Start in Life: 2025 campaign toolkit](#)", October 2025, pages 4 and 5.

## **Family Hubs**

In line with Best Start in Life, Family Hubs can help families access a wide range of support. 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.



Leicestershire has 21 [Family Hubs](#). Across Leicestershire, Best Start Family Hubs are now well established, offering accessible, joined up support for families, children, and young people. The Hubs are used by teams from across the Partnership, such as Family Help, Midwifery, Health Visiting, Housing Advice, Local Area Coordinators, Police Community Support Officers, and voluntary sector groups. This varies from area to

area. The Family Hubs can be a 'one stop shop' for advice, information and support where it is needed at the heart of local communities.



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. The

Rutland Family Hub offer includes the Oakham Family Hub; outreach services, including to people who live in a more isolated, rural area or perhaps on one of the military bases in the county; and digital services and support, including online groups and virtual, interactive learning activities.

## **Five to Thrive**



Five to Thrive is an evidence-based model, which supports healthy brain development in children, fostering secure attachment and resilience. It promotes safety, connection, and co-regulation, helping practitioners recognise their role as a vital resource for families. The approach also encourages shared language and collaboration across services.

Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Services are leading a three-year project to embed Five to Thrive and Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Nearly 200 practitioners have already been trained, with Education and Early Years being prioritised in 2025-26. Health and Midwifery will be the focus in 2026-27.



## **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act**

It is acknowledged that the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 will lead to significant changes in different areas.<sup>23</sup> For example, 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 Act. This includes the creation of a Children not in School Register. Also, the Act will set out changes in corporate parenting responsibility for services wider than Children's Social Care.<sup>24</sup> These national changes will inform any required changes to local policies and procedures, and training requirements will be considered.

## **Crime and Policing Act**

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 will bring in numerous elements linked to the protection of children, implementing recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, including by introducing a new duty to report child sexual abuse, and creating new offences of cuckooing and child criminal exploitation.<sup>25</sup> These national changes will inform any required changes to local policies and procedures and training requirements will be considered.

## **SEND Reform**

In February 2026, the government published the Schools White Paper, titled "Every Child Achieving and Thriving". Subsequently, the Department for Education published "SEND reform: putting children and young people first" and plans to reform the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system in England.<sup>26</sup> The changes aim to improve help and support for children and young people with SEND across the 0 to 25 years system.

Locally, Education teams are considering the resource and capacity implications, the range of pastoral needs which schools have to respond to, and the logistical and strategy challenges. In October 2025, each Local Authority delivered SEND Assurance reports to the Safeguarding Children Partnerships to set out the current picture.

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<sup>23</sup> The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill was proposed in 2024 – see <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/12/the-childrens-wellbeing-bill-what-parents-need-to-know/>. The resulting Act became law in April 2026.

<sup>24</sup> Department for Education, [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024: Policy Summary Notes](#), January 2026.

<sup>25</sup> The Crime and Policing Bill was proposed in 2025. The resulting Act became law in April 2026 – <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/crime-and-policing-act-2026>.

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/every-child-achieving-and-thriving/every-child-achieving-and-thriving-html-version> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/send-reform-putting-children-and-young-people-first/send-reform-putting-children-and-young-people-first-html-version>.

## **Local Government Reorganisation**

The new councils, which will be formed as a result of the Local Government Reorganisation, are due to come into effect in April 2028. All 10 local councils (Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, Rutland County Council, Borough and District Councils) are already working together on the transition.

## **Recent Inspections**

### **Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)**

Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs) are carried out under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. Working Together 2026 notes that “Safeguarding partners are inspected at a single agency level by their respective inspectorates; Ofsted, His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and Care Quality Commission (CQC). These inspectorates, along with HMI Probation, also jointly inspect and report on the impact of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) programme.”<sup>27</sup> Each JTAI cycle looks at a different theme relevant to multi-agency working.

In November 2025, it was confirmed that Leicestershire would be subject to a Joint Targeted Area Inspection on the theme of Child Sexual Abuse within the family environment.<sup>28</sup>

This was a three-week process, with inspectors from Ofsted for the Local Authority, the CQC for Health, HMICFRS for Police and HMI Probation for Probation on site for a week in December 2025. In order to evaluate children’s experiences, inspectors carried out case sampling and tracking and observations of practice. They spoke with staff and children, young people and families. The inspectors requested information from individual agencies and reviewed case related documents, as well as performance and management information.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership supported partners in this process, submitting documentation as required and the Independent Scrutineer meeting with inspectors.

The Joint Targeted Area Inspection results letter was published on 12.02.26. The Partnership was praised, with the report highlighting robust leadership, sensitive and skilled frontline practice, effective specialist support, and a strong multi-agency commitment to keeping children safe. Inspectors also noted the proactive work already underway, including local reviews, training and a draft county wide strategy to further strengthen the response to child sexual abuse.

Partners will build on the report’s suggestions, including improving early information sharing, expanding specialist therapeutic support, and increasing take-up of multi-agency Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment training. Progression of the

<sup>27</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), page 39, paragraph 94.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-targeted-area-inspections-of-the-response-to-child-sexual-abuse-in-the-family-environment>

Action Plan formulated as a result of the JTAI is being supported by the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The following webpage includes the full joint statement from the partners: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/news/commitment-to-support-vulnerable-leicestershire-children-recognised>. The full response is available on the Ofsted website [here](#).

#### Rutland Ofsted focused visit



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. The services were rated as good by Ofsted.

In March 2026, Ofsted carried out a focused visit in Rutland. Ofsted carry out focused visits between standard and short inspections.<sup>29</sup> It was found that Family Help is good and continues to make a difference; the timeliness and quality of multi-agency strategy discussions need to improve; and the consistency of case recording needs to improve. The full response letter is available [here](#).

#### Probation Inspection

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland had their Local Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) inspection, with the report published in May 2025. In addition, the East Midlands, as a region, then had an inspection and that report was published in August 2025. The East Midlands Inspection result was inadequate. Victim work overall was good. The public protection work was not strong enough. In both reports, the effect of the national context was acknowledged by the Chief Inspector, with the prioritising of national policy changes, linked to prison capacity, impacting on local delivery. The Safeguarding Children Partnerships received a presentation on both the East Midlands recommendations and the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland recommendations and the Action Plan in place.

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

Work is taking place across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland to develop thinking about the use of a shared early help assessment. Previously, there was the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Locally, there has not been a focus on this way of working for many years.

The Quick-Thinking Plan (QTP) is a 2-page document which enables any organisation to quickly capture the worries, strengths and what needs to happen

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-s-services#focused-visits>

for any family with lower-level issues that do not require support from Children and Family Services. The plan will demonstrate to families that they are being heard, that there is support for them, but also what they and the organisation can do to move forward. It will be useful if the needs of the family increase or escalate. The Quick-Thinking Plan will help to demonstrate what has already been tried and can avoid families having to re-tell their story.

To date, the focus has been on Leicestershire working with school-based colleagues on this approach. It has now been opened up across the Partnerships.

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

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships want to have meaningful engagement with children, young people and families that makes a difference to their work. To acknowledge that engagement could be improved, two new initiatives were progressed in 2025-26 – the Communication and Engagement Group and the recruitment of two Young Scrutineers.

### Communication and Engagement Group

This group is responsible for hearing from local children and families about their experiences of safeguarding, as well as promoting messages to local communities. The group's membership includes Engagement Officers, Children's Rights and Participation Team Leaders and Communications/Media Officers and the Independent Scrutineer. In the future, the Young Scrutineers will become members too (see below).

The group is working on a Strategy and has a two-year work plan, which addresses key deliverables linked to local Business Plan priorities, learning from reviews and multi-agency audits, and national learning, including from the NSPCC. To support the group's dissemination of key national messages, a Hub Relationship Manager from the NSPCC attended one of their meetings.



In 2025-26, linked to the Harm Outside the Home business priority, the group has supported promotion of [Live Safe](#). This is a partnership initiative providing a central online hub for young people,

parents/carers, and professionals across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland with the main aim to empower young people (aged 10–19, but also relevant to young adults up to 25), their families, and professionals to play an active role in keeping young people safe.

A practitioner from Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) gave a presentation on care leavers' experiences of accessing mental health services, including the views of young people with lived experience. The group is now considering how to further support and increase communications around this cohort of young people.

### Moving forwards

As a result of learning from a multi-agency audit, and in collaboration with the Safeguarding Adults Boards, the Safeguarding Children Partnerships will further promote [Sarah's Law](#) and [Clare's Law](#) to local families and communities. These are disclosure schemes, about child sex offenders and domestic violence respectively, which allow the Police to release information about previous history related to these types of abuse to provide information that could help protect people at risk and prevent further crimes.

During Safeguarding Adults Week in November 2025, which focused on "Prevention: act before abuse", the Safeguarding Adults Boards hosted a number of free online 15-minute spotlight briefings at the start of each week day, with one promoting

Clare's Law. The [video of the briefing](#) is now available on the Safeguarding Adults Boards' YouTube Channel. Information has also been shared with the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum. Work will continue over 2026-27. There will be more work to promote existing resources and ensure they are accessible across community settings.

## Young Scrutineers

Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships have recently recruited two Young Scrutineers to work alongside the Adult Independent Scrutineer, strengthening the commitment to ensuring that the voices and lived experiences of children and young people are at the heart of everything the Partnerships do. Their role is to challenge how effectively safeguarding partners listen to, engage with, and act upon the views of children and young people.

The Young Scrutineers will:

- Attend partnership meetings to share their perspectives and help ensure priorities reflect what matters most to young people.
- Review policies, plans, and projects to ensure the voice of the child is central to decision-making.
- Contribute to reports and help present findings from their scrutiny work.
- Engage with children and young people across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to gather their views and ensure these are shared with key decision-makers.
- Visit frontline services to understand how practice works on the ground and provide informed feedback for improvement.

## Ongoing voice work in partner agencies

Leicestershire Children and Family Services have:



- A Departmental Voice Strategy, grounded in the Lundy Model of Participation, which promotes a rights-based, inclusive approach that values lived experiences and cultural identity. 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 and forums with direct links with children and young people, 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.
- Processes in place to ensure that children's voices are embedded in assessments and plans and their wishes and feelings are recorded by practitioners.
- A Language that Cares Toolkit and an agreement to write case records to children and for practitioners to use plain language in their interactions with children, young people and families that includes them, and not professional jargon that excludes them.
- Processes in place to incorporate the views of parents and children into their Families First programme, with the content of the Young People's page on their Family Hubs website being co-produced by young people and staff from the Leicestershire Youth & Youth Justice Service.

#### In Rutland:

- There is a Children and Young People's Strategy (2025-2028) which states that, when delivering services, practitioners will listen and respond to the views of children and families to shape the support they receive and to improve how Rutland Children's Services deliver services, working alongside (collaboratively with) families rather than doing to. One of their priorities is "Belonging" and a key focus area is strong participation, voice, and co-production with children and young people.
- Rutland Youth Charter is well embedded and young people regularly attend corporate leadership meetings to have their voice heard and to input into shaping service delivery.
- They are due to hold their first Youth Summit in April 2026. Previous Youth Summits have been LLR. Having a focused Rutland Youth Summit will bring together all Participation Groups to support young peoples' voices to be captured and shape local services.
- Their Children in Care Council (SUSO) has been reinvigorated, and young people are helping to shape their new planned children's home.
- They have also brought together their One Rutland Group for care experienced young people. This group is becoming more established to ensure voice is captured for care experienced young people.
- Their Corporate Parenting Board receives feedback from young people and has a co-chair arrangement.
- Rutland Children's Services use feedback from young people to shape activities for all their Aiming High and Young Carer groups. The Aiming High service arranges a variety of activities for children and young people up to age 25. The sessions are for those who have special educational needs or a disability.



