

LEICESTER SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Leicester
Safeguarding
Children Partnership Board

WORKING TOGETHER
TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE

YEARLY REPORT

2021/22



Leicester

Safeguarding Children Partnership Board

Yearly Report

2021/22

Report prepared and published in accordance with Working Together 2018

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Foreword

This is the third yearly report of the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPb). It covers the period from 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

During 2021/22 the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have an impact on children and families across Leicester. It has therefore been important for us to take time to consider the systems pressures emerging from the pandemic and the ways in which we are able to support each other as a partnership.

This report sets out what we have done as a result of our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice. It also outlines our priorities for 2022/23 to continue to address the challenges that remain.

Practitioners and managers in organisations across Leicester have worked hard in difficult circumstances to support the welfare and safety of local children. Our thanks continue to go out to you all.

The Safeguarding Partners of Leicester

“I enjoyed the freedom of it. I had a lot of my freedom stripped from me in other ways, and so knowing that I had support and someone I could openly speak about my problems to, without judgement really helped me to be less fearful of speaking about things that happened to me”

Young person – local domestic abuse consultation

The Partnership

The shared and equal duty of Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board’s three safeguarding partners – Police, Clinical Commissioning Group¹, and Local Authority – is to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Leicester. This includes agreeing on ways to co-ordinate safeguarding services, acting as a strategic leadership group to engage and support others, and implementing learning from local and national serious child safeguarding incidents.

Our partnership’s arrangements outline our vision “for children and young people in Leicester to be safe, well and achieve their full potential”.

LEICESTER SCP MEMBERSHIP		
Courts, Criminal Justice and Blue Light Services	Leicestershire Police	
	National Probation Service (NPS)	
	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service	
	East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)	
	Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS)	
Education	Primary Schools	
	Secondary Schools	
	Further Education Colleges	
Health	Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)	 
	Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT)	
	University Hospitals Leicester NHS Trust (UHL)	
Local Authority	Children’s Social Care and Education	  
	Adult Social Care	
	Housing	
	Lead Members	 
	Public Health	
Other Partnerships	Child Death Overview Panel (C-DOP)	
PVI Sector	Voluntary Community Sector	

- ¹ Clinical Commissioning Groups were replaced by NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) which are statutory bodies and were established from 1st July 2022. In Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland this means that the functions of Leicester City CCG, West Leicestershire CCG and East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG will become the NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board. [Further information is available here.](#)

Partnership Priorities

With a focus on learning from local and national reviews and local data, the LSCPB worked with the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to identify the following shared priorities and outcomes for 2021/22:

Covid-19 Response (shared with the Safeguarding Adults Boards for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland): Understanding and responding to the impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding adults and children so that safeguarding approaches are effective in recovery from Covid-19 and informed by learning from the pandemic.

What we did: Throughout the business year the partnership held reflective meetings where we took time to consider what our partnership data and learning was telling us about Covid-19.

Impact: The value of virtual multi-agency meetings was discussed and there was a collective agreement to continue with these in appropriate settings.

There has been improved knowledge during Covid-19 about how to connect with the public and our local communities. It was agreed that the safeguarding partnership may be able to learn from this.

There were reflections around the stress and anxieties experienced by the workforce since the start of the pandemic and the importance of support being available.

With challenges about workforce capacity issues, the importance of continuing to work as a partnership and not fragmenting or reverting to working in silos was recognised.

Decisions were made to continue effective multi-agency meetings originally set up due to the pandemic. This included some of the cells set up as part of the Local Resilience Forum as well as the Safeguarding Assurance Keeping in Touch Meeting (which has now been formally incorporated into the structure of the Safeguarding Children Partnership).

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

What we did: The partnership logo was added to support the promotion of the local [ICON](#) project rollout. An overview of the project was also added to the June 2021 edition of our local [Safeguarding Matters](#) publication (see page 4).

ICON and safe sleeping references have been added to the local [Thresholds document](#) and the local [Neglect Toolkit](#).

‘Working with fathers’ has been added to the local [pre-birth procedure](#).

