



Leicester
City Council

**MEETING OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION
SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

DATE: TUESDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2024

TIME: 5:30 pm

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles
Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Committee

Councillor Batool (Chair)

Councillor Bonham (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Clarke, Gregg, Karavadra, Mahesh, March and Dr Moore

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Ed Brown (Scrutiny Policy Officer)

Julie Bryant (Governance Services), Governance Services (Governance Services)

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If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Ed Brown or Julie Bryant, Governance Services**, on Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk or Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk . Alternatively, email committees@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

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1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To issue a welcome to those present, and to confirm if there are any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People, and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 20th August 2024 have been circulated, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair is invited to make any announcements as they see fit.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures will be reported.

6. PETITIONS

Any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures will be reported.

7. HIGH NEEDS (HNB) MANAGEMENT RECOVERY PLAN AND TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Appendix B

The Director of Education and SEND submits a report providing detail on the HNB Management Recovery Plan that forms part of the transformation plan.

8. WORKLOAD AND RESOURCES

Appendix C

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submits a report to provide the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission with an overview of current workload and resources available to the two children's divisions in the Social Care and Education Division.

A presentation will be made at the commission.

9. ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS UPDATE

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education will give a verbal update on the current position regarding adventure playgrounds.

**10. LEICESTER SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
PARTNERSHIP BOARD - YEARLY REPORT 2023/24**

Appendix D

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education submits the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Yearly Report for 2023/24.

The Commission is invited to comment on how effectively Leicester safeguarding partners (police, health, and local authority) have jointly reported on the activity they have undertaken in a 12-month period, with a focus on multi-agency priorities, learning, impact, evidence, and improvement.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix E

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS



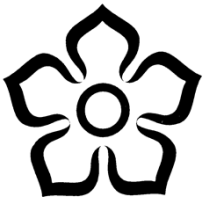
USEFUL ACRONYMS IN RELATION TO OFSTED AND EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (updated November 2015)

Acronym	Meaning
APS	Average Point Score: the average attainment of a group of pupils; points are assigned to levels or grades attained on tests.
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
C&YP	Children and Young People
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CFST	Children and Families Support Team
CICC	Children in Care Council
CIN	Children in Need
CLA	Children Looked After
CLASS	City of Leicester Association of Special Schools
COLGA	City of Leicester Governors Association
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CYPF	Children Young People and Families Division (Leicester City Council)
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
CYPS Scrutiny	Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission
DAS	Duty and Advice Service
DCS	Director of Children's Services
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EET	Education, Employment and Training
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EHP	Early Help Partnership
EHSS	Early Help Stay Safe
EIP	Education Improvement Partnership

ELG	Early Learning Goals: aspects measured at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
EY	Early Years
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage: (0-5); assessed at age 5.
EYFSP	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
FS	Foundation Stage: nursery and school Reception, ages 3-5; at start of Reception a child is assessed against the new national standard of 'expected' stage of development, then teacher assessment of Foundation Stage Profile areas of learning
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Education
GLD	Good Level of Development
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KS1	Key Stage 1: National Curriculum Years (NCYs) 1 and 2, ages 5-7; assessed at age 7.
KS2	Key Stage 2: NCYs 3, 4, 5, and 6, ages 7-11; assessed at age 11.
KS3	Key Stage 3: NCYs 7, 8 and 9, ages 11-14; no statutory assessment.
KS4	Key Stage 4: NCYs 10 and 11, ages 14-16; assessed at age 16.
KTC	Knowledge Transfer Centre
LA	Local Authority
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LARP	Leicester Access to Resources Panel
LCCIB	Leicester City Council Improvement Board
LCT	Leicester Children's Trust
LDD	Learning Difficulty or Disability
LESP	Leicester Education Strategic Partnership
LLEs	Local Leaders of Education
LP	Leicester Partnership

LPP	Leicester Primary Partnership
LPS	Leicester Partnership School
LSCB	Leicester Safeguarding Children Board
LSOAs	Lower Super Output Areas
MACFA	Multi Agency Case File Audit
NCY	National Curriculum Year
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NLEs	National Leaders of Education
NLGs	National Leaders of Governance
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PEPs	Personal Education Plans
PI	Performance Indicator
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent
QA	Quality Assurance
RAP	Resource Allocation Panel
RI	Requires Improvement
SA	Single Assessment
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SCR	Serious Case Review
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SIMS	Schools Information Management Systems
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SLEs	Specialist Leaders of Education
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRE	Sex and Relationship Education
TBC	To be Confirmed
TFL	Tertiary Federation Leicester
TP	Teenage Pregnancy
UHL	University Hospitals Leicester
WIT	Whatever it Takes
YOS	Youth Offending Service

YPC	Young People's Council
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Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 20 AUGUST 2024 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Batool – Chair
Councillor Bonham – Vice-Chair

Councillor Clarke
Councillor Dr Moore

Councillor Karavadra

Standing Invitees (non-voting)

Jennifer Day (Teaching Unions)

Also Present

Councillor Russell – Deputy City Mayor

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85. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mahesh and Councillor March.

86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

Councillor Dr Moore declared that she was chair of the advisory board at Millgate School.

Councillor Karavadra declared that she worked in a nursery.

87. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A typographical error was noticed with regards to Councillor Gregg's declaration. It should have read: "He would be careful to keep his comments non-political."

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 19 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

88. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

89. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Mr Stephen Ashley asked:

"Can the City Council commit to immediate, constructive dialogue in order to give the City's nine adventure playgrounds the best possible chance of moving towards sustainability?"

The Director of Childrens Social Work and Early Help gave the following response:

"Dialogue between the City Council and the nine adventure playgrounds has been ongoing since January 2024, with a clear focus on the expectations communicated to all nine adventure playgrounds that they work towards business and sustainability plans to become financially self-sufficient.

The report before today's meeting clearly evidences the extensive support that the adventure playgrounds have been provided with since January 2024, and also clearly communicates the council's position regarding grant funding ceasing in April 2025 due to the extensive funding pressures it continues to face."

In responding to the question, officers kept in mind the statement that Mr Ashley had submitted as shown on the agenda.

90. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

A petition was submitted at the meeting. This would be verified to ascertain whether it would go to Full Council.

91. ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS UPDATE

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submitted a report to update the commission on the position for each of the nine Play Associations that manage the adventure playgrounds across the city.

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community Safety introduced the report and noted that:

- This report had been requested at the previous meeting to include the specific combinations of support that had been offered.
- In addition to this, an additional meeting was being arranged with Ward Councillors and the play associations to look at those playgrounds that had not yet submitted sustainability plans to see if there were any other opportunities that could be taken up.
- It was stressed that the playgrounds were run by individual, independent charities, and whilst the Council could offer information and links the Council could not tell the organisations what they should do. Therefore, the Council worked on facilitation rather than direct support.
- The Council wanted the playgrounds to succeed in the long term.
- The Council was in a financially dire situation. With the information available at the time of the decision, it had looked as though the Council would be facing a Section 114 notice within the following 12 months. In the event of a Section 114 notice, grants would cease immediately. This would have left the playgrounds exposed and vulnerable, and the Council wished for the playgrounds to be successful.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments and the officers and the Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community Safety to respond. Key points included:

- Regarding a query as to whether grant monies could be spent on redundancy payments by the organisations, it was noted that whilst the Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community had not been party to the legal advice to the organisations' management committees, each organisation was independent, and their management committees

were seeking advice on liabilities. It was further noted that many volunteer sector organisations were set up in a way whereby there was no personal liability, although it was unknown if this was the case for these organisations. The Council could not pay for both redundancy and running costs due to its financial position. The route of open access play only had not been followed in the spirit of supporting staff.