The Health and Wellbeing workers of the Teen Health 11-19 Service, which works across Leicestershire and Rutland to provide health and emotional wellbeing advice and support to children and young people aged 11-19 (25 with SEND), write all notes to the child, clearly evidencing the voice of the young person being supported.

The CAMHS Young Person's Team use several approaches to facilitate engagement and communication, such as play and alternate communication forms like written or flashcards. For young people for whom English is not their first language, interpreters are booked to ensure communication needs are met.

#### Further work completed during 2025-26:



- For the first time, the Safeguarding Children Partnership published a [Children's and Young People's Version of their Yearly Report for 2024-25](#). This is a child friendly version which captures what was achieved using pictures and words.
- The Leicestershire Children and Family Services' Departmental Plan for 2026-2029 was published in March 2026. It reflects what children, young people and families have told them about their needs and experiences. Alongside the full departmental plan, they have also developed a family friendly version, shaped with the input of young people from CYCLLe (County Youth Council for Leicestershire) and the Youth Voice Group. It was designed to clearly explain to families how they will work with them and what they can expect from the service.
- Between 29<sup>th</sup> September-10<sup>th</sup> October 2025, Leicestershire Children & Family Services held Life Story Fortnight. For children coming into care, even for a short time, it is important to complete life story work with them, so that they can start to understand what happened. This usually takes the form of a life story book or folder, but life story work does not end there. Life story work is an ongoing process of direct work, with the aim of helping the child understand their journey into care and answer questions they may have.
- New Children's Rights and Participation Films, produced by the Leicester Rights and Participation Service and created with children and young people, were promoted by the Safeguarding Children Partnerships in the May 2025 issue of the Safeguarding Matters newsletter. The new resources were the outcome of a consultation, with the workforce and with children, around what is needed to help improve how practitioners listen, and more importantly ensure children and young people have an influence on decisions that are made about them.





- The Safeguarding Children Partnerships supported promotion of Project Echo. This is a Leicestershire pilot project where local survivors, both adults and children, of domestic abuse are being invited to share their insight and lived experience. The project will help deliver a national blueprint for embedding child and adult domestic abuse survivors' voices in community approaches to domestic abuse. Representatives from the project have given presentations at Safeguarding Matters Live and to the Education Group.

- On 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025, during the 16 Days of Activism against gender violence, Living Without Abuse held a Survivors Voice Conference. There was a trauma focus and survivors' stories. This was promoted by the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards.
- Survivors have played a key role in shaping Leicestershire County Council's draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy, sharing their experiences to highlight what works well and where barriers still exist. The strategy focuses on earlier help, better awareness, making information clearer, and stronger joint working between services. It also sets out plans to improve access to safe accommodation and ensure children are recognised and supported as victims in their own right. A consultation process, between April and May 2026, will seek people's views on the draft Strategy. This consultation has been promoted through the Leicestershire Family Hubs website.<sup>30</sup>

*"You have been a good support, very approachable, you have listened and been there to support the needs towards myself and my son. Thank you for your personal approach with me. Feel like I've made a friend."*

*"I just wanted to say how much I appreciated talking to you. You made me feel comfortable and listened to with understanding, kindness and without any judgement. It truly felt supportive, so a big thank you from me!"*

Feedback from Leicestershire parents/carers

*"They are completely happy to support my views and wishes and try hard to help me with this. They also always listen to my opinions and help to understand things if I don't."*

*"My Young Carers Youth Worker was kind, caring, and made me feel comfortable."*

Feedback from Leicestershire children/young people

<sup>30</sup> See <https://www.familyhubsleicestershire.org.uk/hot-topics/have-your-say-plans-support-families-affected-domestic-abuse>.

*"The Family Hub offers invaluable support for families and individuals alike. Whether you're seeking community connections, practical resources, or a welcoming space to learn and grow, the Hub provides a warm and inclusive environment. I highly encourage anyone looking for support or camaraderie to visit – it's truly a place where everyone belongs."*

*"It is comforting to know that being Foster Carers for Rutland means that we will be working with a very professional, friendly, and supportive team of dedicated individuals. We receive excellent training, and the young and vulnerable young people in our care are offered excellent advice, nurture, guidance, and every chance to thrive and succeed."*

Feedback from Rutland parents/carers

*"X has also been my social worker for a full year now, and that has made such a difference. Before her, most of my social workers were only with me for a short time, so it was hard to feel settled or build trust. Having someone who stayed, listened, and understood has meant a lot. She has supported me, checked in on me, and helped me feel more confident about the changes happening in my life."*

*"I am happy with all the support I have received from all the people around me. I can't believe how far I have come in 6 months from 2:1 care to 1:1 and now floating support in semi-independent living. I want to help other people in care and be a part of the children in care council and the development of the new care home that has been planned for Rutland Children."*

Feedback from Rutland children

## The Business Priorities of the Partnership

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership worked with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership to identify shared priorities for the [Joint Business Plan 2025-27](#). The two-year-plan allows 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.

### Child Sexual Abuse

#### What we did in 2025-26:

- Signed up to work with the NSPCC (funded by the Home Office) to undertake a local system-wide child sexual abuse snapshot to understand and evidence the effectiveness of the local response to this type of abuse. The process, involving a survey of professionals, was completed by September 2025.

Overall, the NSPCC identified:

- Strong multi-agency commitment to Child Sexual Abuse response
- Child Sexual Abuse complexity recognised, especially in familial contexts
- Good practice exists but is inconsistently embedded
- Low professional confidence in managing Child Sexual Abuse disclosures
- Public awareness and prevention activity underdeveloped

A Task & Finish Group has been set up to progress the NSPCC's recommendation that a local strategy is devised (see below). The findings of the snapshot have been fed into the Task & Finish Group.

- Completed an audit, between May and July 2025, to assess the quality of local multi-agency decision making when responding to concerns about child sexual abuse. The learning was fed into the Task & Finish Group working on the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (LLR) Child Sexual Abuse Strategy. Further information on the findings of the audit is available in the "Quality Assurance and Service Improvement" section of this Yearly Report.
- Completed an analysis of learning around child sexual abuse from out of area reviews to further support the information for the local Strategy. This report considered 15 cases published in 2025 on the [NSPCC Case Repository](#) where "Child Sexual Abuse" had been deemed to be a main feature,<sup>31</sup> with "sexual abuse" identified as a key word/phrase by the NSPCC.
- Started drafting the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Child Sexual Abuse Strategy. This is progressing well and is being informed by the learning from local processes, as described above, and including the Joint Targeted Area Inspection findings, the national learning from the [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#) (October 2022) and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's national review, ["I wanted them all to notice": Protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment](#) (November 2024). Local Action Plans had been developed as a result of these national reports, and these are being incorporated into the Strategy.
- Identified and evaluated a range of multi-agency training initiatives around child sexual abuse, in a range of formats, with specific attention to the role of schools, early years and other education settings.
- Completed a training needs assessment, with agencies that attend the Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group reviewing their own internal offer to help plan and inform further the multi-agency training offer being developed. Most agencies reported making use of the resources from the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, including the e-learning.

#### Outcomes and impact:

- The Leicestershire [Joint Targeted Area Inspection report](#) acknowledged "*strong governance*" from the Safeguarding Children Partnerships around child sexual abuse learning and developing a trauma-informed workforce. It noted that *"Although the partnership's strategy is still in draft form, its ambition is evident through collaboration with the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the Centre of Expertise in Child Sexual Abuse (CSA Centre). The strategy has also drawn helpful*

<sup>31</sup> "Main feature", in general, means that the incident that initiated the review was child sexual abuse. Some other cases that did not fit this description were included.

*insights from local safeguarding practice reviews, thematic briefings, surveys and audits to inform planning and practice. Some of this work was far-sighted in advance of publication of the CSPRP report into child sexual abuse in the family environment in 2024 and work has picked up pace since the panel report.”*

- The July 2025 session of the Supervisors’ and Trainers’ Network focused on child sexual abuse. Attendees received presentations on the impact of child sexual abuse; the East Midlands Children and Young People’s Sexual Assault Service (EMCYPAS) or ‘Coral Cove’ and what it offers; and the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Hub and the links between Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation.

95 people attended from a range of agencies, including Local Authorities, Health, Education, Early Years Providers, Voluntary and Community Sector Providers, District/Borough Councils and Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service.

Below are some comments taken from the evaluation forms:

*“It was really useful hearing about the different places professionals / families can go for support. This will definitely help with the delivery of my Designated Safeguarding Lead training as I can pass this information on.”*

*“The presentation from the perspective of the lived experience was very powerful. A lot of reflective practice for me individually which will only enhance me further as a manager and supervisor.”*

*“I found the content both interesting and highly relevant. Excellent session. Very thought provoking. I think it will stay with me and influence my practice.”*

- In September 2025, the Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group published [Resources to help build confidence when working with Child Sexual Abuse](#).
- Four pilot child sexual abuse awareness training courses have been delivered, two that were a full day and two that were half day sessions, to test the proposed materials and get feedback. This has informed what will be delivered regularly via the Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group’s training programme moving forwards.

#### **Moving forwards:**

- The aim is for the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Child Sexual Abuse Strategy to be finalised and published in Summer 2026, with promotion throughout the Partnerships to follow.
- Regular training sessions, with a focus on child sexual abuse, will consistently form part of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Training Programme. This will include delivery of:

- A half-day session around confidence in working with child sexual abuse and having difficult conversations. Prior to this session, attendees will be encouraged to complete the e-learning offered by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse
- An online session focusing on child abuse in the family environment
- Workshops on 'Understanding CSE/A from a survivor's perspective', which will provide a broader foundation and insight into the full lived-experience journey. These will be delivered by The Reign Collective, who are survivors of child sexual abuse
- 'Following the Breadcrumbs' sessions, allowing practitioners to deepen their learning specifically around recognising and responding to disclosure, delivered by The Reign Collective.
- The local Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Strategic Management Board has been asked by the Safeguarding Children Partnerships to review how people who present a risk of sexual harm and who have contact with children are assessed and managed. The completion date for this work is May 2026, and it is, currently, on target.
- The Safeguarding Children Partnerships will develop a local coalition and/or victim response pathway for local children and young people who have experienced recent or non-recent sexual abuse. They are currently considering adapting and adopting the Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway set out by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.
- Assurance will be sought by the Safeguarding Children Partnerships that there are local pathways for referring children for appropriate forensic medical and other health assessments, for both recent and non-recent sexual abuse, and that safeguarding practitioners understand them.
- It has been agreed that multi-agency audits, with a focus on practice around child sexual abuse, will be completed at the start and end of the two-year business plan period. A second audit will be completed by December 2026.

## Neglect

### What we did in 2025-26:

- Revised the local multi-agency Neglect procedure throughout, to be published in April 2026.
- Produced a new procedure around safeguarding children with chronic health needs, including where neglect is a feature. As set out in the 2024-25 Yearly Report, in response to local learning from a Leicestershire Rapid Review, a Task & Finish Group was formed with practitioners from Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland to carry out this work.