Multi-agency safeguarding training includes learning from local and national reviews.

Following learning from a city review, details of how the National Probation Service can contact Children and Young People's Service for information checks has been added to the [LSCP website](#).

Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) learning was included in the [Neglect Toolkit](#) launch and is also referenced in [multi-agency safeguarding training delivery](#).

'Safeguarding babies' was included in the refresh of our local #OurDoorsOpen media campaign.

A 7-minute learning briefing from city reviews involving babies has been shared across the safeguarding children partnership and also with the Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group (MALDG) to support training.

Impact: Safeguarding babies will continue to be a priority throughout 2022/23 with a focus on measuring impact and seeking further assurance about the effectiveness of safeguarding babies locally.

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

What we did: National psychological first aid training which includes our local ['Was Not Heard'](#) video was promoted within the partnerships. Local [practice guidance](#) has been developed to support practitioners working with children and young people who self-harm and/or have suicidal thoughts.

The partnership gained assurance of safeguarding approaches for children on waiting lists for mental health services. The partnership needed more assurance that pathways for mental health support also support good safeguarding, so will continue to follow this up in the coming year.

Impact: Was Not Heard, which advocates the right of children to be heard and the duty of those working with them to act, has been viewed by over 46,000 people.

Recent local reviews have provided examples of practitioners ensuring that children are heard outside of the home, providing them with the space and place to disclose any experience of harm. However there have also been examples where this is not the case therefore more work is required to ensure that this positive approach is used consistently for children across Leicester.

Domestic Abuse and Child Safeguarding: Seek assurance that partners are responding appropriately to safeguard and support children living with domestic abuse.

What we did: The partnership carried out an audit of safeguarding children cases involving domestic abuse. Safeguarding partners also commissioned work to hear from children and

young people whose families have been considered at MARACs² to understand their experience (see chapter on 'How feedback from children and families has informed our work and influenced service provision' for more information on this consultation).

Impact: The audit and consultation findings fed into local needs assessments, and reviews of domestic abuse services. A key outcome following these pieces of work is the refresh of local multi-agency domestic abuse procedures which is underway.

Harm Outside of the Home: Seek assurance that the local approach to safeguarding children from extra-familial threat is effective.

What we did: The partnership received updates on the progress of the development of a local approach to address harm outside the home. It will continue to follow this up during the 2022/23 business year when this work is due for completion.

The partnership also developed engagement with independent education settings.

Following Ofsted's [review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#), safeguarding partners were invited by the Department for Education, to a series of events to discuss local and national issues that surround harmful sexual behaviour within schools. Leicester's Safeguarding Children Partnership was represented at these events and fed in local experiences including the need for additional support.

Impact: Strategic oversight and requests for assurance helps to maintain focus on this important area of work which will lead to a local approach being developed and embedded.

A new forum of local independent schools has been set up for the partnership with six-monthly meetings facilitated by the business managers. This forum will provide a space for independent schools to consider best practice and contribute to discussions on safeguarding issues that pertain to their work.

Following the events to discuss local and national issues around sexual abuse in schools and colleges, a Home Office funded national support service developed in collaboration with DfE was launched to help practitioners when responding to Harmful Sexual Behaviour. There was a website which outlined the [Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service](#), plus telephone and email support available Monday – Friday, 8am to 8pm. Details of this service were shared widely across the partnership. Unfortunately, according to the website, the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service has already closed.

Safeguarding Children from Diverse backgrounds: Understanding and improving how well partners work together with children and families from diverse backgrounds.

² Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases. See [Safe Lives' frequently asked questions document](#) for more information about MARACs.

What we did: Via an initial scope, the partnership identified that many partners had not carried out work internally regarding understanding safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds. This work will continue into our 2022/23 business plan and involve setting up a task and finish group to progress this priority.

Impact: There was limited impact from this priority during 2022/23 and it is envisaged that further impact will be seen during 2022/23.

The work on all these priorities was embedded within the assurance, training, procedure and review work of the partnership outlined in more detail in the following sections of this report.