- In response to a query on the use of Capital Funding by organisations, it was noted that four had applied for Capital Funding: Mowmacre, What Cabin, Goldhill and New Parks. The Council had been working with the play associations to ensure that the correct processes were observed, particularly with regard to fencing that was needed. With regard to Mowmacre and What Cabin, these were on Parks land, and as such a local consultation needed to be conducted as this would partly block public land for part of a school day. In the case of Goldhill, alternative provision had been considered as it was noted that September was the quietest time of year and alternative provision picked up usage throughout the year. A certain amount of money had been agreed for Goldhill. With regard to New Parks, the nursery position was being looked at.
- In response to a query about extended leases and the transfer of assets, it was explained that in terms of leases, academy land remained as such. With regards to the adventure playgrounds, if playgrounds produced a sustainability plan and a business case, once the business case was evaluated the council could issue a five year licence to occupy, and these were free of charge in terms of use for the site, usually there was a charge for the use of Council buildings, but this was not the case for playgrounds. The licence was charged for, and this gave the organisations limited liability and helped the Council to support them. Options were explored internally for community asset transfer and long leases, however, there had been complicated legal issues involved. Any lease over seven years counted under the Council's disposal policy under national legislation, and therefore different rules needed to be applied. In asset transfer, it was necessary to say that the site was being offered for the local community and increased activity and would be open evenings and weekends, this would leave it open to other organisations coming in and taking over. The Council had a legal duty to follow the best value route. For example, if Highfields was put up for asset transfer, then theoretically another organisation who offered increased services and offered to pay a rent could offer to take over, and the Council would have a legal responsibility to take the best option, and this would not necessarily protect the adventure playground. The licence process protected the play associations as best as possible; they had been secured in the short term whilst keeping a longer-term option open. Additionally, with Highfields on Parks land and Goldhill being on education land, the government would need to be applied to for the disposal of the land.
- There had been discussions over what people from the organisations

would like in terms of meetings, and logs had been kept of these conversations.

- Having security of tenure was seen as useful when applying for philanthropic funding, and the Council had provided letters of assurance to assist with this. Evidence gathered from around the country showed that it was necessary to look at change in the operating model to make it sustainable. Where play associations that offered open access play had changed their operating model to increase their range of services, they had been able to get long-term sustainability and thrive. An example of this was Manchester Young Lives.
- The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community Safety, the Assistant City Mayor for Culture, Libraries and Community Centres and the officers involved were thanked for the effort they had put in to trying to get the best outcome.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.

92. FAMILY HUBS AND CHILDREN'S CENTRES

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education and the Strategic Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help submitted a report on the ongoing work within Family Hubs and Children's Centres.

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community Safety introduced the report and noted that:

- As a flagship programme of the previous government the Council had been happy to get the funding to take the work forward, however, it had become clear that the funding had come with caveats.
- The biggest challenge had been the need to develop an offer and expand it over two years, this needed to be sustainable as after two years the funding would be stopped. The Council had managed to achieve this.
- The Secretary of State had been written to in order to ask for the opportunity for Leicester to pilot early intervention if Children's Centres did not need to be closed. This would be going ahead, but it was not known how much the government were going to change it.

The Head of Early Help and the Disabled Children's Service then presented the report. Key points highlighted included:

- The programme was now in the implementation stage.
- Providers for 0-2 year-olds had been commissioned.

- The workforce and partners were being trained. This included health workers to ensure that interventions were successful.
- With regard to co-dependencies, there were staff available to provide the core offer as well as other offers.
- Looking at the numbers of staff trained, these matched the needs of the community and could also provide core services.
- The consultation on the Summer Extravaganza would need to be considered in terms of delivery. This was still at the consideration stage.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments and the officers and the Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community Safety to respond. Key points included:

- In terms of outcomes, there had been over 100 requirements from the Department for Education (DfE). In terms of sustainability, the Council were looking at their own monitoring processes as they were familiar with the city. The DfE had given boundaries and measures in terms of broad outcomes, but the Council would look more specifically in terms of quality assurance in terms of feedback from families etc.
- It was noted that expectations changed, and other authorities had been told they could have different things.
- The consultation had been completed in terms of Children's Centres. In terms of delivering services that were both early help and early years, it was aimed to move that forward to local communities as much as possible, building connections between workers, families, teachers and health workers etc. Efficiencies and savings could be made through this approach.
- In response to a query on whether a portage service was available, it was noted that there were early years teachers who did Special Educational Needs (SEN) work. It was uncertain as to whether a portage model was used, but in terms of indicators of early years need, there was a model that was embedded.
- Mapping for Change was a part of the project to support the needs assessment. Once the final report was reviewed it could come to the Commission.
- In response to queries on the tailoring of services and the provision of resources, it was clarified that the Mapping for Change report helped the Council understand what the needs were so that services could be tailored, and resources provided accordingly.
- Interventions through the DfE would target specific issues.
- Family hubs were not just about a physical presence but were multi-modal with added focus on online and remote delivery, particularly for hard-to-access families. This gave flexibility.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That the commission be kept informed of updates.
- 3) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.

93. USE OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS

The Director of Estates and Buildings submitted a report to update the commission on Childrens and Education projects and programmes of work completed relatively recently by the Capital Projects and Minor Works teams within Estates & Building Services.

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community Safety introduced the report and highlighted that the work often goes unseen, but there is lots of amazing work ongoing and it had been particularly beneficial having Estates & Building Services work hand in hand with Children's services to streamline the process which has made the difference to the children involved.

The Head of Capital, Estates and Building Services presented the report. It was noted that:

- Some projects listed were from decisions made four years ago.
- Projects included SEND extensions and refurbishment, Children's Home refurbishments, Childrens Contact Centre refurbishments, Designated Special Provision works, roof repairs at schools, window replacements at schools, playground improvements, safeguarding projects, Individual Access Needs works and toilet upgrades.
- Overdale Infant and Junior School, Lutterworth Rd Childrens Home, Oaklands School, Elmbrook Primary School were some of the projects completed.
- Wigston Lane would be complete next month.
- Things that had looked like small change had made a big difference and been transformational to children, staff and teaching environments. For example, use of different lighting, moving a fence to include the tree line has created more space for playing, replacing drafty windows, outdoor canopies to created covered play area and refurbishment of old buildings.
- Safeguarding works included fencing and gates but also the relocation of reception works. This has provided remote control access for staff and has had a huge impact for safeguarding of both staff and pupils.
- Toilet projects were completed by the Minor Works Team. More user-friendly units had been installed which were also more efficient.
- An example of individual access needs was a child who was given an unsuitable medical placement, it was fast tracked to ensure there was an

appropriate environment for them to go into.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments and the officers and the Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community Safety to respond. Key points included:

- 55 schools had benefited from decarbonisation schemes. This had seen installation of things such as new windows, solar panels and LED lighting which saved a lot of money and energy as well as improving the looks and feel for pupils and staff.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair expressed their thanks for the work on this project and how impressed they were at the work shown.