The work acknowledged that many children will have health needs that are of a short-term duration and who do not require long-term clinical management, and most children will have their health needs managed effectively by parents with the support of universal or targeted support. The procedure was required to support those children where longer-term chronic health needs are being managed in the context of wider safeguarding concerns, including neglect. This work was supported by an Independent Facilitator with expertise in this area.

The new procedure – [Safeguarding children with Long-Term Chronic Health Needs who require “additional child safeguards”](#) – was published in January 2026 on the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships’ Procedures Manual.

To support the new procedure, also in January 2026, two launch events were held and a presentation was delivered to the Education Group. A video of one of the launch sessions is available via YouTube – [Safeguarding Children with Chronic Health Needs video](#) – and there is also a [7-Minute Briefing on Safeguarding children with chronic health needs](#).

- Supported a wider system change 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. This has been supported by the publication, in January 2026, of [Best Practice Guidance for Health Staff: Sharing health information with Children’s Social Care and partner agencies](#) and the implementation of a new “Health needs checklist for Child Protection Conference and Core Groups” and a new process that strengthens the health information that goes to Strategy Discussions.
- Continued to support awareness raising of the [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool](#). This addressed the learning from an audit completed in 2024-25, which found that there was poor use of the Tool, with too much reliance on Health staff, either the Midwife or Health Visitor/Public Health Nurse, talking to parents and carers about safer sleep. It also responded to the results of the Section 11 frontline practitioner survey, completed in 2024-25, that found 44% of practitioners that completed the survey were aware of the Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool.
- Provided the Supervisors’ and Trainers’ Network with sessions on both the new safeguarding children with chronic health needs procedure and neglect more widely.
- Commissioned a new training course around neglect, with two sessions delivered in 2025-26.

#### **Outcomes and impact:**

- Extensive consultation took place during 2025 regarding the new system change in Health and the safeguarding children with chronic health needs procedure, including with Health staff in the 0-19 service, GPs, Community

and Hospital Consultant Paediatricians, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) and University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) Safeguarding Teams, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and Conference Chairs and Social Workers via Social Work Managers.

Around 180 practitioners attended the two procedure launch events. Since the procedure was launched, it has been promoted to various Health settings by the Designated Nurse for Children and Adult Safeguarding.

The full impact of the changes cannot be assessed in detail until they have been in place for a sustained period of time. It is believed that they will have a significant impact for key meetings and how the partnership manages child protection planning.

Current feedback has been positive, with practitioners seeing the potential to greatly improve information sharing and multi-agency collaboration in understanding any child's health needs in the context of abuse and neglect and providing better support to the cohort of children with chronic health needs.

- Safer sleep information was disseminated via the identified Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safer Sleep Champions, which includes practitioners from Children's Social Care, Early Help, Health Visiting, HomeStart Teams, Perinatal Services, Neonatal Services, Breastfeeding Support Services, Turning Point Drug and Alcohol Services and Maternity Lecturers at the local Universities.

The Safer Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool was promoted again in the May 2025 issue of Safeguarding Matters. A one-hour Safer Sleep Session was delivered by the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Designated Doctor for Child Deaths during Safer Sleep Week 2026.

The importance of the Tool was reiterated at a meeting of the Supervisors' and Trainers' Network and a Trainers' Network, held specifically for those who deliver safeguarding training to those working in Early Years. It was made clear that there is an expectation that messages around safer sleeping will be shared in all core/essential safeguarding children courses, including Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training.

### **Moving forwards:**

- In April 2026, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published [Child Neglect: A thematic analysis](#). The Safeguarding Children Partnerships have been awaiting this national thematic review. They will now carry out work to respond locally to the national learning, including learning set out in the additional briefing papers on [The use of child neglect assessment tools](#); [Child Neglect: Voice of the child](#); and [Child Neglect: Responding to cumulative harm](#).
- The national learning will inform the update of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Neglect Toolkit. This work is already in progress, and it is



planned to include changes around dogs in the home, safer sleep and fire risk.

- The Safeguarding Children Partnerships will be seeking information from individual agencies on how the chronic health needs procedure has been implemented. Agencies have been provided with an assurance form to complete, which will be requested for return in October 2026. The Audit Group has agreed to carry out a multi-agency audit in the future to test how the procedure has been embedded.
- Regular sessions of the commissioned Neglect training course will form part of the multi-agency offer on the Safeguarding Children Training Programme.
- The Audit Group will complete an audit on Neglect in 2026-27.

## Harm Outside the Home

### What we did in 2025-26:

- Sought updates on Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) work across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland from the Adolescent Safety and Diversion Board, with the Chair of the Board invited to present to the Safeguarding Children Partnerships on an annual basis in line with multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Received information from the local Child Exploitation and Serious Violence Group, who considered the findings of the National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, led by Baroness Casey.<sup>32</sup> Multiple cases of rape and abuse against children across the country led to this report and the recommendations were addressed to the government. The Child Exploitation and Serious Violence Group felt it was necessary to consider the recommendations and benchmark the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland region against them. They provided assurance to the Safeguarding Children Partnerships about their findings (see below).
- Received assurance from the Local Authorities, Police and Health regarding safeguarding of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, particularly in relation to exploitation and missing.
- Sought an improved understanding of sexual assault of children and young people outside the family environment across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Safeguarding Children Partnerships are looking to assure themselves that individual assaults, which have been the subject of local reviews, are not reflective of any wider and broader risks related to group-based child sexual exploitation. Data was collated by the Performance Subgroup from Leicestershire Police over a 5-year period for analysis.

<sup>32</sup> Baroness Casey of Blackstock, National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, June 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-audit-on-group-based-child-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>.

- Supported promotion of Live Safe, which is a partnership initiative with the main aim to empower young people (aged 10-19, but also relevant to young adults up to 25), their families, and professionals to play an active role in keeping young people safe.
- Adapted a [Neurodiversity and Exploitation Briefing](#), created by Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together, for local use. This was in co-ordination with the local Child Exploitation and Serious Violence Group. It explores why neurodivergent young people can be targeted by offenders.
- Continued to deliver the training course entitled 'Child Exploitation: An introduction to CSE, County Lines, Trafficking and Missing' as part of the multi-agency offer on the Safeguarding Children Training Programme.

#### **Outcomes and impact:**

- The Child Exploitation and Serious Violence Group assured the Safeguarding Children Partnerships that child sexual exploitation is investigated by the Serious Crime Team in Leicestershire Police. The well-established Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Team enables detailed information to be shared between the Local Authorities, Police and Health to support multi-agency decision making for children subject to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. The MACE Team has established an audit programme to test the validity of MACE Team decision making. The Child Exploitation and Serious Violence Group is seeking assurance that ethnicity data is captured in the design of data sets.
- The volume of data collected by the Performance Group regarding sexual assault of children and young people outside the family environment across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland made it difficult to draw conclusions. It was identified that this requires further work, analysis and expertise.
- A dedicated Live Safe webpage has been included on each Safeguarding Children Partnership's website (see <https://lrsb.org.uk/live-safe-information>). It has been accessed over 300 times since it was published in November 2025 on Leicestershire & Rutland's website.

An article on Live Safe was included in the October 2025 issue of the Safeguarding Matters newsletter and a presentation was delivered at the December 2025 Safeguarding Matters Live event. The Voluntary and Community Sector Forum has been asked to support communication to children and young people in communities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

- A "My Role" article was included in the October 2025 issue of Safeguarding Matters on the Team Managers of the Child Exploitation Team in Leicestershire County Council.

#### **Moving forwards:**

- The Child Exploitation and Serious Violence Group will confirm that the local definition of what group-based abuse is adheres to the definition in Baroness Casey's report.
- The Performance Group will liaise with other agencies, as necessary, to gain a wider understanding of sexual assaults and continue to consider the data. They are liaising with the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) team and the Child Criminal Exploitation and Serious Youth Violence Operations Group to see whether assurance can be provided.
- The Supervisors and Trainers' Network, planned for April 2026, will focus on 'Harm outside the Home'.
- The Audit Group will complete an audit on "Harm Outside the Home" in 2026-27.

## Belonging

### What we did in 2025-26:

- Addressed the reflective questions for Safeguarding Children Partnerships posed in the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's briefing, entitled ["It's Silent": Race, racism and safeguarding children](#) and published in March 2025. In order to identify what further development was needed in reviews to respond to issues of race, racism and racial bias, a Task & Finish Group was formed to analyse Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) in the Case Review Groups' review processes. A work plan was agreed and has been completed. A local action plan is being progressed (see below).
- Continued to promote and embed learning from "Race, racism and safeguarding children" in multi-agency learning and development. An article was included in the May 2025 issue of Safeguarding Matters, and it is referenced within the Core Awareness Safeguarding Children training.
- Completed an audit on the theme of "Belonging", between January and March 2026, to establish the effectiveness of multi-agency working in considering the role of immigration status, culture, faith, and parenting in safeguarding. Further information on the findings of the audit is available in the "Quality Assurance and Service Improvement" section of this Yearly Report.
- Progressed work, via a Diversity Task & Finish Group formed to meet an action from the 2023-25 Business Plan, with a focus on providing multi-agency learning and development around immigration status, culture, faith, and parenting to improve knowledge, understanding, and practice in relation to safeguarding children.
- Translated the leaflet, "Reducing the risk of harm to children in your household: Advice for parents who use drugs or alcohol", into five different languages – Arabic, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu. This leaflet is used

by Turning Point, which provides drug and alcohol support services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The leaflets were supplied directly to Turning Point for their use.

- Continued work on Transitional Safeguarding, via a Task & Finish Group formed to support the 2023-25 business priority. The group is owned by both the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards and is co-chaired by children's and adults' representatives. Specifically, the group's purpose is to develop a multi-agency Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland transitional safeguarding policy or practice guidance. It is acknowledged that Transitional Safeguarding is not simply transition planning for people who are moving from Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care services.<sup>33</sup>
- Supported the re-launch of [My Adult, Still my Child](#). This is a pioneering UK-based website designed to support parents and carers of young adults aged 16 and over who may not be able to make decisions for themselves, providing legal guidance, advice on health and care decision-making, and resources for transitioning to adult services.

#### **Outcomes and impact:**

- The Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Reviews Task & Finish Group gathered information from partners involved in children's reviews at a local level to gauge confidence; this also covered what staff are provided with in terms of training. They were assured that awareness is being promoted in individual agencies, including through training and quality assurance processes.

The group conducted two in-depth audits of Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews across Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland to analyse where there were strengths and to identify weaknesses in equality, equity, diversity and inclusion. The Case Review Groups have a shared policy and templates, which consistently prompt consideration of all protected characteristics. There is a specific question on equality, diversity and inclusion for agencies to answer in information returns and in the template for the Rapid Review Report, which is submitted to the National Panel.

To further support this process and strengthen the response, the Task & Finish Group has proposed some changes to the paperwork. Further recommendations have also been made to the Case Review Groups (see below).