Data

Local authority data provides an overview of statutory child safeguarding activity across Leicester throughout 2021/22.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2021-22
Contacts³	4,369	3,657	4,115	4,283	16,424
Contact NFA⁴	714	694	757	930	3,095
Contact NFA %	16.3%	19.0%	18.4%	21.7%	18.8%

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2021-22
Referrals⁵	618	567	554	556	2,295
Re-referrals⁶	126	76	87	76	365
Re-referral %	20.4%	13.4%	15.7%	13.7%	15.9%

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2021-22
CPP⁷	122	116	120	130	488
Repeat CPP (ever)	23	20	27	15	85
Repeat CPP (ever) %	18.8%	17.2%	22.5%	11.5%	17.4%
Repeat CPP (1 yr)	5	10	15	4	34
Repeat CPP (1 yr) %	4.1%	8.6%	12.5%	3.1%	7.0%

³ An Initial Contact is made where Children's Social Care is contacted about a child, who may be a Child in Need, and where there is a request for general advice, information or a service.

⁴ NFA = No Further Action.

⁵ An Initial Contact will be progressed to a Referral where the social worker or manager considers an assessment and/or services may be required for a Child in Need.

⁶ Re-referrals are referrals to Children's Social Care within 12 months of previous referral.

⁷ CPP = Child protection plan.

Seeking Assurance

The partnership has a Quality Assurance Framework shared with the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Performance data

During the year the partnership reviewed comparative data for the safeguarding system against other areas of the country. This showed that rates of referrals and repeat referrals in Leicester and trends in these were in line with other areas of the country. End of year data had not been considered by the time this report was completed and is not able to be shared.

Self-assessment

During 2021 the safeguarding partners and specific relevant agencies carried out a self-assessment of their safeguarding effectiveness. The partnership focussed this assessment on specific areas of priority in the pandemic, including staff welfare, support and capacity, responding to the voice of children and response to domestic abuse.

Following improvement work in the year almost all partner agencies provided some evidence that they were effective across all areas in the assessment:

- Governance of safeguarding,
- Consideration of safeguarding in commissioning,
- Consideration of safeguarding in service change, including the response to Covid-19,
- Supporting workforce capacity and resilience in order to effectively safeguard children,
- Engaging with children to hear and respond to their voice, and
- The response to children affected by domestic abuse.

The assessment did not directly identify any areas for significant work across partners or on a multi-agency basis. All agencies were asked for their plans for how they would improve effectiveness, which will be followed up in next year's assessment

Audits

The LSCPb carried out one multi-agency audit in 2021-22 focussed on domestic abuse and safeguarding children. Alongside this health partners funded Barnardo's to carry out some work to hear the voice of children from homes where domestic abuse had taken place locally.

The audit found that across the majority of cases there was good multi-agency working, information sharing and involvement in safeguarding processes. The voice of children was often sought and considered well by most, but not all, agencies. There were a number of notable areas for improvement:

- There was a consistent lack of engagement with the perpetrators of domestic abuse, often males, and a lack of consideration of referral to routes to address their behaviour.
- In some cases there was an over-reliance on victims to manage the behaviour of perpetrators.
- Sometimes expectation was placed on children to report if parents' abusive relationships restarted, a potentially inappropriate responsibility.
- The diversity and backgrounds of children and families and impact of this was not clearly considered in most cases in Leicestershire & Rutland

The Barnardo's consultation work sought the views of young people whose parents had been considered as at high risk of harm at Domestic Abuse MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meetings. The findings from this are detailed in the section of this report on feedback from children and families.

A review of the SCP domestic abuse procedures will be completed at the start of 2022/23 which will take into account the findings and recommendations of the audit and Barnardo's report. These findings have also been reported into local Community Safety and Domestic Abuse Partnership arrangements and the SCP will follow up how these have been responded to.