94. LEICESTER CITY YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2024-25

The Director of Childrens Social Care and Education submitted a report providing a summary of the annual Youth Justice Plan refresh, highlighting progress to date and new emerging priorities. The Head of Prevention and Safer Communities and the Service Manager for Children and Young Peoples Justice Service and Youth Service presented the plan, and it was noted that:

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community Safety introduced the item and noted that the team involved was fantastic and that they were passionate to get it right. Page 143 of the report summed up the plan and the work of partners behind the scenes and demonstrated how it was also relevant and meaningful to the young people who were vulnerable in the city and helped to support them to make changes.

Head of Service Prevention Services and the Service Manager for Children and Young Peoples Justice Service and Youth Service presented the report.

It was noted that:

- The team was proud of what had been achieved and were now working on next year's plan. The Service Manager for Children and Young Peoples Justice Service and Youth Service had been instrumental in the development of the plan.
- The last inspection had been in 2019. The inspectorate had put together a new package and as such an inspection was anticipated soon and priorities have changed due to Covid and the challenges that brought.
- The Youth Justice Board created a new monitoring framework – Leicester were rated in quadrant 2 and aimed to be in quadrant 1.
- The aim of this plan was to be collaborative all the way through from children to leadership team.
- One of the key priorities is first time entrants into the system. There were 200 young people in the service at one time and 40% were first time entrants. The service would like intervention in place before they become first time entrants.

- The reoffending rate was excellent with those who were being engaged with and the service wanted to continue to mainstream intervention with the budget available.
- A key challenge was that youth offending has increased. A requirement was knowing the population, and it was known who and where reoffending was and it was being addressed.
- Another key challenge was the smaller number of young people who offended with high frequency. This has required trauma informed approaches to help them as it had been notable that there were increased complexities.
- Education was raised as a big issue for ages 16-19 as fewer had gone into employment or placements post-covid.
- Serious youth violence was a very small concentration of young people, contrary to what had been suggested in the media. There was a multi-agency collective to address this working with the police and community safety.
- A collective partnership offer to victims through court and pre-court processes which allows the victims voices to be heard whilst supporting them.
- The focus is very much on a child first approach - focused on them being children first and an offender second using a children's plan which is child led and was impactful.
- Young people would like safe spaces, training in life skills, emotional support etc. All of which were core basics of youth work.
- There would be a meeting on 5 September to face challenges and respond to what the children want.
- An example of a key success has been the REACH service. They were given funding to provide intervention in eight schools for children who were vulnerable or at risk of exclusion to help prevent them entering the criminal justice system. The project engaged with 240 children. However, the concern is the sustainability of these programmes, as they are provided using short term funding offered by government.
- The Children and Young Peoples Justice Service (CYPJS) had been awarded the SEND Youth Offending Service) YOS Charter Mark and were now working towards the SEND leaders award.
- A consistent approach to working with children and young people on Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) had been developed to ensure staff were skilled and able to adapt plans to meet identified needs.
- Nine different training sessions from the Crown Prosecution Service had been offered on preventing unnecessary criminalization of children in the city.
- In terms of risk, there had been a large impact from Covid and the ensuing isolation of young people, as they became disassociated and disenfranchised with the wider community.
- A balance of prevention and early intervention was required and there was more work the team wanted to see happen in the communities.
- The Director of Social Care and Education was the chair of the partnership board and commented on the strength of the partnership and commitment from the police and other partners. Noting that these

relationships had helped how the challenges could be addressed.

The Detective Chief Inspector from Leicestershire Police commented that this report documented the progress made as a partnership and how the partnership could move forward.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments and the officers to respond. Key points included:

- The length of the report was commented on as particularly large; this was noted as being the statutory length but is an issue that was raised annually.
- The statistics in the report demonstrated that the work being done had been working and the team was commended on the work done.
- It was suggested that the plan could be sent to schools to help address the fact there was an increase in first time entrants to the system.
- Quarterly meetings with the magistrates were held and there was significant training, especially around how to talk to children. Similarly, language work with the children occurred along with what to expect in the system. The intention had been to help make the process as kind as possible for the child and to help them be relatable to the magistrate.
- Engagement had occurred through a range of methods including music or cartoons. There had been focus groups to help understand how to engage the children best. However, engagement was voluntary, and it was around 90%.
- Work had recently been commissioned on cost of living and deprivation in relation to youth offending rates increasing.
- Each member of the Leicester Youth Justice Management Board had adopted a measure to scrutinise to ensure they were addressed.
- The Youth Justice plan was best in country in 2022/2023.
- The key frustrations for officers in the service were how the media reported children and criminal offences. It was highlighted that this has been one of the benefits of the child first approach as it allowed them a voice and to push back against the labels and still be seen as children. Another frustration was funding as the work needed long term investments to make sustainable changes.

The commission thanked the team for the report and their work.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

95. WORK PROGRAMME

It was requested that the situation with Adventure Playgrounds be revisited after September. It was further clarified that this could only be based on what the Council knew of the situation as they could not talk on behalf of

independent organisations.

The possibility of involving the play associations in the scrutiny would be discussed outside the meeting.

The work programme was noted.

96. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 19:29.

High Needs Block (HNB) Management Recovery Plan and Transformation Project

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission

Decision to be taken by: Cllr Elaine Pantling
Assistant City Mayor for Education

Date of meeting: 29th October 2024

Lead director: Sophie Maltby
Director of Education and SEND

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: all
- Report author: Sophie Maltby/Shelley Piercy/ Martin Judson
- Author contact details:
Sophie.maltby@leicester.gov.uk/shelley.piercy@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: v4

1. Summary

- 1.1 Funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is provided from the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Since 2014, nationally there has been a significant increase in spend within the High Needs Block. Funding for SEND from the government has not kept pace with this increase in demand and costs.
- 1.2 Most of the Local Authorities nationally have reported a deficit budget for the High Needs Block. As a result, the previous government introduced two national programmes (Safety Valve and Delivering Better Value) for Local Authorities to reduce and remove their deficit budgets. Other authorities with smaller deficits have been required to submit HNB Management Recovery Plans and meet regularly with Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to demonstrate how they are managing their deficit budgets.
- 1.3 Presently, the government has implemented a statutory override to general accounting practice, which allows Local Authorities to proceed with an imbalanced Dedicated Schools Grant budget without requiring a Section 114 notice for the council. The override was due to expire in March 2023, but the government has extended this to March 2026. Many local authorities nationally have stated that if there is no change to SEND funding and the override is ended it will force their authorities into issuing a Section 114 notice.
- 1.4 As with councils across the country, Leicester continues to experience conflicting priorities in balancing effective efficient inclusive resources to support and meet its statutory duties and the needs of a rising number of children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).
- 1.5 Leicester City currently had a cumulative DSG deficit of £6m as of March 2023 ranking us 64 places below the highest deficit of £118.8m and 35 places above the lowest deficit of £0.25m. The cumulative deficit for Leicester as of 31 March 2024 has risen to £9.6m with a forecast in year overspend of £14.8m in 2024/25. If unmitigated the projected cumulative deficit for the HNB could rise to over £100m by 2030.
- 1.6 Leicester City has not been required to join one of the government programmes. However, it has been required to submit a HNB Management Recovery Plan, which has been scrutinised and accepted by the ESFA. The Local Authority meet 2-3 times a year with the ESFA to discuss the progress of this plan.
- 1.7 For several years the Local Authority has been working hard to manage the spend in the HNB and as a result has had to take some difficult decisions to prevent increase in the deficit, such as removing the funding for residential provisions at 2 Special

Schools, reviewing the system for top-up funding in mainstream schools and introducing new funding rates in Special Schools. Nevertheless, the increasing demand and lack of funding for SEND mean that there remains both an in year and cumulative deficit which requires urgent action to mitigate.