- As a result of the Task & Finish Group's analysis, and their response to both local and national learning, two new resources have been produced and published:
  - A [Practitioner Briefing on Adultification](#), which was adapted from a resource from Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership and

<sup>33</sup> See Local Government Association transitional safeguarding resources for more information about transitional safeguarding: [Transitional safeguarding resources | Local Government Association](#).

includes research and an image created by Jahnine Davis, National Kinship Care Ambassador and Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel member

- A [Practitioner Briefing on Cultural Genograms](#), which was adapted from a resource from Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and sets out why cultural genograms are needed and why it is important to be culturally competent when working with families.
- The Diversity Task & Finish Group has identified a provider to deliver training for the Partnerships to broaden understanding of religion, culture and communities relevant to the demographics of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. This training will be delivered between May and June 2026. It has also commissioned training to enable the Partnerships with understanding the support available and issues faced by families with no recourse to public funds, and immigration status.
- The Diversity Task & Finish Group has made links with the East Midlands Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA), which is a partnership of ten Local Authorities and the Northamptonshire Children's Trust, who work collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and young people in the East Midlands. The aim is to support resources being shared across the region via the RIIA learning hub.
- Transitional safeguarding was an area identified in 2024-25 as demonstrating limited progress. As a result, regular progress meetings have been held, throughout 2025-26, with the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Boards and the Independent Advisor for the Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

The Task & Finish Group has completed a local multi-agency mapping exercise and the report from this exercise has established that the position has not changed locally, with regard to the specific cohort of young adults/people that do not fit into existing pathways when the transition from children's to adults' services occurs. Group members have started to produce and present real-life case examples from their service which describe the journey from children's to adults' services for young people, as well as practitioner experiences. This analysis and lived experience will inform the production of the policy / practice guidance.

#### **Moving forwards:**

- The Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Reviews Task & Finish Group has recommended that the Case Review Groups complete the following work:
  - Agree a new position statement around consideration of Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in reviews, to be included in their Terms of Reference

- Amend Rapid Review and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review templates with a view to strengthening the Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion sections with new additional prompts to pull more out of agencies' responses
- Strengthen the Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion section of the Individual Management Review (IMR) Report / Rapid Review Report author training
- Request that Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is consciously considered when preparing Key Lines of Enquiry for Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Request that Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion experience and training is stipulated, which is pertinent to the case, when advertising for a Reviewer.
- The Diversity Task & Finish Group will organise a conference, to include children and young people with lived experience, to support understanding of their experiences and to support wider learning.
- The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland transitional safeguarding policy or practice guidance is due to be ready for November 2026.

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

## Thresholds

The Business Plan for 2025-27 states that the Policy and Procedures Group will lead on publishing a refreshed Thresholds document, confirming changes and setting out a broad continuum of Family Help. This work was due to be completed by the end of March 2026. There has been an issue with progressing this work, though, as transformation activity is not at a stage where the Policy and Procedures Group has the information required to update the Thresholds document.



## Quality Assurance and Service Improvement

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership has a Performance and Quality Assurance Framework shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership. This can be found here <https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp>.



### Changes in 2025-26

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships previously shared an Assurance and Audit Group. It was acknowledged that the remit of this group was 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 were implemented to replace the Assurance and Audit Group. There are now a Performance Group and an Audit Group, which fulfil the requirements of the Performance and Quality Assurance Framework.

The Performance Group analyses performance data; plans, scopes and tasks multi-agency assurance processes; and analyses findings from multi-agency assurance processes, including findings from agencies' internal assurance processes and Section 11 self-assessments.

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

It was anticipated that this change would allow for more audits to be completed and improve the ability to evidence how information sharing has improved practice and outcomes. These expected improvements are now evident in the work completed in 2025-26.



Additionally, in 2025-26, it was decided to step down the monthly Safeguarding Assurance Keep in Touch meetings, which fed into the Performance Group. This meeting brought together senior safeguarding leads to share intelligence and joint oversight of the ability of multi-agency children's safeguarding services to maintain statutory functions in relation to safeguarding children. The meetings have been closed down because data detailing trends in workload and workforce capacity are now collated by the Performance Group.

## Performance data

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

### Leicestershire

#### Child Protection data

|                                                                | 2024-25 | 2025-26 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Education      | 1071    | 1092    |
| Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Health         | 1171    | 1186    |
| Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Housing        | 61      | 60      |
| Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Police         | 1841    | 2381    |
| Number of Strategy Meetings*                                   | 2961    | 3593    |
| Number of Section 47 enquiries*                                | 1778    | 2609    |
| Number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs)**       | 389     | 583     |
| Number of Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPCs)**        | 683     | 894     |
| Number of Child Protection Plans that started over the year*** | 617     | 848     |

\*This is children not a count of meetings

\*\*This is a count of conferences

\*\*\* This number accounts for the plans that started across the year (and subsequently ended too).

**Categories of Abuse\***

|                                                                           | 2025-26 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Number of children subject to Child Protection Plan – physical abuse      | 38      |
| Number of children subject to Child Protection Plan – emotional abuse     | 285     |
| Number of children subject to Child Protection Plan – sexual abuse        | 83      |
| Number of children subject to Child Protection Plan – neglect             | 340     |
| Number of children subject to Child Protection Plan – multiple categories | 102     |

\* This data is related to starts during the quarter

In general, in Leicestershire across 2025-26, the number of referrals from different sectors remained stable. There was a substantial increase in referrals from the Police. The Safeguarding Children Partnership identified that the Police make the highest number of contacts to the Local Authorities, and a piece of work was recommended to ensure that contacts are appropriate, focused and of the required quality. A report was presented to the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' meeting in October 2025, following the completion of joint analytical work by Leicestershire Children's Social Care and Leicestershire Police about the number of contacts made by the Police that are converted and accepted as referrals. Assurance was provided that, overall, the volume of referrals was appropriate and proportionate, and they were being managed effectively. Mechanisms are in place at the Front Door – Children's Social Care make the decision about what is a referral based on application of the threshold criteria. Work continues to ensure that these are evaluated by the Police and Children's Social Care to identify the most appropriate pathway for the child, which includes Targeted Early Help.

From September 2025 onwards, Leicestershire saw an increase in their Front Door activity and higher numbers of children on child protection plans. This continued through Quarter 3 (October-December 2025) and put significant pressures on teams. By Quarter 4 (January-March 2026), the increase seen over the previous quarters reduced / stabilised, in terms of contacts, numbers of strategy discussions and conferences.

The rise in child protection numbers in the 12 months up to March 2026 was reflected across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Leicestershire completed audit activity to inform their response. Local learning confirmed strong practice and highlighted opportunities to sharpen Section 47 analysis and apply thresholds consistently. Swift actions were taken and included weekly Heads of Service oversight of Initial Child Protection Conference recommendations, as a short-term measure to support proportionate outcomes. This has now ended. This work meant that March 2026 saw a lower conversion rate from Section 47 enquiries to Initial Child Protection Conference (19.2%). This coincided with a period where a greater proportion of enquiries concluded that children's needs and risks could be safely

addressed outside of the child protection process. This particularly focused on children experiencing accumulated harm, where robust Child in Need planning within the Family Help model could successfully and proactively support families to build on strengths to improve outcomes.

During 2025-26, Leicestershire continued to strengthen their understanding of children's identity, culture, ethnicity and sense of belonging, ensuring these are considered in the support and services provided to children, young people and families. Their quality assurance activity and external inspection feedback show increasing evidence that children's cultural backgrounds, lived experiences and diverse identities are recognised and reflected in assessment, planning and practice. This year, partners across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland completed a multi-agency audit exploring children's experiences of belonging. Learning from this work is being taken forward across the Safeguarding Partnership to strengthen practice and improve outcomes for children and families. In December 2025, Leicestershire also relaunched the Race and Identity Excellence Forum (RIEF), providing a dedicated space for learning, reflection and challenge to promote equity, inclusion and anti-racist practice across services.

Local data shows that most children receiving support are from White British and other White backgrounds, broadly reflecting the county's population. Leicestershire also know that some groups are represented differently across services, including children from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds who are more visible within care and care leaver services and children from Black backgrounds who are generally underrepresented across most service areas when comparing to the school population. They will continue to improve their understanding of these patterns and use data, partnership learning and the voices of children and families to help ensure services are fair, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all communities

Through the Families First reforms, ongoing quality assurance activity and partnership learning, Leicestershire remains committed to improving its understanding of ethnicity, identity and belonging, using both data and the voices of children, young people and families to shape services that are inclusive and responsive to local need.

## **Rutland**

### **Child Protection data**

|                                                           | 2024-25 | 2025-26 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Education | 81      | 86      |
| Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Health    | 42      | 58      |
| Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Housing   | 3       | 2       |

|                                                           |     |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Number of referrals to Children's Social Care – Police    | 92  | 99  |
| Number of Strategy Meetings*                              | 149 | 94  |
| Number of Section 47 enquiries**                          | 94  | 139 |
| Number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs)*** | 41  | 36  |
| Number of Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPCs)**   | 72  | 74  |
| Number of Children subject to a Child Protection Plan     | 28  | 61  |

\*This is a count of meetings/families, not children

\*\*This is a count of children

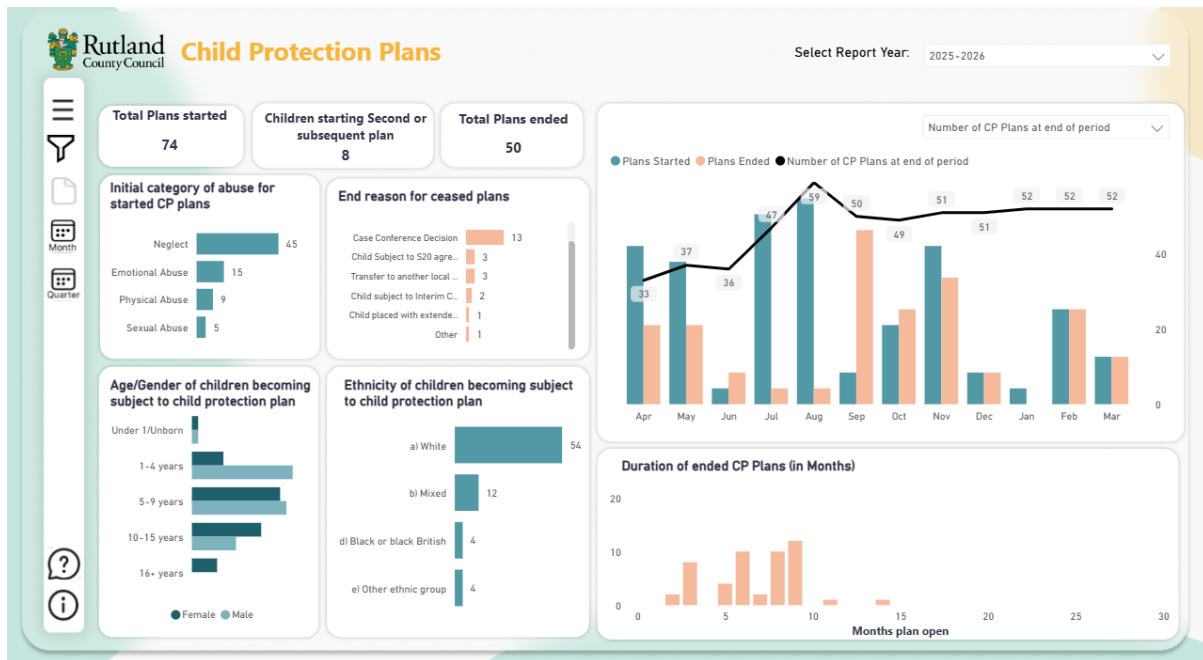
\*\*\*This is a count of conferences

### Categories of Abuse

|                                                                       | 2025-26 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Number of children subject to Child Protection Plan – physical abuse  | 9       |
| Number of children subject to Child Protection Plan – emotional abuse | 11      |
| Number of children subject to Child Protection Plan – sexual abuse    | 5       |
| Number of children subject to Child Protection Plan – neglect         | 36      |

In Quarter 2 (July-September 2025), Rutland saw a slight increase in referrals overall and children being discussed for child protection concerns. It was noted that the increase in numbers for Rutland would have an impact on partners as they would be asked to attend more meetings and the pattern appeared to be repeated across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. As a result of this increase, Rutland completed dip sampling for children being subject to Child Protection Plans and this found that thresholds had been applied appropriately. By Quarter 4 (January-March 2026), Rutland's child protection numbers had remained stable from the original spike within the reporting year. They also noted that partner referrals remained relatively stable, suggesting that thresholds for escalation to Children's Social Care are understood.