Other assurance work

The local SCPs set up a monthly 'Keep in Touch' assurance meeting to continue to consider ongoing impact of the pandemic and other operational matters affecting safeguarding services, with a particular focus on workforce capacity and wellbeing. During the year this identified the following areas of concern:

- There are workforce capacity issues in many services and significant area of challenge in some services. Covid-19 is a factor in this, as well vacancies and availability of trained staff. All services are prioritising children at risk and safeguarding within their response to these challenges. (Oct 21)
- Workforce capacity issues could prevent concerns and issues being picked up early and could lead to missed opportunities to identify and respond to risk of abuse or neglect early. (Jan 22)
- Permanent exclusions have increased and there remains a large increase in number of children electively home educated, which decreases visibility of these children.
- There are large waiting lists for children's community health services which may potentially impact upon the development, health and well-being of children, and increase stress in families (Mar 22)

In response to these concerns the SCP has supported open reflection and conversations regarding the impact of workforce gaps on services and how this is impacting safeguarding through the Keep in Touch meeting and at the main Partnership meetings and has gained assurance that safeguarding continues to be prioritised. The partnership also tasked

partners to review how they were identifying and supporting children at risk of harm, particularly those who were less visible to services, such as those missing education or electively home educated.

In addition the SCP reviewed local approaches and practice regarding:

- Peer on peer sexual abuse between children
- The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse reports regarding religious institutions and institutional responses to allegations.
- Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing children

From these the partnership identified a need to develop engagement with private schools in the area regarding safeguarding, and following consultation set up a safeguarding forum for private schools in the area alongside existing safeguarding engagement approaches with maintained schools that will commence in the summer of 2022. When the partnership followed up progress on work to address peer on peer sexual abuse at the end of the year it identified inconsistencies in responses across the area and commenced a review of procedures in line with national guidance which will be completed in summer of 2022.

This work has also shaped the partnership's priority for 2022/23 to support safeguarding in independent, out of school and small community settings.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures

Via the Leicester and [the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual](#), the partnership has ensured that procedures are in place for multi-agency safeguarding in line with Working Together 2018. Throughout 2021/22 the following procedures were revised in response to learning from local and national reviews and assurance processes:

- Procedure for Children on child protection plans who leave the UK
- Guidance regarding children with mental health needs/self-harm and suicide
- Neglect Toolkit updated to include adolescent neglect, SUDI and pre-birth neglect
- Pre-birth procedure
- Review of the Multi-agency Thresholds document
- LLR Child Protection Practice standards document
- Procedure linked to the National Concordat on Children in Custody

In addition, work was underway at the end of the year to complete:

- A review of the Fabricated and Induced Illness procedures
- A review of the domestic abuse procedures

Of particular importance for all practitioners working within children across Leicester to be aware of and use when needed is the policy on [Resolving Practitioner Disagreements and Escalation of Concerns](#). It is vital that professional disagreements do not negatively affect the outcomes for children and young people and therefore they must be effectively resolved.

Training

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

With the continued impact of the pandemic almost all training was delivered online, however in March 2022 we were able to run our first large-scale in person training event in two years. This was run partnership with De Montfort University (DMU) for World Social Work Day. 125 participants accessed a full programme on 'Transcending Otherness: Disturbing Othering' supporting inclusive practice.

We provided training resources and events in support of our priorities (as well as other key areas identified in a training needs assessment) which included neglect, intrafamilial sexual abuse, and multi-agency safeguarding more broadly.

As well as our core training programme we supported the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) with the booking and administration of an extensive, tiered, Trauma Informed training programme. We have also supported smaller projects by individual agencies such as the Reducing Parental Conflict programmes in Leicester City and Leicestershire.