1.8 Leicester City Council remains committed to meeting the individual needs of all children with SEND whilst ensuring best value and funding efficient use of resources from the High Needs Block (HNB). Achieved through a system of change and reform across the council as described in the HNB Management Recovery Plan, aligned to the DfE Change Programme Partnership and the SEND Transformation Project plan (*Appendix 1*). However, this requires systemic and cultural change in a system which is national acknowledged as 'broken'. Therefore, impact will take time to evidence.

1.9 Whilst Leicester City remains in a more stable financial situation in SEND than many other councils nationally and has not been required to join a DfE led programme to manage the HNB deficit, the rise of the cumulative deficit, unknown future government policy regarding SEND and the planned removal of the statutory override present a clear risk for the council if the mitigations outlined in the HNB Management Recovery Plan and SEND Transformation plan are not implemented.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 The Executive are asked to accept the SEND Transformation Plan/ HNB Management Recovery Plan to continue to actively address the deficit budget in the High Needs Block.

2.2 The Executive are asked to note that whilst the Transformation project is working at pace the impact of the project will take time to evidence.

2.3 The Executive are asked to authorise the implementation of a High Needs Block Funding board to govern the pace and impact of the Transformation Project. The board will be accountable to the Director of Education and SEND, and will include Head of SEND Support Service, Head of Service for SEND and Integrated Services, Inclusion and Transformation Manager and the Head of Finance.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.1 A DSG Management Recovery Plan has been required by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). They have received and scrutinised the plan and agreed to its content.

3.2 The council (Senior SEND and Finance staff) are required to re-submit the HNB Management Recovery Plan and meet with the ESFA twice a year to discuss progress on the actions.

3.3 The HNB Management Recovery Plan forms part of the Transformation Plan which will be shared with Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission on 29th October 2024

3.4 Following the formal adoption by the council the SEND Transformation Plan will be shared with all stakeholders across the Education and SEND system.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

SEND and Alternative Provision Reforms

- 4.7. In March 2023, the DfE published the national SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement plan in response to the SEND and AP consultation and the Green Paper.
- 4.8. The national consultation highlighted some excellent support from dedicated education, health and care staff but also that many families feel frustrated by the system and feel they need to battle to access specialist education, health or care services including from mental health services. People generally agreed about the challenges in the system and wanted a new national SEND and alternative provision system that delivers timely, high-quality services and inclusive support in mainstream settings, alongside swift access to more local state specialist settings, where needed.
- 4.9. However, providers and services are facing increasing pressures around children with more complex needs, more requests for Education Health and Care assessments and in turn more requests for special school places.
- 4.10. The improvement plan (Right Support, Right Place, Right Time) identified the steps being taken and to be taken to improve the SEND and AP system for children and families.
- 4.11. This included a range of work, programmes and frameworks to support local areas with differing degrees of both financial and strategic challenges.
- 4.12. All Local Authorities with deficits to the Dedicated Schools Grant budget were required to submit a High Needs Block management recovery plan in order for the DfE to assess their level of intervention through entering either the Delivering Better Value (DBV) or the Safety Valve (SV) programmes: 55 Local Authorities are working within the “Delivering Better Value in SEND” intervention programme.
- 4.13. 34 Local Authorities with the highest DSG Deficits are working within the “Safety Valve” agreements.
- 4.14. The Change Programme Partnership launched in September 2023 enlisted 31 Local Areas to represent the 9 regions in a test-and-learn approach for delivering an improved SEND and AP system. Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) local areas are coworking to represent the East Midlands region.
- 4.15. Leicester City has incorporated the Change Programme Partnership priorities and the HNB Management Recovery plan priorities into our co-produced local area SEND strategic outcomes. The SEND strategic outcomes are that:
- Children, young people & their families are listened to, and are empowered to make change where it matters
 - Children and young people are included in their communities and are supported to achieve their aspirations

- Children & young people receive support at the earliest opportunity to ensure good outcomes for their education, health and wellbeing
- Partners work together to make sure children & young people are healthy & they have their needs met
- Children and young people have successful and smooth transitions and are supported to become independent adults.

Overview of the High Needs Block Management Recovery Plan

- 4.16. Since 2014 there has been a significant increase in spend within the High Needs Block (HNB). Funding for SEND from the government has not kept pace with this increase in demand and costs.
- 4.17. The number of new agreed EHCPs has risen from 246 in the year 2015/16 to 753 in 2022/23 and the demand for special school places has also risen significantly over that period. In addition parental requests for a Statutory EHC Assessment have risen from 26 in 2015 to 312 in 2023.
- 4.18. In common with the majority of LAs nationally, Leicester has in recent years spent more than the funding it receives from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As of 31 March 2023 the cumulative deficit was £6m.
- 4.19. Leicester is not alone in having a deficit, in fact the majority of local authorities are in this position. Our cumulative DSG deficit of £6m as of March 2023 ranks us 64 places below the highest deficit of £118.8m and 35 places above the lowest deficit of £0.25m. The cumulative deficit for Leicester as of 31 March 2024 has risen to £9.6m.
- 4.20. Leicester City Council is currently operating within a statutory override to general accounting practice. The statutory override allows LAs to proceed with an imbalanced Dedicated Schools Grant budget without requiring a Section 114 notice. The override was due to expire in March 2023, but DLUHC has extended this to March 2026.
- 4.21. All LAs with deficits are expected to prepare a HNB Management Recovery Plan to submit and discuss with the DfE about how the LA will bring its high needs expenditure into line with the funding allocation and thereby become financially sustainable.
- 4.22. The initial draft management recovery plan was discussed with the DfE in August 2023 and has so far enabled LCC to avoid entering the Delivering Better Value or the Safety Valve intervention programmes.
- 4.23. The SEND Transformation Plan described in this report will support the HNB management recovery plan's aim of making LCC financially sustainable with regards to its HNB expenditure. And this Transformation project contributes to the overall strategic outcomes in Leicester.

Challenges

- 4.24. The number of pupils with identified SEND needs continues to rise and the LA needs to remain committed to meeting the needs of CYP through effective and efficient resourcing.

- 4.25. The current expenditure from the HNB is financially unsustainable as year on year the forecast demonstrates a cumulative deficit.
- 4.26. There is insufficient physical capacity currently for the number of special school or independent sector places required and there is insufficient capital funding available for significant expansion.
- 4.27. Significant expansion of Special Schools would not be a viable option as the DfE would not provide the revenue funding for the High Needs Block
- 4.28. Increase in demand for statutory assessments continues to increase.

Previous Projects which support the HNB Management Recovery Plan

- 4.29. The LA has previously taken steps to reduce high needs costs. They have focussed on the themes of funding reform, elimination of non-eligible high needs block expenditure and sufficiency through expansion of special school and resource provision:
- Reform of the funding methodology for high cost SEND pupils both with and without EHCPs within mainstream settings. The new system provided a more equitable distribution of funding support and was agreed in March 2022 following a thorough consultation with schools. (Element 3 funding)
 - Some of the savings made enabled us to form a new 'Quality Inclusion Team' to promote inclusion, advise, monitor and audit the use of top up support funding and ensure best practice in mainstream settings.
 - Introduction of a new banding and tariff funding system for all special schools (with the exception of Ash Field) to ensure equitable and consistent funding based on need. This was agreed in March 2021 following an extensive consultation and subsequent approval by the DfE.
 - Withdrawal of non-educational respite residential provision at Millgate and Ash Field Academies. Decisions were made in 2022 and in 2023 respectively.
 - Small scale expansion within existing special school sites to expand places, preventing unnecessary increases in expensive independent places.
 - Expansion of resourced provisions called a Designated Specialist Provision (DSP) at mainstream schools to offer more appropriate and inclusive provision and at a lower cost than a special school placement.