The table below shows a snapshot of the data available for 2025-26 for children subject to Child Protection Plans for Rutland. Within this data, it can be identified that most children subject to Child Protection Plans are White British. This would be expected in Rutland in line with the overall demographics for the county, which is predominately White British.



In relation to equality, diversity and inclusion considerations, Rutland have provided cultural genogram training to support frontline practitioners to understand any needs. They have undertaken audits on the theme of belonging for the multi-agency case file audit and identified that they needed to improve recording of ethnicity and religion within their case management systems. This has been actioned and is now mandatory.

Rutland has revised its corporate EDI strategy. Children's services inputted into this via their Youth Summit, directly using children's voices and experiences, which are now included in the strategy.

Within their own internal audits, Rutland continues to consider equality, diversity and inclusion and this shapes their training and learning and development offer.

### **Multi-agency response to data analysis**

It was agreed that, as the increase in child protection numbers seen across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland had an impact on capacity across the partnership, a multi-agency audit would be beneficial to establish if there were any threshold issues and to identify any learning. The Performance Group have requested that the Audit Group carry out a spotlight audit on the increase in children on child protection plans. This will take place in Quarter 1 of 2026-27.

In Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, the majority of children subject to Child Protection Plans are under the category of abuse of neglect. This is reflected in Neglect being selected as a business priority in the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Business Plan for 2025-27. All subgroups have been allocated work, with the Policy & Procedures Group progressing an update of the Neglect Toolkit, the Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group commissioning a new one-day training course, and the Audit Group due to complete a multi-agency case file audit in 2026-27. All of this work will be informed by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's Thematic Analysis on Child Neglect, published early in April 2026.

## Self-Assessment

Section 11 self-assessments are undertaken by agencies as part of their duties under Working Together 2026.<sup>34</sup> Every other year, each member of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships self-assesses whether their organisation is being effective in keeping children safe, via a self-audit. In the years where the Section 11 is not completed, a frontline practitioner survey is completed. This work is co-ordinated by the Performance Group of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships. The results and learning are reported to the Planning and Delivery Group.

For 2025-26, a Section 11 self-assessment audit was completed. This requested information on strategic and governance arrangements; workforce capacity and resilience; service change and transformation; listening and responding to children at risk; effectiveness linked to the current business plan priorities; and learning and improvement.

Agencies were asked to grade their level of effectiveness in each area, provide evidence to demonstrate effectiveness and, if not currently reporting being 'fully effective', document their plan to achieve full effectiveness, including when they expected to see improvements.

Agency submissions are being analysed, and a report will be presented to the Planning & Delivery Group in 2026-27.

The 2024-25 Section 11 Practitioner Survey sought to establish from frontline staff and managers across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland how they used local resources available to them to help safeguard local children. In response to the findings, the Performance Group produced and published [Local Resources to Help you Safeguard Children 2025](#). It provides an overview of, and links to, each resource asked about in the survey, with the aim of increasing awareness and use of these resources.

## Audits

Both multi-agency case file audits and spotlight audits are completed throughout the year. A case file audit is a deep dive audit, looking at a smaller number of cases in more detail. A spotlight audit is dip sample audit, looking at a greater number of cases.

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.

<sup>34</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), Chapter 4, pages 114-115, paragraphs 258-259.



### Spotlight audit on children on a child protection plan and in receipt of CAMHS

In 2021-22, an audit was completed on the theme of children and young people with mental health needs. This 2025-26 audit sought to provide a follow up to the previous audit and to assess progress in regard to any gaps in joint working with children in need of safeguarding when they are in receipt of mental health services. The audit took place between March and April 2025.

| The audit found that:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Outcomes and Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where CAMHS were informed and invited to child protection meetings, they attended or sent apologies and provided a report.</li> <li>The voice of the young people and parents / carers was evident in the records.</li> <li>In two cases, where the child was born a girl and now identifies as a boy, preferred pronouns and names were recorded and used by partnership agencies and appropriate support was provided around gender identity and transitioning.</li> <li>There was evidence that CAMHS practitioners were not always invited to Strategy Discussions, Child Protection Conferences or Core Groups. If a child/young person is on the CAMHS waiting list, Local</li> </ul> | <p>Since the audit was completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each Local Authority has provided assurance that Children's Social Care are sharing invites to meetings and minutes with CAMHS for children known to them on the waiting list and who are actively engaged with CAMHS. Rutland reported that the learning from the audit had been communicated to the social work teams and practice reviews have shown that this is being implemented. Leicestershire explained that the learning from the audit had been shared with all relevant service areas and new system monitoring is now in place for tracking attendance at meetings.</li> <li>CAMHS provided assurance that System 1 has been updated with current children subject to child protection plans and open to Children's Social Care to ensure that</li> </ul> |



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| <p>Authorities should always still invite CAMHS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAMHS practitioners are not always made aware when a Child Protection Plan has ended to enable removal of the child protection icon from System 1 records.</li> <li>• Social Care should not be reliant on waiting for a mental health diagnosis; there should be a focus on supporting the child/young person every day and the presenting issues and needs, as these are unlikely to change as a result of a diagnosis.</li> <li>• Agencies should ensure that they understand the impact of a child's mental health on their siblings. It could have a parenting impact on siblings, as well as an emotional impact.</li> </ul> | <p>all professionals can input into these plans. Also, following cross referencing with the Local Authorities, a manual update has been completed to remove the child protection icon from System 1 records, where a Child Protection Plan has ended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The findings from the audit, including what worked well and learning points, were presented in a <a href="#">7-Minute Briefing on the Multi-Agency Spotlight Audit on Children on a Child Protection Plan in receipt of CAMHS</a>. This is published on the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' websites and was also disseminated via the October 2025 issue of Safeguarding Matters.</li> <li>• A repeat CAMHS audit is planned for 2026-27 to test the impact of this audit.</li> </ul> |
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### Case file audit on Child Sexual Abuse

An audit is to be completed at the start and end of the two-year business plan period to analyse the quality of local multi-agency decision making when responding to concerns about child sexual abuse. For this first audit, the audit tool focused on the key areas of learning identified in the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's National Review, "I wanted them all to notice", including prompts to consider evidence of critical thinking and curiosity around sexual abuse and harm and understanding of risks, triggers, motivations, and specific impact and ongoing risk to the child. The audit took place between May and July 2025.

| <b>The audit found that:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Outcomes and Impact</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Paediatric Sexual Assault Referral Centre (PSARC) made therapeutic referrals and carried out child protection medicals when requested. Where they received referrals that did not meet their thresholds, they fed back to referrers.</li> <li>• There was an example of excellent work by the Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ChISVA),</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was acknowledged that the learning from the audit, around under use of the Paediatric Sexual Assault Referral Centre (PSARC) and issues around therapeutic work, was similar to learning identified by the NSPCC's Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) System Wide Snapshot for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Audit Group's report was shared with the Task &amp; Finish Group working on the Leicester,</li> </ul> |

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| <p>with plans updated at every contact, the child's concerns being used to plan upcoming sessions and the child's lived experience outside of sexual abuse being recorded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was an under use of the Paediatric Sexual Assault Referral Centre (PSARC) in some cases.</li> <li>• Issues around therapeutic work have been identified and further scoping work is needed.</li> <li>• Practitioners could have been more professionally curious around how child sexual abuse could be affecting a child's behaviours.</li> </ul> | <p>Leicestershire and Rutland Child Sexual Abuse Strategy and the response to this shared learning will be led by them to avoid repetition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In September 2025, a learning pack, entitled <a href="#">Resources to help build confidence when working with Child Sexual Abuse</a>, was published. It is for practitioners and managers to use when working with or suspecting child sexual abuse and encourages professional curiosity, including lots of links to practice resources, including from the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.</li> <li>• A <a href="#">7-Minute Briefing on the Multi-Agency Case File Audit on Child Sexual Abuse</a> was published on the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' websites in December 2025.</li> </ul> |
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### Spotlight Audit on Electively Home Educated (EHE) children

An audit on the theme of electively home educated children was previously undertaken in 2022-23. Following this, local guidance was produced and published in September 2024, supported by four training briefing sessions. This audit was completed to assess progress and any gaps in the implementation of the local guidance. Additionally, one of the conclusions of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's [Safeguarding children in Elective Home Education Panel Briefing](#) was that *"local safeguarding partners take all necessary steps to assure themselves that policy, practice, and procedures in their area enables professionals to work effectively together, with children and their families, to safeguard and protect this group of children."* Also, the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) on Sara Sharif, published in November 2025, raised issues around elective home education.

It was recognised that lots of electively home educated children have no safeguarding concerns, and their education is meeting their needs. The audit aimed to understand their visibility in line with previous local, and current national, learning, focused on establishing if children were known to services or presenting vulnerabilities. The audit took place between October 2025 and January 2026.

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| <p><b>The audit found that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authority Inclusion Services are being proactive where they have</li> </ul> | <p><b>Outcomes and Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <a href="#">7-Minute Briefing on the Spotlight Audit on Electively Home Educated (EHE) Children</a> will be disseminated</li> </ul> |
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| <p>concerns and working as well as they can within the current guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies are acting appropriately when electively home educated children become known to them.</li> <li>• In a change from the earlier audit's findings, Leicestershire and Rutland Children's Social Care records do now routinely capture that the child is electively home educated, with flags being used to achieve this.</li> <li>• There is a good process around Operation Encompass and electively home educated children.</li> <li>• As with the previous audit, Inclusion Services have significant limitations with regards to their powers when dealing with families of children who are electively home educated, which adds to the barriers to professional oversight and support to this group of children.</li> </ul> | <p>via the April 2026 issue of Safeguarding Matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was acknowledged that many of the issues raised in this local audit reflect those raised in national publications. It is difficult to implement changes until national legislation changes. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 will aim to strengthen measures around home educated children. Its publication will likely require changes to local policies and procedures.</li> </ul> |
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### Case file audit on Belonging

An audit on the theme of "Belonging" was completed to establish the effectiveness of multi-agency working in considering the role of immigration status, culture, faith, and parenting in safeguarding. This audit supported the business plan priority and acknowledged that, whilst many of the recommendations in the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's Briefing, "It's Silent", are linked to Rapid Review and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review work, the overarching recommendation is:

*Safeguarding partners are asked to consider this report, and the reflective questions contained within it. We recommend that partnerships carefully evaluate current partnership work in this area and identify what further development is needed in learning reviews, and multi-agency safeguarding practice, to address and respond to issues of race, racism and racial bias.*<sup>35</sup>

The audit considered cultural needs, communication needs, immigration status, intersectionality, racism and adultification. It took place between January and March 2026.

