

Briefing:
Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review
(LCSPR)
'Patricia'

What is an LCSPR?

A Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) is an independent review into a case where a child has been seriously harmed or has died and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. LCSPRs are carried out where local partner organisations identify there may be learning from the case to improve the safeguarding and welfare of children, particularly regarding how organisations work together.

The aim of a LCSPR is to establish any lessons learnt from the case and to identify how these have, or will be, acted upon and lead to sustainable improvements to practice and the prevention of death, serious injury or harm to children and young people.

More information on LCSPRs can be found in [Working Together to Safeguarding Children \(2023\)](#)

Foreword

This was an extremely distressing case which involved Patricia, who experienced abuse at the hands of an adult within the community. The Safeguarding Children Partnership recognises the far-reaching impact of this abuse.

Patricia is not this young person's real name, but is a pseudonym she has chosen. I would like to thank her for contributing to what would have been a challenging process, given the trauma we know she has experienced.

The findings and recommendations of the review were fully accepted by the Safeguarding Children Partnership and since this review was carried out in 2020, all of the agencies involved have acted on the recommendations of the report. This includes taking part in trauma-informed training, and putting in place a strategy, to ensure that full account is taken of the lasting impact that traumatic experiences have on the lives of children and young people. Work continues to be carried out on this topic, within children's social care and across the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

Work is also being done around increasing the number of foster care placements available, with insufficient numbers of placements being a national issue. In Leicester we are developing an enhanced foster care offer and the city council is expanding the city's children's home provision.

It is the role of the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to ensure that agencies provide the best care and support possible to children and young people in Leicester. I know that all of those within the partnership are committed to continued improvements in all of the areas highlighted in Patricia's review in order to achieve this.

Amanda Boodhoo, Independent Chair, Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board

1. Overview

- 1.1. 'Patricia' is the anonymous pseudonym provided to a young person in the care of Leicester City who was the subject of a rapid review, and later LCSPR. 'Patricia' has read the final report and has had a say in the choosing of the pseudonym 'Patricia.'
- 1.2. Patricia has reflected upon reading the full report and expressed that it is not published in full. The Safeguarding Childrens Partnership have respected Patricia's wishes and are therefore publishing this briefing as an alternative.
- 1.3. The Local Authority initiated legal proceedings in respect of Patricia when she was 10 years old. Patricia was placed into foster carer, whilst a sibling was placed with their father. Since entering care and over the review period, Patricia unfortunately experienced a number of placement moves. She was placed with five foster placements (both Local Authority, Independent Fostering Agency carers and an emergency placement), four out of area residential placements, two local authority residential homes, a period in kinship care with family for 10 months and a placement in a secure setting.
- 1.4. Whilst living in a children's home, an adult in the community sexually assaulted Patricia and criminal proceedings were initiated. This led to a rapid review being undertaken.
- 1.5. The LCSPR was written by Sheila Fish and Jane Wiffin, Independent Reviewers.

2. Timeline of the Review and Significant Events

Feb 2017	<p>Legal proceedings commenced. An Interim Care Order (ICO) is granted in respect of Patricia, she became a Looked After Child and she was placed into her first foster placement. One of her siblings is placed with their respective father.</p> <p>Patricia experiences a number of placement moves.</p>
April 2020	<p>The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel were notified about the serious incident of the adult in the community sexually assaulting Patricia. In line with due process a Rapid Review was undertaken, and the decision made to proceed to a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review.</p>
June 2020	<p>The National Panel response agreed with the recommendation to proceed to a LCSPR.</p>
Feb 2022	<p>LCSPR final report completed.</p>
July 2023	<p>The SCP Board signed off the LCSPR.</p>
Feb 2024	<p>LSCPR report shared with Patricia. The timescale of this was when Patricia was felt to be in a position whereby it was safe and appropriate to share this with her.</p>