Aims of the SEND Transformation Project

- 4.30. Leicester City Council (LCC) is experiencing conflicting priorities in balancing effective efficient inclusive resources to support and meet the needs of a rising number of children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).
- 4.31. We are committed to continue to meet individual needs of pupils with SEND through new initiatives and a focus on inclusive practice known as the SEND Transformation Project. This initiative is led by the Head of Service for SEND and the new posts of Inclusion and Transformation Manager and SEND Inclusion Lead Teacher.

- 4.32. Through a system of change and reform across the council, aligned to the DfE Change Programme Partnership, the SEND Transformation Plan (*Appendix 1*) aims to ensure that LCC remains committed to meeting the individual needs of all children with SEND whilst ensuring best value and funding efficient use of resources from the High Needs Block (HNB).
- 4.33. The five aims identified below link to the workstreams outlined in the SEND Transformation Plan (*Appendix 1*). The aims arise from identified areas of development that are required to support a more efficient use of the HNB funds. The areas of development were identified from the challenges set out above.
- 4.34. SEND Transformation Plan Aims:
- Aim 1: New DfE Reforms – The SEND and AP Change Programme
 - Aim 2: Developing Ordinarily Available offer: LA, Schools, Settings & Colleges
 - Aim 3: Local Authority Process reforms & Sufficiency
 - Aim 4: Increase confidence for parents and carers
 - Aim 5: Placement reforms
 - Aim 6: Stakeholder Engagement
- 4.35. The embedding of inclusive practices and supporting schools to develop their mainstream offer will support parents in developing trust in the education system for SEND children. To ensure children will receive the right support at the right time in the right place.

Risks and Issues

- 4.36. The risks for the Local Authority in not delivering effective change in the SEND and AP system for children and young people with SEND include:
- 4.37. Increased challenge, focus and intervention by the DfE and regulatory inspection bodies through entry into the Delivering Better Value programme and as a result of poor outcomes from a SEND Local Area inspection. Meaning the Local Authority would have less choice and control over local context and savings decisions.
- 4.38. Irrespective of whether the DfE including the Local Authority in the Delivering Better Value intervention, the risk is of financial sustainability which will impact on our ability to
- meet the increasing numbers and increasingly complex needs of children and young people with SEND
 - fund successful early support services which are not statutory but support schools with direct work with children & young people with SEND
 - jointly focus on inclusive practice amongst partners so children and young people with additional needs are supported in mainstream schools where possible
 - provide support to children at the earliest opportunity to meet their needs, support good outcomes and prevent issues escalating for children in their education, health and wellbeing
- 4.39. If left unmitigated the cumulative deficit will rise to over £100m by the end of the decade. Even with mitigations it will be a significant challenge to manage the in-year deficit due to increasing demands and a need to meet our statutory duties.

4.40. If the statutory override is removed in 2026 the deficit in the HNB would significantly impact on the wider council finances and could result in the council being unable to produce a balanced budget.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.11 As outlined in the report, at 31 March 2024 the LA had a cumulative DSG deficit of £9.6m. In 2023/24 HNB expenditure exceeded our funding allocation by £6m and this was despite of a funding increase of £7.6m.
- 5.12 The demand nationally for SEND services has increased significantly since the introduction of the EHCPs in 2014. We are not an outlier compared to our statistical and geographic neighbours or nationally in terms of the proportion of students with EHCPs as a percentage of the school population. Whilst the DfE have increased funding allocations significantly (averaging 10%) in recent years, this has only helped to offset the in-year growth and inflationary pressures. It has not dealt with the underlying shortfall in funding which had built up over a number of years prior to these increases beginning. Unfortunately, in 2024/25 the DfE have drastically reduced the funding allocation increases and the 3% growth received for 2024/25 has had to be used to fund inflationary pressures.
- 5.13 The DfE indicated earlier in the year that there are no current plans to return to significant increases to the funding allocations. The issue of LA DSG deficits (totalling £1.6 billion at 31 March 2023) was deferred until the new parliament. The statutory override mentioned in the report presently runs out in March 2026. The idea that this level of cumulative deficit can somehow be 'paid back' by individual LAs is unrealistic - as it would mean that LAs would need to draw on future years' funding allocations and, in the process, penalise the likelihood of meeting future students' needs.
- 5.14 A more realistic objective for LAs, but an incredibly difficult one, would be to return to a sustainable in year position whereby HNB expenditure matches allocation, but the question is how long that would take to realise. The issue for LAs is not only about addressing new demand for support each year through the mechanisms outlined in this report, but also that the majority of the LA's annual expenditure is on existing students with existing needs across all year groups within the system and these costs will not change quickly.
- 5.15 Since the pandemic there has been a surge in the number of EHCPs agreed, reaching a peak of 753 in 2022/23. If we continue with that level of new plans and without any growth in funding allocations, then the cumulative DSG deficit could reach £100m or more by the end of this decade.
- 5.16 In part the transformation plan is about dealing with demand in different ways whilst still meeting student needs. However, even returning the need for new statutory assessments back to pre-pandemic levels (halving the number seen in 2022/23) will now take many years to reduce the overall annual HNB expenditure. To have a major impact on costs, the transformation project would need to also address how existing needs are being supported in line with the aims of the project. This will be more difficult to address.

5.17 In summary therefore, from a financial viewpoint we are in limbo. There is no information for LAs regarding their cumulative DSG deficits and the statutory override. The extent to which LAs can address their in-year DSG deficits is limited given the ongoing level of the majority of the costs. There is no indication of any significant changes to the funding levels in the future. The impact of the AP and SEND Change Programme is difficult to assess.

5.18 Nevertheless, regardless of the issues raised, we should continue with the Transformation Project as outlined in this report and make as much progress as possible until the future landscape for SEND becomes clearer in the new parliament.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance

Signed: C G Sharpe

Dated: 25 September 2024

5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations sought in this report. However, it is recommended that ongoing legal advice is obtained on any specific proposals to address the deficit as these are developed.

Signed: Julia Slipper, Principal Lawyer (Education & Employment)

Dated: 24 September 2024

5.3 Equalities implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the Public-Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

Decision makers need to be clear about any equalities implications of the proposed option. In doing so, we must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected groups under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The SEND Transformation plan needs to ensure that equality considerations are embedded throughout the five aims and related workstreams. The plan identifies statutory responsibilities for schools under the Equality Act with regards to reasonable adjustments, which has a particular emphasis on the protected characteristic of Disability. It is recommended that equality impact assessments (EIAs) are completed as appropriate, for example, proposed changes to services, policies/guidance, such as those listed in the anticipated impacts for each of the five aims. It is important to ensure that any consultation findings feed into the relevant equality impact assessment and inform any proposals.