<sup>35</sup> Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, ["It's Silent": Race, racism and safeguarding children: Panel Briefing 4](#), March 2025, paragraph 7.8.

| The audit found that:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Outcomes and Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was evidence of different agencies' recognition of ethnicity, language and identity of families, trauma, migration and cultural transition.</li> <li>• Where clearly evident, cultural context was explored well, understood and considered.</li> <li>• There was effective professional curiosity in high-risk cases – for example, where forced marriage was a concern.</li> <li>• Many of the cases involved domestic abuse, physical chastisement or maternal mental health issues.</li> <li>• There was inconsistency regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use of interpreters</li> <li>○ Quality of information in making / receiving a referral</li> <li>○ Accurate capture of ethnicity</li> <li>○ Exploration of intersectionality</li> <li>○ Exploration of racism.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where families had moved into the country, a lot of professionals can be involved and this can have a negative effect, including on trauma-informed practice.</li> <li>• Where the child was from a dual heritage background, the impact of ethnicity was not so clearly recognised.</li> <li>• In terms of immediate actions, the main focus was often, understandably, on risk to and safeguarding of the child, but understanding of belonging at the beginning of the process could help support in the future.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 7-Minute Briefing will be produced to disseminate the learning.</li> <li>• The Policy &amp; Procedures Group will review existing Toolkits and assessment tools – for example, the Neglect Toolkit – to ensure they are properly focused on belonging.</li> <li>• Guidance / information sheets on ethnicity will be sourced or produced to support practitioner understanding, with this work being led by the Multi-Agency Learning &amp; Development Group.</li> <li>• Individual agencies will review their practice guides for the use of interpreters and update, where appropriate.</li> </ul> |

## Other assurance work

### Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Operational Group Meeting

The Operational Group is a standalone group that feeds into the Performance 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 Audit Group seeks annual assurance from partner agencies around their internal quality assurance processes. This includes information on key findings from internal agency audits undertaken to support and broaden safeguarding learning and how the voice of the child is included in internal agency safeguarding audits and how it drives improvement.

### Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs)

Supported by the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships, multi-agency partners carry out audits on Joint Targeted Area Inspection themes, as they are announced, to measure their effectiveness in that area and consider improvements. In 2025-26, the Planning & Delivery Group received assurance on the audits completed on the themes of Domestic Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse, in line with the JTAI themes.

The national learning from JTAI audit cycles is also considered and informs local work. The [Joint Thematic Report into the multi-agency response to children who are victims of domestic abuse](#), published in January 2026, indicated that local learning on this theme was reflected in some of the national learning.

### Assurance reports from other partnerships / services

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships receive annual assurance reports from other partnerships / services that oversee specific areas of work linked to safeguarding. The following areas are invited to present on an annual basis:

- Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)
- Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs)
- Front Door
- Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Corporate Parenting
- Adolescence Safety and Diversion Board (ASDB)
- Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Boards.

## Use of data and information sharing

Quantitative data and qualitative information are shared to evidence that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

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

Moving forwards, phase two of the Child Protection Information Sharing (CP-IS) service is being rolled out. This means that children in care, children on Child Protection Plans and unborn babies subject to Child Protection Plans, their mothers and NHS numbers will automatically be on Health systems for the 0-19 service. All GPs, community dentists, community paediatricians and the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) will know about the fact that these children are subject to those criteria.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 will introduce a new statutory Information Sharing Duty, which will come into force on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2026. Local arrangements will be updated in line with this national duty.

An example of how information sharing has improved practice and outcomes in 2025-26 is analysis completed around referrals from the Police into Children's Social Care. Questions were raised following performance reporting by the three Local Authorities to the Safeguarding Children Partnerships. It was identified that the Police made the highest number of contacts to the Local Authorities and that a relatively high percentage of these did not proceed further into the system for action.

A piece of work was recommended to ensure that contacts were appropriate, focused and of the required quality. Meetings were held to consider the quality of referrals, how these were progressed, the reviewing processes in place, the communication between agencies and the pathways in place.

It was established that the volume of referrals was being managed effectively. There was not one particular reason for the volume of referrals from the Police.

Learning was identified around what could be done better. As a result, a proposal was progressed to add further information to police notifications to improve the analysis of risk associated with relationships and work to share the Police 'Threat Risk Assessment' commenced. The work also highlighted positive outcomes around standard Public Protection Notices (PPNs) going into Leicestershire's Extended Domestic Abuse Team and them being able to apply early intervention with some of those families affected by domestic abuse, which prevents an escalation of behaviour. This is a strength and really supports the Government's agenda for Family Help and prevention.

The work completed provided a good overview of the local systems and the openness of the Partnerships. It also identified how the Family First Partnership Programme will provide a good opportunity to strengthen information sharing even more.



## Safeguarding in Education Teams

### Leicestershire

The Safeguarding in Education team at Leicestershire County Council supports schools with all safeguarding concerns and signposting to Safeguarding Children Partnership safeguarding procedures.

They deliver:



### Rutland

At Rutland County Council, they deliver training to the Education Sector throughout the year, including:

- Safeguarding Information Briefings, which are delivered three times a year by the 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.
- The Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum, which is delivered three times a year by the 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.



## Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures

Together, the Leicestershire & Rutland and Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnerships ensure that procedures are in place for multi-agency safeguarding in line with Working Together 2026. Throughout 2025-26, 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://lrsrb.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](#).

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## 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.

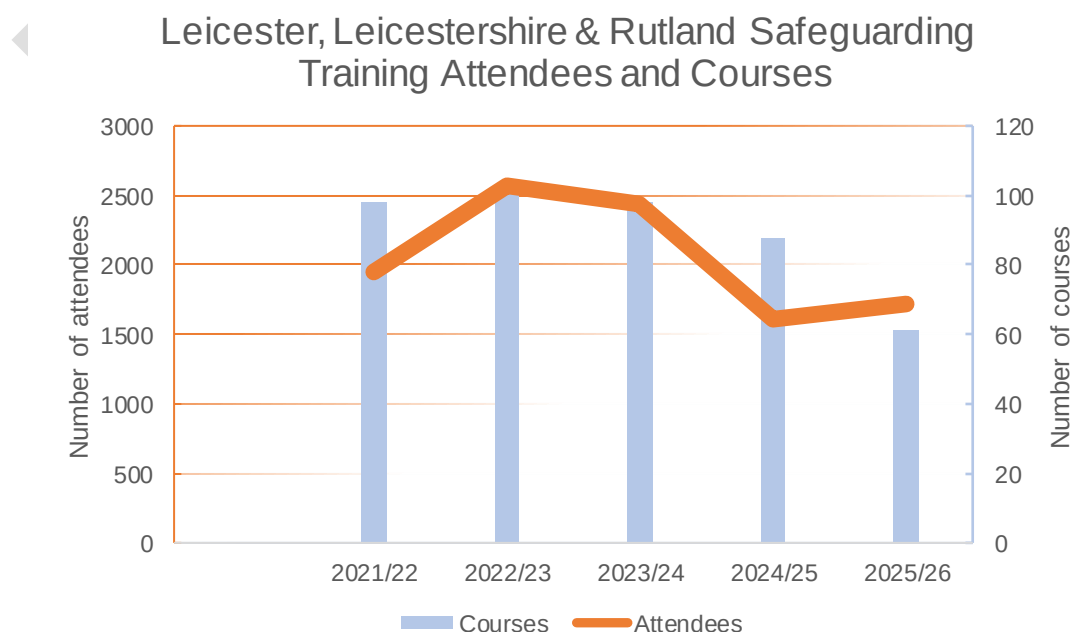
The Safeguarding Children Partnerships provide:

- 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 Supervisors and Trainers Network for staff who are named in their agency as a Safeguarding Trainer or a Safeguarding Manager/Supervisor
- 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.



This year the Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Programme delivered 61 courses to 1723 attendees. The Partnerships also supported the Baby Fortnight programme through collaborative planning, promotion and technical delivery support. The programme brought together agencies across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to deliver a wide range of workshops and practice forums focused on infant wellbeing, brain development, safer sleep, healthy relationships, early years development and wider support for families with babies and young children.

A significant development during 2025-26 was the introduction of dedicated Early Years safeguarding training. New Early Years versions of both Core Awareness and Designated Safeguarding Lead training were launched to better support safeguarding and welfare requirements that were set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2025.

The Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group also strengthened safeguarding leadership and workforce accountability through enhanced specialist learning opportunities. This included the introduction of a new “Safer Recruitment to Safeguard Children” course, and “Multi-Agency Reflective Supervision” course. Both of these consider staff and safeguarding. Established Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) training further strengthened understanding of how organisations should respond appropriately to allegations concerning staff and volunteers to ensure children remain protected.

To improve accessibility and ensure safeguarding learning reached practitioners across different agencies and sectors within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, the Partnerships expanded the flexibility of training delivery during 2025-26. Evening and weekend training sessions were introduced to support practitioners working varied hours and shift patterns, helping to ensure wider access to safeguarding learning opportunities.

### Update of Competency Framework

The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Competency Framework (SCCF) was updated in January 2026 and then further reviewed to include any changes from the new Working Together to Safeguard Children, published in March 2026.

The Safeguarding Children Competency Framework is for use by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Children’s Workforce to support individuals and organisations to undertake their safeguarding roles and responsibilities in a confident and competent manner. It outlines the minimum expected level of safeguarding competence that people need to have in order to work or volunteer with children.

The changes made reflect Annex C of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), updated in September 2025, which talks directly about what should be in the training for early years’ practitioners and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs). The changes to the Framework were minimal, and it is suitable for use by any agency. Four training sessions were delivered to explain how to use the Safeguarding Children Competency Framework, to support managers and supervisors.

### Safeguarding Matters Live

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 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 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 two events delivered in 2025-26, with one in July and one in December, over 640 practitioners attended.

For the first time, the July 2025 Safeguarding Matters Live was a hybrid event, with in-person attendance at City Hall and also online attendance. The event was focused on a specific topic, Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse. It looked at how domestic abuse can impact both adults and children and what services are available to support, with stalls from some of these local services at City Hall. Topics included Economic Abuse and the Domestic Abuse Act, the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process and Transnational Marriage Abandonment, which is a type of immigration abuse mostly suffered by migrant women which had recently been recognised as a form of Domestic Abuse in legislation.

Topics covered in the December 2025 event were working with transient families and strengthening safeguarding practice across boundaries; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) – who they are and what they do; Live Safe – a partnership initiative with the aim to empower young people; Project Echo – a project from Safelives alongside Living Without Abuse, putting the voices of survivors at the heart of local responses to domestic abuse; and PEGS (Parental Education Growth Support), which aims to reduce the impact of Child to Parent Abuse by supporting parents and professionals.

### Supervisors and Trainers Network

Commencing in June 2025, there is now a Supervisors' and Trainers' Network. Meetings take place three times a year. Membership is by invitation and is only available for staff who are named in their agency as a Safeguarding Trainer or a Safeguarding Manager/Supervisor.

The group was formed to ensure that those who are in responsible supervisory positions are fully briefed about the learning from 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. The aim is to provide the opportunity to discuss and explore the learning so that attendees can facilitate the sharing of this information during supervision, team meetings and when advising on specific safeguarding issues. Expert speakers are invited to deliver presentations to the Network. Videos of the sessions are published on the [YouTube channel](#).

Topics covered in 2025-26 included Child Sexual Abuse, the new safeguarding children with chronic health needs procedure and "Adolescence Abuse, Neglect and the Interface with Adultification".

### 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 to offer regular meetups between trainers to share knowledge, skills and to help develop the delivery of safeguarding children training.

### Training Impact

Feedback from participants throughout the year demonstrated the positive impact of the training programme and reflected the quality, accessibility and practical value of the learning delivered. Practitioners described trainers as “professional”, “knowledgeable”, “down to earth” and “easy to understand”, highlighting the supportive learning environment created across sessions.