We continued to use a more blended approach to learning incorporating video resources and resource packs alongside online training sessions and exploring different approaches. One new approach has been joint work with the Safeguarding Adults Boards to provide some resource packs for learning and sharing on common themes. In 2021/22 we produced two shared ['Build Confidence in Practice'](#) resources:

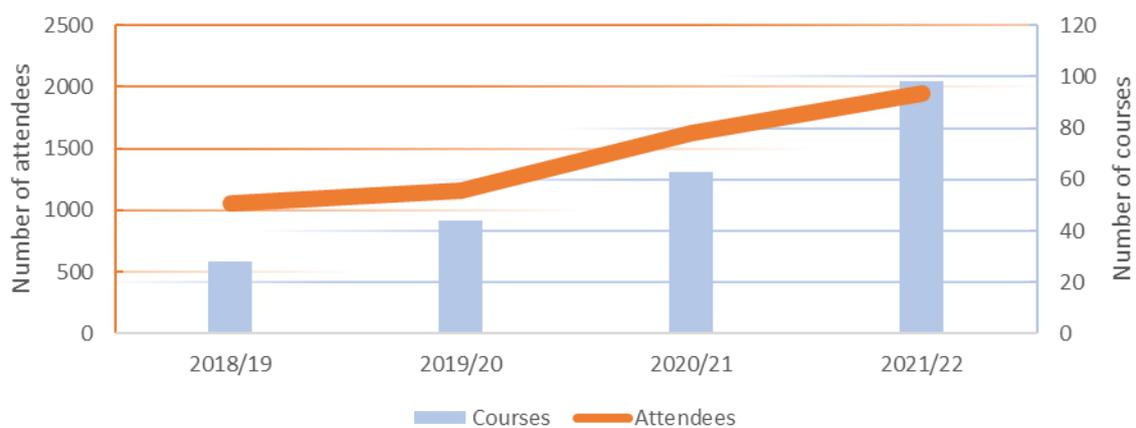
- 1) [Working with Resistance](#)
- 2) [Professional Curiosity](#)

Another new approach was the 'Festival of Learning'. This was run as a series of 43 training sessions held online over two weeks in September 2021 and focussed on how the Statutory, Voluntary and Community Sectors Work Together to Safeguard Children. Feedback on the event was good and demonstrated a need for more training focussed on the voluntary and community sector, however less people attended that we had aimed for. The training group has reflected on this and identified areas for improvement for running a similar event in future to increase attendance, including work to increase the reach of information about the event into the voluntary and community sector.

Overall, training was delivered to almost two thousand (1949) individuals over 98 training events this year. The chart below identifies a continued increase in numbers attending SCP training on previous years. Whilst this is positive, and multi-agency training has been shown to provide improved confidence in interprofessional communication, gains in knowledge, confidence in using safeguarding policies and procedures, and promoting the wellbeing of

children (Carpenter et al., 2010)⁸ the LSCPb recognises that 2,000 people is a small proportion of the overall staffing levels across the partnership. It is therefore critical that individual organisations continue to train their own staff; assurance around this locally is sought by the SCP through its annual self-assessment audit. This year’s audit had a training focus on domestic abuse, with 14 agencies assessing that they were ‘fully effective’ and 4 agencies assessing that they were ‘mostly effective’. All agencies reported either an upward improvement in their self-assessment or maintained the standard they reported in the 2020 audit. The agencies that were reporting they were ‘mostly effective’ explained how they would seek to achieve full effectiveness in this area.

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Training - Attendees and Courses



Alongside this increase several training events were cancelled due to sickness and/or low numbers. There were also a lot of courses which were fully booked but only a half to two thirds of registered participants attended. When reaching out to understand lack of attendance workers reported a significant increase in workload which has been aggravated by a lack of staff, either through sickness or outstanding vacancies.

Our training evaluation shows an increase of 80 to 90 points (on a scale from -100 to +100) across evaluated training in all areas of knowledge, confidence, and skills, in line with last year. This is based upon a return rate of 42% of course attendees, which we are aiming to improve. With broadened learning options it is more difficult to identify who is accessing training materials and therefore the full reach and impact of SCP training.

We want to improve our understanding of access to and impact of SCP training resources to enable us to focus on providing effective training and learning resources that support changes in practice. To do this we will explore the option of a learning management system that will work with our continued blended approach including in-person and online training

⁸ Carpenter, Hackett, Patsios and Szilassy (2010) Outcomes of Inter-agency Training to Safeguard Children: Final report to the Department of Children, Schools and Families and Department of Health. London: Department of Health

sessions alongside continued use of video and online training resources that can be used in individual agency settings.