It should be noted that the EIA is an iterative document which should be revisited throughout the decision-making process and should, ultimately, also take into account any consultation findings. The findings of the EIA should be shared, throughout the process, with decision makers to inform their considerations and decision making. Where any

potential disproportionate negative equalities impacts are identified in relation to a protected characteristic/s, steps should be identified and taken to reduce or remove that impact.

Signed: Sukhi Biring

Dated: 19th September

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are limited climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. As service delivery generally contributes to the council's carbon footprint, any impacts from changes made to service delivery could be managed through encouraging use sustainable travel options, using buildings and materials efficiently and following the council's sustainable procurement guidance, as applicable to the programme.

Signed: Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

Dated: 16th September

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

SEND Code of Practice

[SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262222/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1: SEND Transformation Plan



SEND

Transformation Plan

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

no

9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

Yes- affects all wards and relates to significant budgets

SEND and Education

SEND Transformation Plan

Shelley Piercy
June 2024

Purpose

Leicester City Council is facing significant financial pressure around SEND and the High Needs Block (HNB). The council remains committed to meeting the individual needs of all children with SEND whilst ensuring best value and funding efficient use of resources from the High Needs Block.

A SEND Transformation has been developed to support this the change needed to meet manage the deficit budget in the HNB. Achieved through a system of change and reform across the council aligned to the DfE Change Programme Partnership and the HNB Management Recovery Plan.

The SEND Transformation Plan aims outlined in this plan arise from identified areas of development that are required to support a more efficient use of the High Needs Block funds.

Aims of SEND Transformation Plan

Aim 1 New DfE Reforms – The SEND and AP Change Programme

Leicester City along with Leicestershire and Rutland local areas (partners) have committed to participate in the DfE reforms for SEND and AP. The DfE published their SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan in March 2023, which followed the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper published in March 2022.

The improvement plan is intended to establish a new single national SEND and AP system to allow children to fulfil their potential, build parents trust and provide financial sustainability. The DfE have set up a national Change Programme to test and iterate the reforms set out in the improvement plan, covering the following workstreams:

- Local Area Inclusion Plans
- EHCP template testing and digitisation
- Local data dashboard for SEND
- Alternative Provision
- Strengthening Mediation
- Effective Multi-Agency panels
- Advisory tailored lists
- Bands and Tariffs
- National standards
- Transition from Early years and Post 16
- Early language support for every child (ELSEC)
- Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity In Schools (PINS).

Aim 2: Developing Ordinarily Available offer: LA, Schools, Settings & Colleges

The SEND Transformation Project will collaborate effectively with LA Schools and Academies, Early Years setting and Post 16 colleges to increase early identification and early intervention through the Ordinarily Available offer/ Inclusive Mainstream Provision. The current data (Exclusions data, attendance data, part-time timetable data, BERA audits, request for statutory assessment data, and E3 top-up funding data) indicate that some schools are struggling to support CYP with SEND in their mainstream offer.

Statutory Responsibility

The Children and Families Act of 2014 (CAFA 2014) and SEND Code of Practice (COP) identify the support pathways required to meet the individual needs of Children and Young People (CYP) with SEND.

The COP identifies that schools are expected to remove barriers to learning and put in effective special educational provision in place. Schools are expected to follow a graduated approach of support utilising their ordinarily available provision and resources. The COP of practice identifies the graduated response as:

“A model of action and intervention in early education settings, schools and colleges to help children and young people who have special educational needs. The approach recognises that there is a continuum of special educational needs and that, where necessary, increasing specialist expertise should be brought to bear on the difficulties that a child or young person may be experiencing.”

Schools are also expected to comply with their legal responsibilities to use their ‘best endeavours’ (section 66 of the CAFA 2014) to address SEND needs by making ‘reasonable adjustments’ (Equality Act 2010). The acronym BERA has been devised from these legal duties. Leicester City have used the BERA Framework and devised an in-depth audit tool called the BERA audit to support schools to achieve a high standard of inclusive practice.

Schools have an identified notional budget to support pupils with SEND. In Leicester City schools can apply for additional Top-up (Element 3) funding to add to their notional spend to ensure children with SEND have additional resources.

The SEND COP also includes a statutory duty to assess CYP who may have a special educational need to see if they require an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan).

“Where, despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress, the school or parents should consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs 104 assessment (see Chapter 9). To inform its decision the local authority will expect to see evidence of the action taken by the school as part of SEN support” (section 6.63)

The SEND COP also states:

“Children and young people with SEN have different needs and can be educated effectively in a range of mainstream or special settings. Alongside the general presumption of mainstream education, parents of children with an EHC plan and young people with such a plan have the right to seek a place at a special school, special post-16 institution or specialist college.” Section 1.38 COP

To support schools to develop their ordinarily available offer, in addition to the BERA framework and auditing process Leicester City Council support schools, settings and colleges to implement and monitor with the embedding of this process. (This workstream also links to the Change Programme; Ladder of Intervention and National Standards see below 4.3).

Furthermore, Leicester City Council opts to use the HNB to resource a large SEND Support Service. In a recent questionnaire schools reported that this resource is valuable and provides a necessary layer of support to schools. However, demand for support is high and SENDSS support managers and City Psychology Service, report that increasingly time is spent on statutory assessment rather than early intervention. To develop the SENDSS offer further and to increase capacity to support schools with their

ordinarily available SENDSS teams are required to review current systems processes and offers of support.

Leicester City Council, as part of the Change Programme will be developing a new strand of the BERA to support mainstream schools in developing internal 'Alternative Provision' for CYP. We anticipate this will increase the capacity for schools inclusive offer within their mainstream.

In addition to the development of the ordinarily available offer (BERA) in schools, additional resource is required in the Early Years to support our children prior to entering formal education. The LA has been awarded Family Hub status which has provided the opportunity within the Early Help service to focus on the readiness for school. It is anticipated this will provide early intervention which will support children's needs to be identified and the right provision is in place. The current landscape within Leicester City Council indicates that the graduated approach is not always followed or insufficient time is not always provided to children allowing them to receive support at earlier intervention levels. This increases the number of EHC requests with specialist settings being identified. Childrens development with the right interventions at an early stage can see positive outcomes for children and can change the need for specialist settings. Currently the increase in EHCPs is higher than our available number of specialist provision places. Subsequently there are limited places available in special schools for those with more complex needs.

Aim 3: Local Authority Process reforms & Sufficiency

Process Reforms

Demand for Education, Health and Care Plan requests is high and there is significant pressure on SES to meet deadlines. An evaluation of current systems and process and consideration given to changes to streamline systems and processes would ensure increased efficiency and would improve timescales. Currently 65% of EHC plans meet the 20-week deadline which is above national average. The number of EHC plans requested and issues has increased significantly from pre-pandemic levels.

DfE reforms are recommending a set of criteria for compliance for panel processes to ensure a more robust approach to both request for statutory assessment and issue of an Education Health and Care plan (EHCP). DfE suggest such changes would improve efficiency in allocating resource.

However, whilst managing change, consideration needs to be given to the legal test (Children's and Families Act 2014 36(8)) which states the Local Authority must assess on the following criteria:

“(a) The child or young person has or may have special educational needs, AND (b) It may be necessary for special educational provision to be made for the child or young person in accordance with an EHC plan. In addition consideration has to be give to c) Despite Relevant and purposeful action rate of progress has not increased.”

Tribunal figures, appeals and mediations figures would increase if early intervention and faith building in the Ordinarily Available Offer do not seem satisfactory to parents and carers.