Feedback particularly recognised the practical relevance of training content, opportunities for discussion and reflective learning, and the value of experienced trainers sharing real-life safeguarding perspectives. The flexibility of the training programme was also positively received. Feedback from Designated Safeguarding Lead Refresher training highlighted the benefit of evening delivery, with one practitioner noting that attending outside normal office hours “*made it easier to attend and focus on [the training] without other priorities crowding in*”.

*“I found the training and presentation well formulated and carried out. It was very informative and pulled from local and relevant examples and challenged thinking. As a new practitioner within Leicester, I found it helpful as an introduction to local safeguarding pathways.”*

Feedback from participant of Core Awareness in Safeguarding Children training

*“I really enjoyed the scenarios and hearing the perspective of the trainer on how she dealt with situations. This was a very informative part of the training. Training was delivered in a superb fashion. Trainer was down to earth, easy to understand and was able to help me with queries I raised at the end of the session helping me to strengthen our approach in the future.”*

Feedback from participant of Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) training

*“This was a very helpful day with a very professional knowledgeable trainer. I already had a good knowledge of safeguarding, but this covered Leicester and Leicestershire requirements/paperwork and was therefore particularly useful.”*

Feedback from participant of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Refresher training

Evaluation feedback across the 2025-26 learning programme demonstrated a significant increase in practitioner confidence following attendance at safeguarding training. Average confidence ratings, marked out of 10, increased from 6.56 prior to training to 8.55 following training, representing an overall increase of 1.99 points and approximately 30% growth in confidence across the workforce. Similarly, according to the same set of evaluation data, the attendees who answered the questions report a raise of 28% in their knowledge and 25% raise in their skills.

|                                             | Knowledge  | Skills     | Confidence |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Scaling question point increase – out of 10 | 6.7 to 8.6 | 6.8 to 8.5 | 6.6 to 8.6 |
| Average point increase                      | 1.9        | 1.7        | 2.0        |
| Percentage %                                | 28%        | 25%        | 30%        |

The Safeguarding Children Partnership Learning & Development homepage on the Leicestershire & Rutland website was viewed over 2100 times, with the Competency Framework webpage being viewed nearly 2950 times.

The [Safeguarding Basic Awareness PowerPoint](#), aimed at people who may work in a voluntary capacity or staff requiring a basic induction to children's and adults' safeguarding, has been visited over 8000 times this year on the Leicestershire & Rutland website.

During 2025-2026, more than 90 people requested they be added to the Safeguarding Matters distribution list, with nearly 900 people now signed up.

*“Training was good and informative, and a refresher to what organisations are available when dealing with safeguarding. Also resources available to take back to team.”*

*“Absolutely fantastic, very impactful and will share with colleagues.”*

*“Fantastic coverage from all speakers. I will be reviewing our safeguarding procedures and also discussing this within our team meetings, linking in resources and signposting staff to watch this Safeguarding Matters recording.”*

*“Learned about different agencies and how they operate and how to make contact with them.”*

Feedback from attendees of Safeguarding Matters Live

## Learning and Development Resources



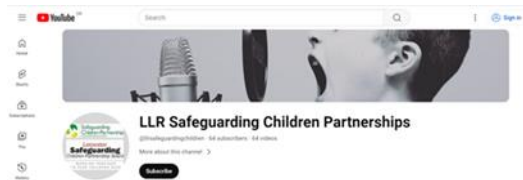
During 2025-26, two print issues of the [Safeguarding Matters newsletter](#) were published. They included information on the latest reports from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, a spotlight on stalking and harassment, Project Echo, Live Safe, and the re-launch of [My Adult, Still my Child](#).

Updates on local and national safeguarding information are also delivered in a concise email format via the Safeguarding Matters Digest. There was a special Digest on National Stalking Awareness Week (21<sup>st</sup> April to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025). Other topics covered in the Digests included the national Romance Fraud Awareness Video Campaign, launched by the Met Police in October 2025; the national County Lines Awareness



webinars, hosted by the National County Lines Coordination Centre; and local events linked to the 16 Days Of Activism To End Gender-Based Violence.

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. In February 2026,

a new resource pack was published on [Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Adults](#). It was developed from work undertaken by Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership. The resource pack aims to address effective sharing of information between practitioners, local organisations and agencies, essential for early identification of need, assessment, and service provision to keep children and adults safe. It covers key topics such as Legislation and Guidance and includes tips and links to resources.

### Moving forwards

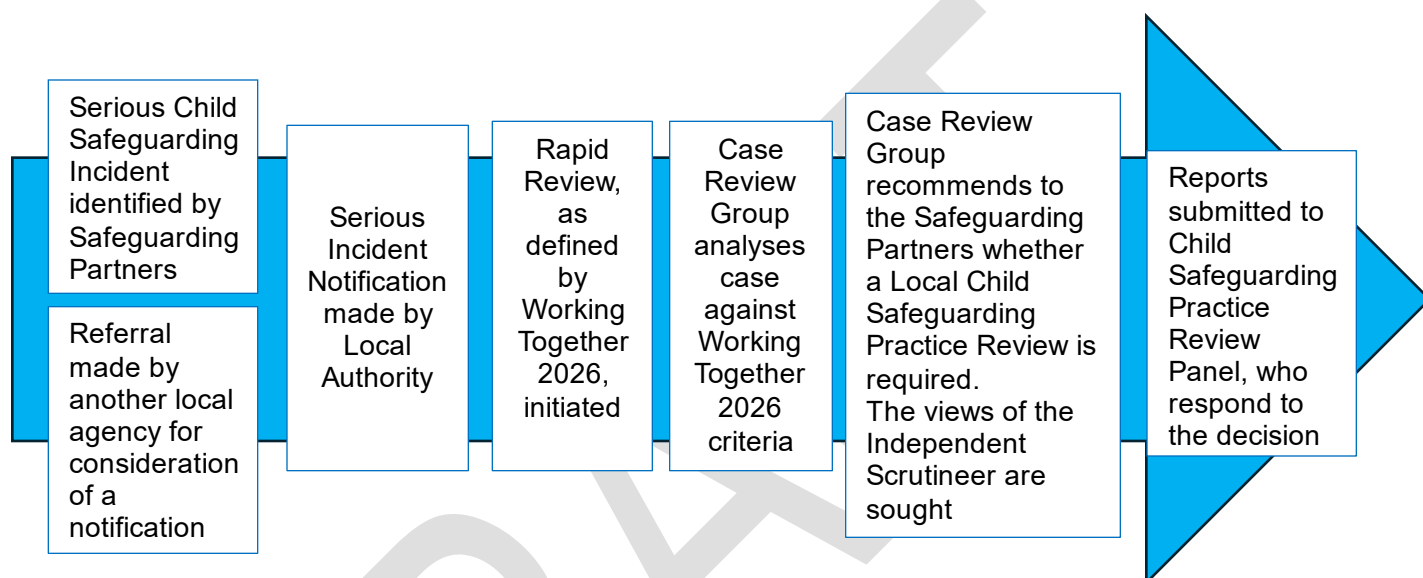
The Multi-Agency Learning & Development Group will set up short online sessions, entitled “Safer Together: Top 10 LLR Safeguarding Essentials”, on a quarterly basis to raise awareness of key procedures and resources from the Safeguarding Children Partnerships, with the aim of helping support these being accessible and visible to professionals. For example, a 7-Minute Briefing could be shared, which could introduce learning from a review and link it to the procedures, or 10 top procedures/resources for safeguarding could be shared, which could link to key themes from reviews, such as professional curiosity or ‘invisible men’, and help to re-visit and embed key learning messages.



## 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 2026, in cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected, and the child has died or been seriously harmed.



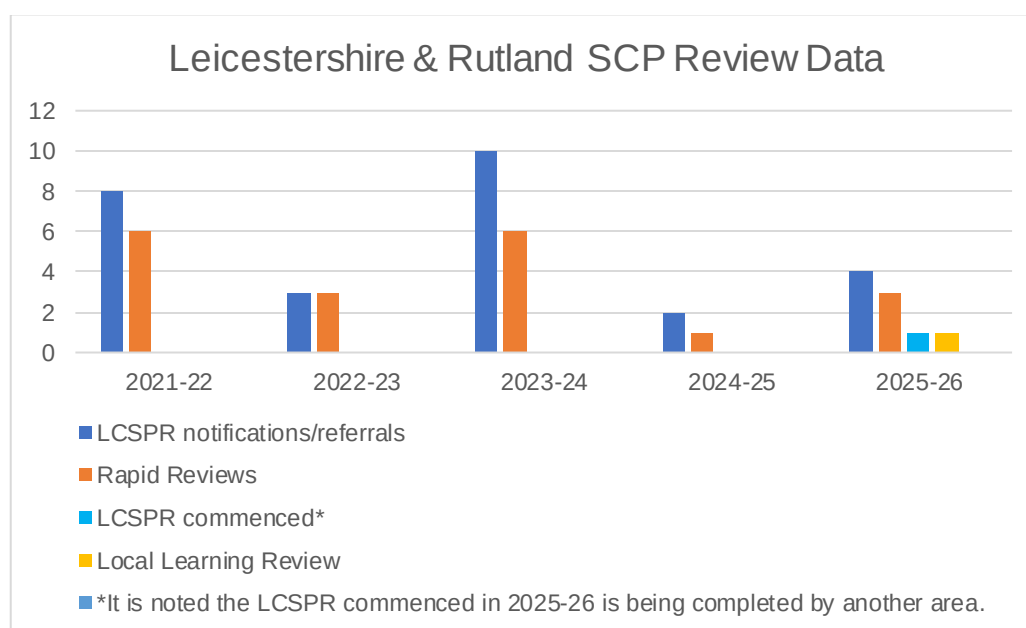
### Changes relevant to reviews in Working Together 2026

Updates to Working Together 2026 have included more detail on potential reviews on the deaths of care leavers and have introduced the possibility of Safeguarding Children Partnerships carrying out “Local Learning Reviews.”<sup>36</sup> Working Together 2026 states that “Where safeguarding partners have determined the criteria for serious incident notification has not been met, they may choose to undertake their own local learning reviews outside of the formal review process. For example, where there is an opportunity to learn from good or poor practice, or from a near-miss incident. However, only incidents that have been notified as a serious incident through the Child Safeguarding Incident System shall be subject to the procedures followed in this guidance and overseen by the Panel.”<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), page 138, paragraph 384.

<sup>37</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), page 137, paragraph 378.

### Key decisions and actions taken



During 2025-26, four notifications/referrals for potential Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) were received by the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership's Children's Case Review Group (CRG), up from the two in 2024-25 but not disproportionately out of line with previous years.

Three of these notifications/referrals were in relation to Leicestershire children. The other notification was in relation to children from outside of the area. However, because the suspected abuse had occurred in Leicestershire, as per the Children Act 2004, Leicestershire Local Authority was required to make the notification. This case went on to become a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, commissioned by the area where the children reside.

It was decided that, whilst one of the cases did not meet the criteria for a serious incident notification, it could lead to useful learning for the Safeguarding Children Partnership. Therefore, it was agreed to commence a Local Learning Review.

Therefore, the Partnership carried out two Rapid Reviews about Leicestershire children following a serious incident notification, in line with Working Together 2026, in the period of this report.