“This was one of the most comprehensive and interesting training sessions I have attended. Getting the local picture in relation to Modern Slavery was both fascinating, but also worrying, with me now reflecting on recent cases and thinking that I could/should have been more curious. I really recommend all frontline practitioners attend future sessions whether you think it is relevant to your role or not as you will come away knowing just how relevant it is.”

Local multi-agency training feedback

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

At the start of the year, two Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) remained in progress. We are at the final report stage for both of these reports which will be completed during 2022/23. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, in line with Working Together 2018, the LSCPb undertook two Rapid Reviews. In both instances, a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) was commissioned. These reviews will also be completed during 2022/23.

Our Rapid Reviews identified:

- A child who was potentially at risk, and who went on to be safeguarded as a result
- Good information sharing and communication between agencies
- Assessments completed within expected timeframes
- A child seen in person and away from others to enable them to speak freely (which is good to see as this has not always been the case in previous reviews locally)
- That '[professional curiosity](#)' could have been stronger
- A lack of recognition of a child's 'lived experience'
- Importance of ensuring all relevant health assessments – including CAMHS – are featured in a young person's Review Health Assessment (RHA)
- Importance of reflective discussion between professionals
- Importance of quality commissioning, monitoring and review of foster placements (this learning fed into work that was already ongoing)
- A single agency audit has taken place looking at where a concern has been raised about a foster home, but the threshold for LADO was not met
- The Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer (FIRO) role has been strengthened by formally escalating concerns about practice
- The FIRO has been reviewing the assessment of foster carers prior to a Foster Home Review (FHR) and noting in the FHR any vulnerabilities, gaps in information to ensure that the history is captured and noted so any new concerns or vulnerabilities are reflected upon alongside history.

Learning from local LCSPRs also identified updates to be considered for our [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual](#) in relation to:

- Sexual abuse
- Supporting children and young people who self-harm and / or have suicidal thoughts
- Pre-birth procedures

This work will be progressed throughout 2022/23. Google Analytical data shows that there was a significant increase during 2021/22 in the number of users, sessions and page views of

our procedures manual compared to the previous business year. From April 2021 to March 2022, there were 8,343 users, 11,700 sessions and 21,257 page views in comparison to 4,221 users, 6,937 sessions and 17,044 page views from April 2020 to March 2021. It is positive that our procedures are being accessed more widely including our local [Resolving Practitioner Disagreements and Escalation of Concerns](#) which helps to keep children safe.

Learning has been shared with practitioners across organisations through the Safeguarding Partnerships' [Safeguarding Matters newsletter](#), through articles and '7-minute briefings' designed to convey key messages from reviews and encourage managers and workers to reflect on their practice. Multi-agency training, briefings and learning events have also been held to communicate learning, guidance and changes in procedures and learning.

National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The myth of invisible men: safeguarding children under 1 from non-accidental injury caused by male carers review was [published](#) September 2021 and tabled at the October 2021 Board meeting. Findings from this review were remitted to the November 2021 Planning and Delivery Group (the executive for the local Safeguarding Children Partnerships) to consider how learning can be built into practice across the whole system. Learning from this review was incorporated into our 2021/22 business plan priority 'Safeguarding Babies' where the following work was completed:

- The LSCP logo has been added to support the promotion of the local [ICON](#) project (promoting strategies to cope with and respond appropriately to crying babies) rollout.
- An overview of the ICON project was also added to the June 2021 edition of our local [Safeguarding Matters](#) publication.
- ICON and safe sleeping references have been added to the local Thresholds document and the Neglect Toolkit.
- 'Working with fathers' has been added to the [pre-birth procedure](#).
- Multi-agency safeguarding training has included learning from local and national reviews.
- Following learning from a city review, details for how the National Probation Service can contact Children and Young People's Service for information checks has been added to the [LSCP website](#).
- Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) learning was included in the Neglect Toolkit launch and is also referenced in multi-agency safeguarding training delivery.
- 'Safeguarding babies' has been included in the refresh of the #OurDoorIsOpen campaign which was launched during 2021/22.
- A 7-minute learning briefing from city reviews involving babies has been shared across the LSCP and also with the training group to support multi-agency training.