Changing systems and processes within SES need to be managed sensitively to increase parent confidence in the process and improve school engagement.

Funding Reforms

Leicester City opt to use the HNB to provide 'top up' funding for schools to support SEND students as part of the graduated response prior to an EHC needs assessment. An

evaluation of current systems and processes to look at how funding is distributed and for how long, could ensure efficiency of spend and provide schools with additional financial security.

Sufficiency

The data demonstrates that the number of students with SEND is rising yet the government have not assured any Local Authorities of an increase in allocation to the HNFB. Therefore, there is no additional funding to increase capacity in the system for pupils that have Special School named on their EHCP due the lack of increase from DFE.

In response to this Leicester City has developed Designated Specialist provision, providing 270 placements for students with an EHCP, offering specialist provision based in mainstream schools across the city.

In addition, in August 2024 there will be a pilot of a Special SEND Unit at Imperial Avenue Infant school for students with an EHCP naming special school provision.

Responding to a rising concern from schools, in September 2022 Leicester City commissioned a review of secondary provision for pupils with social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). This identified a substantial increase in the number of students identified with SEMH needs.

“The number of pupils with SEMH as a primary need has grown significantly in recent years. The Local Authority’s pupil planning forecasts for SEND also show a continued substantial growth in future years, with the largest increase predicted for mainstream.”

Recommendations from the review indicated that ‘satellite’ hubs of provision might be a next step in increasing provision and developing inclusive practices

Aim 4: Increase confidence for parents and carers

Nationally there has been, a lack of parental confidence in the SEND systems and an increase amongst parents believing that the only way to support their child’s SEN needs is to have a psychological assessment and source an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Parent Carer Forums, Special Needs Jungle and social media are advocating ‘pushing’ Local Authorities to assess children through the EHCP process. Celebrities are advocating in newspapers to ‘keep trying’ to get an EHCP and discussions on TV chat shows present parents with the idea ‘to keep sourcing EHC assessment’.

Many parents/carers do not believe that a mainstream school offer or mainstream school additional resource provision is the best for their SEND child. The feeling amongst parents is the gold standard for their Children and Young People is to receive an EHCP with additional funding. Parents feel funding and 1:1 support is the only way for their Child or Young Person to be supported to make progress in school. In addition, increasingly parents feel special school education is the best placement for their child or young person and increasing numbers are requesting independent special education settings for their Children and Young People.

Parents are sourcing external SEND advocates to support them in appealing decisions and navigating the tribunal process.

Aim 5: Placement reforms

At present specialist placements are both negotiated on an individual basis in consultation with specific Independent Special School providers (ISS) and in some cases negotiated as a block to gain lowered rates. The present situation could be considered to be a seller’s market for the Independent Special Schools due to the level of demand across LAs regionally for these placements. All negotiations re placement and fees at present are

conducted by SES staff members, with input from Finance at key times, such as when Independent Special Schools are negotiating uplifted fees for upcoming academic years.

Action

The new workstreams which are included in the project are organised around the following themes:

Aims

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | New DFE Reforms links to the Workstream | Change Programme Partnership |
| 2 | Developing the Ordinarily Available offer links to the Workstream | Ordinarily available provision (OAP) and Early Prevention, |
| 3 | Local Authority Process, reforms and Sufficiency links to the following workstreams | Process reforms, Funding reforms and Sufficiency |
| 4 | Increase confidence for parents and carers | links to the OAP |
| 5 | Placement Reforms links the workstream | Placement reforms and Non eligible HNB expenditure. |

Anticipated Impact

The ultimate intention of the Transformation Project and Management Recovery plan is to recognise the SEND need and the increase demand it places on the HNB and to find collectively across the whole SEND System creative solutions to meet needs in a cost-effective manner. The table below summarises the anticipated impact for each aim.

Aims

Anticipated Impact

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | New DFE Reforms links to the Workstream | Participating in the DFE 'test and learn' of the new reforms for SEND and AP known as the Change Programme will improve standards and experience for CYP and their parent carers, whilst shaping the future development of SEND. Leicester City are leading on Banding and Tariffs and Alternative provision. In addition, supporting colleagues in Rutland who are leading on Mediation and Multiagency panel workstreams as well as the EHCP Standardisation and National Standards. |
| 2 | Developing the Ordinarily Available offer links to the Workstream | Build capacity in mainstream schools to provide inclusive education opportunities to support students with SEND through an inclusive mainstream offer.
SENDSS support services can offer a different pathway of support to ensure they have capacity to support mainstream schools Inclusive Mainstream Provision. New initiatives such as Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) and Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) will focus on early identification and intervention and building capacity within mainstream schools to meet individual needs. |
| 3 | Local Authority Process, reforms and Sufficiency links to the following workstreams | Process reforms will ensure efficient ways of working to ensure additional resources, training and professional support are effectively distributed in a timely manner. Process reforms will ensure accurate data is captured and requests for support and assessment are processed in good time.

Funding reforms will ensure that resources are readily available to ensure early identification and intervention to mainstream schools to support their inclusive mainstream offer. Funding reforms will allow schools to access top up funding over longer |

periods of time allowing support for CYP to become embedded and maximise opportunity for progress.

Sufficiency

Completion of DSP phase 2 by April 2025 will total 150 extra placements for students across the primary and secondary phase with an EHCP for communication and interaction.

Following the SEMH Review, a pilot scheme will be trialled at Beaumont Leys secondary which will provide SEND provision for students with SEMH needs under a new model of provision. In addition, a pilot at Fullhurst Community College will trial an Internal Alternative Provision. Work across the Alternative Provision strand of the Change programme will focus on fluidity between the offers (mainstream, DSP, AP and Special) will ensure accurate placement of CYP to meet their needs across the range of provision provided in LCC.

- 4 Increase confidence for parents and carers

The plan will increase parent confidence that the needs of their CYP can be met.

Working in partnership with schools, parents & carers to ensure collaborative working where person centred approaches and meeting the individual needs of each child are paramount. Informal mediation processes will provide parents with opportunities to discuss CYP's needs and appropriate support.

- 5 Placement Reforms links the workstream

Placement and Commissioning to be completely reviewed in order to identify areas to develop process, protocol and systemic change. This is likely to include developing the embedding of block commissioning of placements in ISS and the identification of key staff members to develop strategic liaison with ISS providers. There may be the potential to explore economy of scale and resources through liaison across LRR LAs to work as a unified group but this is in the very early development stages.

Summary

The five Aims link to the workstream flow identified in the Transformation Project Plan. The embedding of inclusive practices and supporting schools to develop their mainstream offer will support parents in developing trust in the education system for SEND children. Children will receive the right support at the right time in the right place.