3. Background and Rapid Review

- 3.1. A Rapid Review was undertaken following the serious incident in April 2020. Patricia, who was 13 years old at the time, made an allegation of rape against a 40-year-old male. Patricia was living in a Leicester City children's home at the time.
- 3.2. Patricia has undoubtedly experienced significant harm and trauma in her early years. The LCSPP summarised her early and formative life experience as being '*characterised by family chaos, witnessing domestic violence and being frequently physically abused; her developmental needs were not met, and she was emotionally abused and significantly neglected.*'
- 3.3. Following being taken into care, Patricia's significant attachment and support needs were evident, leading to emotional and behavioural dysregulation. This escalated with each breakdown in her living arrangements, which resulted in aggressive behaviour towards others and damage of property. She returned to the City at the start of the Covid 19 lockdown restrictions. This brought her into contact with children and young people from her past, as well as being drawn to her mother's home. There were regular episodes where she was reported missing, with other vulnerable young people. The children's home worked hard to keep her safe, although this became harder to achieve.
- 3.4. Patricia was sexually assaulted; this was the incident which led to the rapid review. Following this, Patricia was placed in a secure setting. Patricia was later placed in a residential placement following the planned ending of the secure placement.
- 3.5. Patricia is currently 17 years old and is being cared for in semi-independent, specialist, supported accommodation.

4. Findings and Response

- 4.1. The review which concluded in 2022 made five broad findings;

FINDING ONE: Trauma-informed approaches

- 4.2. *Available training has not yet sufficiently enabled professionals to routinely work in a trauma-informed way with the small group of children who have significant attachment needs and dysregulated behaviour. This increases the chances that a behavioural view predominates, where a child's significant attachment needs and dysregulated behaviour is perceived as the wilful flouting of boundaries, needing clarification of consequences. Simultaneously, it encourages professionals to mistakenly take at face value what a child with significant attachment needs says they want, with insufficient contextualisation of such demands in relation to their attachment and trauma-related needs.*

Response, Assurance and Action

- 4.3. Trauma informed training has been rolled out across the partnership, in consultation with the Violence Reduction Network as part of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland trauma

informed strategy/Trauma Informed Partnership. There continues to be work undertaken on this topic, both within children's social care and across the partnership.

- 4.4. Training on trauma informed approaches and has been provided to social care and early help staff. Trauma informed principles are considered widely within all training and development sessions, as well as within the development of new processes and systems and considered, reviewed, and assessed for impact through our audit and quality assurance framework.
- 4.5. The Children's Rights and Participation Team have supported training and development around the use of trauma informed language. This work continues with consideration being given to how we can consider the spaces in which we engage with families (such as family hubs) through a trauma informed lens.

FINDING TWO: Personalising moves from one place to another for children

- 4.6. *Do current processes support a child who is care experienced move from one home to another and sufficiently enable a personalisation approach as standard? This approach is important to ensure that important details from the child's perspective (the routines they are used to, what they like and do not like doing, eating etc, their cultural context) are captured and shared. It also makes it easier for relationships and life-long links to be sustained.*

Response, Assurance and Action

- 4.7. Following the review, further work was undertaken with regards to placements and commissioning services, and the Placement Request Form and Placement Planning Documentation was amended and further developed. This provides more detailed information about children's histories and previous experiences, to ensure that important details are captured and shared so that children are better supported, if they need to move to a new home.
- 4.8. The work detailed under Finding One around Trauma Informed Approaches, as well as further embedding the practice framework of Signs of Safety together with a specific focus on placement moves and instability, has supported this approach in developing personalised, child and behavioural specific care plans to support children, and carers in meeting their needs. There has also been a focus on 'networks' for children, and for looked after children the issues of networks considers those around the child widely, including any previous carers.
- 4.9. This continues to be reviewed through our audit and quality assurance framework.

FINDING THREE: Addressing factors that create placement instability

- 4.10. *Faced with insufficient options of places for care experienced children with trauma-related behaviours to live, and the very real possibility of not finding anywhere for a young person to go, 'placement' finding is focused on finding the next placement, without equivalent priority being given to identifying and addressing factors known to create placement instability in the first place or incorporating learning from successive placements, both successful and failed ones, to inform a child's subsequent ones. This exacerbates rather than alleviates the significant*

constraints. This lack of focus on the causes of placement instability leads to family members and commercial providers alike being less likely to be aware of these child's complex needs. This leads to issues emerging which are beyond their respective capabilities to address, children's needs are not met and this risks the child being set up to fail, while commissioners and providers argue about whose responsibility failed placements are, after the fact.