It was agreed that the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, commissioned in 2020-21, which had been on hold with an interim report because of an ongoing criminal process, should be considered as complete. The Panel was reconvened, including the original Independent Reviewer, and they concluded that no further work was required to deliver learning. The Safeguarding Children Partnership is satisfied and assured that the work linked to the learning from this Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review has been completed, with outcomes recorded and impact considered and tested. Given the possibility of criminal prosecution in the future, the report is not being recommended for local publication. This decision has been communicated to the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

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

### Themes and learning identified from reviews completed in 2025-26

#### Rapid Reviews

One Rapid Review involved a baby girl of Mixed Black Caribbean and White ethnicity who presented to hospital with suspected non-accidental injuries. The Rapid Review included agencies from the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership and out of area agencies. Themes included effectiveness of multi-agency information sharing, safety planning and agency roles, and Child Protection Plan categorisation.

The Rapid Review discovered:

- Prior to her birth, the baby and her older half-sibling had been placed on a Child Protection Plan, under the category of emotional abuse, following a domestic abuse incident. A range of services were quickly put in place from the start of the plan to both understand and support parenting.
- Responsibility for maintaining safety within the safety plan was placed on the mother, the parent experiencing domestic abuse.
- The effectiveness of multi-agency meetings was limited when key agencies were not present, and information was incomplete, particularly in relation to the parents' histories.
- Agencies had recognised the relevance of the baby's race, being a dual heritage child, and there were proactive discussions documented with the parents about race and identity.
- There was good multi-agency work and information sharing following the baby's hospital admission.

It was agreed that:

- While emotional abuse/harm is a valid category for concerns related to domestic abuse, this example highlighted the importance of factoring the child's age and developmental vulnerability into risk assessments and the categorisation of harm within Child Protection Plans. It was proposed that, for babies under 12 months in the context of domestic abuse, the category of Child Protection Plans should be risk of physical abuse/harm.
- It is essential that safety planning considers the wider support network and does not place the responsibility of creating safety solely on the non-abusing parent.
- More work is needed to explore multi-agency perspectives to enhance safety planning to ensure agencies bring challenge and detail to what is to be expected to build robust safety for the child.

The other Rapid Review considered the physical abuse of two young siblings, a White British girl and boy, by their father and his partner. The children had previously been on a Child Protection Plan for neglect. This was in place when they moved from out of area into Leicestershire. It ended prior to the concerns being raised. The Rapid Review included agencies from the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding

Children Partnership and out of area agencies. Themes included disguised compliance, information sharing at point of transfer between different Local Authority areas, recognising the role of new partners within the household and respecting roles and responsibilities within the Child Protection process.

The Rapid Review discovered:

- No agency held information to suggest unexplained injuries or concerns regarding physical abuse during the period of child protection planning.
- When the family moved to Leicestershire, there was a gap in the information received from the out of area Local Authority.
- During the period of child protection planning, agencies saw continuous engagement and compliance with the plan by the individuals who are now seen as the perpetrators of abuse.
- There were some process issues when concerns about parenting in general were raised by a member of the family.
- On one occasion, when they raised a concern about a parent's presentation, the Early Years provider felt their contributions were not valued by Social Care.
- When an anonymous referral was received, swift action was taken within the Partnership for safeguarding action to be put in place.

It was agreed that:

- The Partnership must reflect on how to build workers' confidence and ability to look at concerns regarding disguised compliance, to ensure that all professionals bring challenge and seek to triangulate what appears to be visible, thinking beyond what is presented.
- The sharing and triangulation of historical information when families move in and out of areas is crucial.
- The level and depth of understanding regarding the dynamics of the relationship between the father and his partner could have been stronger. It is important to explore the roles and impact of changing household dynamics.
- All partners, including early years professionals, should feel able and supported to challenge and be aware of escalation routes to respond if necessary. This message will be highlighted and promoted.

Neither Rapid Review resulted in a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR). The cases met the criteria, but the decision was taken that an appropriate level of learning had been established as a result of the Rapid Review, meaning a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review was not required. Both the Independent Scrutineer and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel agreed with these decisions.

### Care Leaver Review

In 2024-25, Leicestershire Children's Social Care made a notification regarding the death of a care leaver who was in his early 20s. The case was considered by the Joint Case Review Group, which includes representatives from both adults' and children's safeguarding teams. In 2025-26, in line with Working Together 2026, it

was agreed to carry out a Care Leaver Review / Local Learning Review.<sup>38</sup> This type of review does not need to be submitted to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, but learning is identified and disseminated with a view to improving practice.

In this particular case, the circumstances of this young man's death led agencies to believe there was potential learning for the Safeguarding Children Partnership to strengthen multi-agency practice for young people in this cohort. Learning was identified, including around the following themes: care leaver status and vulnerability, information sharing around care experienced young adults and homelessness.

Locally, the Leicestershire Corporate Parenting Board has previously agreed to identify care leaver status as a protected characteristic, which means that this group of individuals could have additional vulnerabilities. This review highlighted a difference in how "vulnerability" is understood across agencies. All agencies and professionals may not understand or recognise the specific vulnerabilities experienced by care experienced young adults and the responsibilities held by professionals towards this protected characteristic.

It was acknowledged that the Government are bringing in regulations and statutory duties around the corporate parenting responsibility, which includes children in care and care leavers. As a result of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, any public body will have a duty to protect these cohorts, as if they were their own children or young people. It was agreed that a national recommendation from this case will be made regarding care leaver status.

#### Local Learning Review

The referral that led to the decision to commence a Local Learning Review was submitted late in 2025-26 and so this review will be progressed in the upcoming year.

#### Actions from Reviews

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

In the last year, the Partnership has completed all Action Plans in place from reviews from previous years and is progressing well with the Action Plans from the reviews held in 2025-26.

Actions from reviews in 2025-26 implemented and in progress include:

- The proposal that, for babies under 12 months in the context of domestic abuse, the category of Child Protection Plans should be risk of physical abuse/harm was taken to the Policy & Procedures Group. The proposal was initiated by Leicestershire Children's Social Care and has now been agreed across the sub-region, by Leicester and Rutland Children's Social Care too. Consequently, the Domestic Abuse procedure on the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Procedures Manual is to be updated to reflect this point about categorisation.

<sup>38</sup> [Working Together 2026](#), pages 137-38, paragraphs 381 and 384.

- A [7-Minute Briefing on Safeguarding babies in the context of domestic abuse](#) was published and promoted.
- Leicestershire Children's Social Care has produced Practice Guidance on Safeguarding Babies Under 12 Months Exposed to Domestic Abuse. This was shared with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, who asked to include a link to this guidance on their new [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Learning Hub](#) in the vulnerable babies' section of the website.
- A new training course on Multi-Agency Working Within Child Protection Plans will start in early 2026-27, with the aim of improving understanding of roles and responsibilities within the child protection conference and planning process, as well as core group meetings and the role of professionals, including safety planning within child protection.

#### Moving forwards

- Existing resources in relation to professional curiosity and the response to disguised compliance will be updated in light of new learning and the learning material will be reissued to all partners.
- Local guidance to support transfer of Child Protection Plans into the area is being produced by the Leicestershire Safeguarding Unit and will be shared across the Partnership to support bottom lines of information sharing at point of transfer to include a full chronology.
- Safeguarding Children Partnership resources will be further publicised, including the escalation procedure, to ensure that all agencies can access these including Early Years provision.
- One hour Learning from Reviews sessions will be held on specific Rapid Reviews. Participants will be able to consider how best to share the learning with their own teams. The PowerPoint and associated information will be provided as a resource that can be used by leaders, managers and supervisors in their own agencies or teams.
- There will be consideration of a local strategic agreement around care leaver status, as a protected characteristic, and what this means in terms of understanding of vulnerability. The approach will take into account the legislation around care leavers included in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and the change in corporate parenting responsibility for services wider than Children's Social Care.

#### 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 2026.
- 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.

### How we are measuring impact

Agencies are asked to provide assurance regarding how they disseminate and use learning resources produced by the Safeguarding Children Partnership, including 7-Minute Briefings and the Learning from Reviews resource, and to provide any feedback collated. It has been confirmed, for example, that the Integrated Care Board share resources via the GP Forum and directly to GP Practices, with the expectation that they are disseminated to their staff. Leicestershire Education disseminate information via the Headteachers’ Safeguarding Newsletter, in the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Forum and direct to Designated Safeguarding Lead emails. University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) have reported that 7-Minute Briefings, Safeguarding Matters and learning resources that can be easily shared are very valuable and well received.

The Case Review Group produce impact reports following the completion of actions initiated as a result of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Now that the outstanding LCSPR has been completed, an impact report will be produced to evaluate the updates carried out since the time of the incident.

Following the completion of work around a previous Rapid Review, agencies have been told that the Safeguarding Children Partnership will be seeking information from individual agencies on how the chronic health needs procedure has been implemented and promoted. They were provided with a form to complete. This will be requested for return in October 2026. Additionally, the Audit Group has agreed to coordinate and provide oversight to future assurance activity to hold agencies to account for how this procedure is implemented and how it is delivering the ambition for system change. They have agreed to complete a case file audit in 2027.

### **National Reviews**

National reviews are used for benchmarking and ensuring best practice locally. The Safeguarding Children Partnership analyse the learning from national reports and out of area reviews and ensure it is integrated into local thinking and practice. For example, national and out of area learning is considered during Rapid Reviews and included in the Practice Points. Across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, this



learning is often incorporated into a local Action Plan, with actions disseminated to the appropriate Safeguarding Children Partnerships' subgroup.

| Date          | Publication                                                                                                                                                                                 | How national learning has been considered in local work                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 2025      | Serious Incident Notifications                                                                                                                                                              | A report allowing for comparison of Leicestershire & Rutland notification data with that of other areas for 2024-25 was produced and shared with the Case Review Group.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| November 2025 | Sara Sharif Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review<br><br>Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership                                                                                        | Learning was considered by the Case Review Group in the December 2025 meeting.<br><br>Learning points and links to the review and related 7-Minute Briefing have been included in the Practice Points.<br><br>An extraordinary meeting of the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Case Review Groups will consider any further action required in April 2026.<br><br>Learning will be included in an article in the April 2026 print issue of Safeguarding Matters. |
| February 2026 | "Protecting all vulnerable babies better": National review into the broader safeguarding issues raised by the death of baby Victoria Marten<br><br>Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel | Learning points and links to the review and the briefing note for child protection professionals have been included in the Practice Points.<br><br>An extraordinary meeting of the Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Case Review Groups will consider any action required in April 2026.<br><br>Learning will be included in an article in the April 2026 print issue of Safeguarding Matters.                                                                    |

## 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.

The two-year business planning period started in April 2025 and will run through to March 2027. Therefore, the priorities in 2026-27 will continue to be Child Sexual Abuse, Neglect, Harm Outside the Home and Belonging. The [Joint Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Business Plan for 2025-27](#) is published on the website.

For each of these areas, there are key deliverables, leads, timescales and impact measures. This enables the Safeguarding Children Partnerships to monitor progress and secure assurance that actions are making a positive difference to the lived experience of children and families.

## Conclusion

Again, in 2025-26, the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership has been working in the context of significant national reforms and changes to statutory guidance. This has provided the opportunity to review and improve how the Partnership works together to safeguard children and look to make better use of the resources across the Partnership. The positive impact of the changes implemented to quality assurance processes is evident. Moving forwards, these processes will only be further strengthened by the involvement of the Young Scrutineers. The Partnership's learning and development output continues to support and adapt to the changing needs of the workforce. As this period of national and local transition progresses, with the aim of creating a whole-system, early intervention approach to improve outcomes for children, the Partnership will contribute to changes in practice through training and sharing learning from review and assurance work across the partnership.

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