Local work on the ICON programme has included a focus on engaging with fathers and public campaign planned for the coming year will have a focus on getting ICON messages to males. In the coming year the partnership will include focussed questions in all its assurance and review work to assess how fathers and male carers are engaged in safeguarding work and support services. It will also carry out assurance work to assess the effectiveness of local work to safeguard babies.

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

During the year the SCP reviewed its engagement approach to ensure it was having meaningful engagement with young people that made a difference to the work of the partnership.

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

Partners commissioned some work to hear from children and young people whose parents have been considered at Domestic Abuse MARAC to understand their experience. The reach of the survey was limited by the pandemic and interviews were only able to be carried out by telephone, with eleven young people.

Most young people felt that support they received was helpful, but they had to wait too long for it, and communication with them about their experience and support, including listening to them could be significantly improved.

The more detailed findings of the consultation were:

- Communication with young people could have been better. Many felt professionals seemed judgemental and did not understand what they had been through. Many young people were anxious about support, not understanding what support would be available or be like.
- Many young people had to wait a long time for support, and in the meantime developed their own coping strategies which were not always healthy.
- Almost all young people who received support from specialist domestic abuse services found this to be beneficial and a positive experience.
- Changes in workers was very unsettling.
- Having to repeat their lived experience several times as part of the process caused more trauma for some young people.

The report made the following recommendations:

- Scope existing Domestic Abuse support pathways and arrangements to support children and young people, identifying gaps. Build on good practice examples.
- Young people to be involved in shaping new and existing services for domestic abuse.

- Improving access to and range of domestic abuse services and support.
- Discuss the support offer and the benefits of support services.
- Explain and re-explain confidentiality.
- Provide needs led holistic support.
- Triage for access to appropriate referral pathways.
- Audit / examine robustness of multi-agency working.
- Trauma Informed Practice training for professionals.
- Consideration of a Phase 2 Consultation.

Findings from this consultation will be taken into account in the review of the SCP domestic abuse procedures in 2022 and has been shared with the Domestic Abuse Partnerships to influence domestic abuse strategy, commissioning and service provision.

The Partnership continued to promote and receive excellent feedback on the 'Was not heard' film. This film, referenced above, by local young people encourages those who work with children to understand how children communicate with them and highlights the importance and legal duty to hear and respond to them.

"Don't see people like us as weak, victims or broken, we are strong and survivors. I want to hear "you can do it" not "you went through all this and that's why your life sucks" completely changed the narrative of the support"

Young person – local domestic abuse consultation

Changes to Partnership Arrangements

The partnership is committed to developing and improving. The partnership continued its joint working arrangements with the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership to support effective use of resources and consistency in approaches.

The safeguarding partners for the two areas, alongside the safeguarding adults statutory partners reviewed the business office support arrangements for the SCPs, and decided to retain current arrangements with a greater focus on join up and reducing duplication.

Chairing of the joint partnership moved from the Independent Advisor to the Safeguarding Partners for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland in rotation.

The arrangements will also be updated to recognise meetings between the lead representatives of the statutory partners as part of the partnership structure.

The arrangements document will be updated in line with this and published alongside this annual report.

A copy of our governance chart can be found in the appendix.

Independent Scrutiny – Report of the Independent Advisor, Kay Whyte-Bell

Scrutiny Activity

During the last year the impact and challenges of Covid 19 have remained however, statutory and partner agencies have responded robustly, ensuring that the most vulnerable are prioritised. It is important to recognise and appreciate the singular and collective efforts of all members of the statutory and partner agencies in their relentless focus on safeguarding children, their continued collaboration and seeking to identify and seek solutions to the emerging gaps, issues and challenges.