Response, Assurance and Action

- 4.11. Placement sufficiency is a nationally recognised issue and complex problem, and work continues to be undertaken around our fostering offer, the development of the enhanced foster carer offer, and the expansion and development of our children's home provision.
- 4.12. Children who are requiring a long-term placement are reviewed by senior managers at a monthly Panel. This includes younger children in residential care (who are likely to have experienced significant trauma), and children for whom a placement may be considered unstable or likely to end/in need of support.
- 4.13. A review was undertaken to better understand the needs of children who experience unplanned placement moves. A strengths-based process/procedure was subsequently developed for Placement Support Meetings, which has replaced previously termed 'disruption' meetings. This has encouraged support and more specific plans to be put into place for children and carers at an earlier stage. Where children are likely to need a placement move, this process enables better consideration of a child or young person's experiences and histories (including experience of trauma and the impact of relationships), and how this can be taken forwards to inform any planning around future placements.
- 4.14. The work recently undertaken with IMPOWER has considered the profiles of looked after children, and there has been a needs analysis completed in respect of specific cohorts of looked after children (Valuing Care tool). This is helping to better understand the needs of looked after children. Work is continuing around embedding the Valuing Care tool so it can be used both individually to support the intervention for individual children and matching needs for placements, and also more widely to support commissioning.

FINDING FOUR: Paperwork

- 4.15. *The current local authority IT system and its use, confuses the past and present, making it difficult to understand a child's present circumstances and needs at any time, and relying on individuals to change the tenses of information that is automatically pulled through. This has an impact on the small group of children locally who have experienced significant abuse in childhood, making it harder for those supporting them to understand significant attachment needs and dysregulated behaviour over time.*

Response, Assurance and Action

- 4.16. Since the LCSPR was undertaken, the practice framework of Signs of Safety has continued to be delivered and embedded further into practice. There has been regular training for staff

within Childrens Social Care (CSC) and Early Help (EH), and audit and quality assurance to consider its impact.

- 4.17. Forms have been adapted to ensure that the ‘pull through’ of old information is more limited, and that up-to-date information is provided more regularly. Trauma Informed language is considered within training, and within the audit and quality assurance framework.
- 4.18. For looked after children, it is acknowledged that the computer-generated Liquid Logic documents may not be child friendly and trauma aware. A child friendly Looked After Child Care Plan is being developed, with input, consultation and coproduction from the Children’s Rights and Participation Team and implementation is planned for Autumn 2024.

FINDING FIVE: Partnership working

- 4.19.** *For the small cohort of children with significant attachment needs and dysregulated behaviour, close and effective partnership working and a shared responsibility for meeting needs is vital. Yet there is a tendency that the more a child’s behaviour escalates, and list of placement breakdowns grows, the more children’s social care role become front and centre because the task and role has become so challenging. This makes it more difficult to pause to gather and hear input and analysis from other professions including schools, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Forensic CAMHS and consider accepting their offers of help, even when the need would otherwise be self-evident.*

Response, Assurance and Action

- 4.20. Work has continued across the partnership. Annual Health Audits take place between CSC and Looked After Children (LAC) Health, with joint sessions taking place between Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and Health professionals to improve communication and ensure concerns can be escalated. Information around the provision of CAMHS services has been provided and city LAC Service have a direct link to the CAMHS young people’s team. As in the case of Patricia, where necessary, there continues to be a flexible approach taken to supporting therapeutic needs are met. Further work is planned across the Partnership around the audit and assurance related to CAMHS provision and availability.
- 4.21. The work that has been undertaken around developing plans for children and young people, particularly where there has been trauma and/or placement instability, consider the network around the child which is a focus of our practice model of Signs of Safety. The focus on the network, including family/friends and professionals, promotes the development of plans for children which include the input of all professionals. This has been further embedded as the practice framework since the LCSPR was undertaken.

For any questions regarding this briefing please contact the Leicester Safeguarding Childrens Partnership Officer LSCP@leicester.gov.uk