A key priority for Scrutiny Activity was to hear the voice of frontline practitioners and managers. It is important to get a sense of how strategic decisions and partnerships impact on the day-to-day experience and practice of those charged with delivering on those priorities. This was primarily achieved by meeting with Leaders from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Due to service management and workforce issues, brought on by the challenges mentioned above, meetings with staff from Leicester City and Police representatives were not able to take place ahead of the Annual Report being published. Clearly however, the impact of recruitment and retention is an issue for all partner agencies which has been mirrored during strategic discussions. It is anticipated, however that these specific meetings will be scheduled early Autumn 2022.

Following on from the national interest in the outcome of the court trials in relation to two child deaths, strategic leaders reported that calls and activity had increased at contact, referral and assessment levels, coupled with the growing pressure due to recruitment or sickness absence. This has placed unprecedented demand on service response and provision. Through scrutiny, leaders have taken steps to ensure that those children who are vulnerable are prioritised as far as possible.

Leaders from the CCG identified capacity issues particularly in health visiting and midwifery (which we know is a national issue), but were able to clarify how arrangements had been adapted to ensure that safeguarding children remained a priority for front line service provision. Professional relationships are critical but also in calling each Partner to account; to this end there continues to be regular meetings with Children's Social Care Leaders and Health Leaders to focus on the capacity and response issues.

Scrutiny activity during 2021-22 has included:

- Attendance at least once of all the SCP's Sub Groups to seek assurance of process, attendance and engagement
- Meeting with Health professionals from the CCG

- Regular touch base meetings with the three Statutory Partners
- Regular attendance at the Audit & Assurance Sub-Group
- Member of T&F Group (Safeguarding Children from Diverse Backgrounds)
- Providing independent advice for Rapid Reviews and Case Review Group
- Regular meetings with SAB Chair to assure progress on joint priorities
- Joint Chairing of SAB and SCP's meetings
- Attendance at Vulnerability Executive
- Attended (The Association of Safeguarding Partners (TASP) seminars and East Region Chairs/Independent Scrutineers quarterly meetings

Key strengths

- There remains strong evidence of excellent collaboration, accountability and partnership across the three Statutory Partners and other agencies
- Positive Ofsted report judged Leicester City Children's Services as overall "Good, and evidenced that children and young people are served well by the City and it's partner agencies
- A range of new or updated multi-agency procedures and guidance introduced including the Launch of the newly revised Neglect Toolkit to include learning from the Myth of the Invisible Men national report
- Continuation of the Multi partnership Safeguarding Sub-Cell
- Relaunch of the public awareness campaign "Our Door is Open"

Key areas identified for further assurance activity:

- Development of a robust multi agency data set linked to the priorities of the SCPs
- Progressing work on joint SAB/SCP's transitions priority
- Evidence of impact in key learning from Rapid Reviews
- Assurance on the priority of children and young people's mental health and well-being

Emergent challenges

- Workforce issues across all statutory partner agencies. Assurance is being sought that children who are most vulnerable or subject to CPP are being prioritised by all Statutory Partners.
- The impact of the two recently published national reviews on safeguarding and children's social care is yet to be fully understood

Priorities 2022/23

The partnership has reviewed learning from local and national reviews, and from local assurance and engagement work, as well as speaking to children and young people and considering the current context of the pandemic in determining its priorities going forward. The Partnership has identified the following forward priorities shared with Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership:

Safeguarding Babies – Continue to improve how we work together with families before and after births to safeguard babies.

Child Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing – Seek assurance that partners are working to support good mental health for children and that mental health and safeguarding are effectively addressed together.

Keeping Adolescents Safe / Supporting Safe Adolescents – Seek assurance that the local approach to safeguarding children from extra-familial threat is effective. This includes priority work on Transitional Safeguarding shared with the Safeguarding Adults Boards.

Safeguarding Children from Diverse backgrounds – Complete our work to understand and improve how well partners work together with children and families from diverse backgrounds.

Effective Safeguarding in Independent and Out of School Settings – Work with independent schools, religious institutions, alternative education, and other out of school settings to support robust safeguarding.

Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPB) Structure Chart 2022/23