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission Report

Workload and Resources

Lead Member: Cllr Sarah Russell

Lead Strategic Director: Laurence Jones

Director: Damian Elcock / Sophie
Maltby

Date: 29 October 2024

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission with an overview of current workload and resources available to the two children's divisions in the Social Care and Education Division. A presentation will be made at the commission.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Children's Service are made up of two divisions, Social Care and Early Help and SEND and Education. Some metrics regarding the population served and workload are produced on a monthly basis. The resources available are made up of employed staff and financial resources, some of which are used to commission or procure services from external providers such as special schools or care homes.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission is recommended to:
- a) Note the report and to provide any comments

4. Report

- 4.1 The Social Care Division produces snapshot data each month which gives a sense of the demand upon services. The latest snapshot is shown below:

04/10/2024	Number	Change from last Quarter (Rolling 13 Weeks)	% Change from last Quarter (Rolling 13 Weeks)	Notes
Population of the City	379,780	6,381	1.7%	The ONS Mid year population estimates were updated. They will not change again before next publication is announced.
No of children in the City (0-17)	88,726	891	1.0%	
No of EHCPs (0-25)	4,405	127	3.0%	This number includes: 1) children in the city where a 2) children 'belonging' to the city (e.g. City LAC) who are managed by the Virtual Schools Team.
No of Child Protection Plans	415	12	3.0%	
Child Protection rate (per 10,000)	47	1	1.9%	
No of CLA (all ages)	602	-21	-3.4%	
CLA rate (per 10,000)	68	-3	-4.3%	
No of children in need (including CLA, CP and SA)	2,009	-137	-6.4%	
CIN rate (per 10,000)	226	-18	-7.3%	
Highest Team caseload (CIN)	133	-6	-4.3%	
Highest caseload (CIN)	31	3	10.7%	
Lowest caseload (CIN)	5	-1	-16.7%	
Workers with caseload over 20 (CIN)	15	3	25.0%	
Highest caseload (SAT)	29	-2	-6.5%	
Lowest caseload (SAT)	3	-6	-66.7%	
Workers with caseload over 20 (SAT)	6	-4	-40.0%	
Highest caseload (CLA)	24	-2	-7.7%	
Lowest caseload (CLA)	3	-10	-76.9%	
Workers with caseload over 20 (CLA)	10	0	0.0%	
Highest caseload (Leaving Care Team) - Allocated Case Worker	23	-1	-4.2%	
Lowest caseload (Leaving Care Team) - Allocated Case Worker	6	-6	-50.0%	
Workers with caseload over 20 (Leaving Care Team) - Allocated Case Worker	7	2	40.0%	
Highest caseload (Leaving Care Team) - Leaving Care Advisor	21	2	10.5%	
Lowest caseload (Leaving Care Team) - Leaving Care Advisor	1	0	0.0%	
Workers with caseload over 20 (Leaving Care Team) - Leaving Care Advisor	1	1	-	
Highest caseload (Independent Chair)	123	-10	-7.5%	
Lowest caseload (Independent Chair)	1	-2	-66.7%	
Workers with caseload over 20 (Independent Chair)	5	0	0.0%	
Highest caseload (IRO)	81	-3	-3.6%	
Lowest caseload (IRO)	30	29	2900.0%	
Workers with caseload over 20 (IRO)	9	1	12.5%	
Highest caseload (Kinship)	8	-1	-11.1%	
Lowest caseload (Kinship)	1	-1	-50.0%	
Workers with caseload over 20 (Kinship)	0	0	-	
CSC Supervision Compliant %	79.7%	5.3%	7.2%	
Early Help Supervision Compliant %	84.1%	9.7%	13.1%	
Number of Early Help Assessments opened in the week	13	-19	-59.4%	
EH cases (inc draft Advice contacts & STW) open led by LCC clusters (family)	322	-28	-8.0%	
EH cases (inc draft Advice contacts & STW) open led by LCC clusters (individ)	1,167	-75	-6.0%	
Highest caseload EH (clusters) by Individuals	46	-5	-9.8%	
Lowest caseload EH (clusters) by Individuals	2	1	100.0%	
Workers with caseload EH over 25 (clusters) by Individuals	22	-6	-21.4%	
Workers with caseload EH over 8 (clusters) by Families	10	-2	-16.7%	
Highest caseload EH (Targeted Youth Support) by Individuals	6	-1	-14.3%	
Lowest caseload EH (Targeted Youth Support) by Individuals	2	1	100.0%	
Workers with caseload EH over 20 (Targeted Youth Support) by Individuals	0	0	-	
LADO cases open	65	-21	-24.4%	
Highest caseload (LADO)	31	1	3.3%	
Lowest caseload (LADO)	18	-11	-37.9%	
Workers with caseload over 20 (LADO)	1	-1	-50.0%	
CASS open	104	4	4.0%	CASS in Care (S20): 67, Care Leavers (former CASS): 37 This measure was last updated on 04 October

4.2 In relation to SEND there has been a continuing high increase in the number of children with Education, Health and care Plan (EHCP) plans year on year, with the number of request for EHC assessments also increasing. In 2023, 736 new EHCPs were issued in Leicester, 17% higher than in 2022.

4.3 The directly employed staffing establishment across the two divisions is shown below. In some areas, such as residential care or frontline social work, vacancies are covered by agency staff should they arise to meet statutory duties and to keep children safe.

Division	Service	Headcount
Childrens Social Work & Early Help	Divisional Director	1
	Child Safeguarding & QA	37
	Childrens Social Care Learning & Development	6
	Childrens Social Work Teams	149
	Corporate Parenting	250
	Early Help	86
	Early Help - Targeted Services	112
Total		641
SEND and Education	Divisional Director	1
	Childrens (Commissioning)	8
	Education	148
	Passenger & Transport Services	163
	Programme Support	111
	SEND Integrated Service	75
	SEND Support Service	117
Total		623

4.4 Departmental finances come from Council revenue and a mixture of ringfenced and more widely available grants. A summary of finances and their allocation is show below. Income numbers are shown in brackets.

SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP	(£000)
Looked After Children Placement Costs	55,972
Client Transport	1,907
Legal Costs	1,500
Interpretation and Translation	422
Adoption allowances	993
Adoption agency fees	300
Other client direct costs	988
Staffing pay costs	19,379
Other staffing costs	110
Non pay team costs	(220)
Premises	70
LSCB	110
Social Care	81,531

Children's centres	1,150
Family Support	1,222
Supporting Families - income	(1,792)
Supporting Families - team costs	306
Supporting Families - other commitments	579
Childcare and Early Learning Officers	1,105
Adventure Playgrounds	1,037
Management Team	(11)
Family Group Conference Co-ordinators	84
Early Help & Prevention Service	86
Early Help - Targeted Services	3,765
Multi-Systemic and Functional Family Therapy	2,409
Youth Service	963
CYP Justice Service	622
Young carers	53
Domestic Violence	308
Early Help - Specialist services	4,355
Total Social Care & Early Help	89,651
EDUCATION	
School Improvement	83
Virtual schools team gross costs	409
Virtual schools team High Needs Block DSG funding	(410)
VST Pupil premium net costs	1
Early Education Development Team	307
Early Year's Private/Voluntary/Independent and academy FEEE	1
Administration	195
SACRE (Religious Education)	10
Governor Services	21
Raising Achievement	617
Connexions	800
Educational Welfare	844
Connexions & EWS	1,644
Planning & Performance	242
Information team	461
Transformation Team	383
Commissioning review support	429
Core Business Support	92
Admissions gross cost	695

CSSB Designated Schools Grant Funding	(581)
Mainstream transport	146
School crossing patrol	207
School organisation and assets	120
Performance, Transformation & Transport	2,193
Total Education	4,453
HIGH NEEDS RELATED	
<i>General Fund</i>	
Special Educational Needs transport costs	14,969
Passenger Transport costs	(114)
Disabled Children's service	1,604
Educational Psychology	1,543
SES service	1,683
Special Needs Support Service GF	(11)
General Fund High Needs Services	19,674
High Needs Block High Needs Services	42,418
<i>De-delegated High Needs services</i>	
Primary Behaviour Support	639
De-delegated High Needs Services	639
Early Year's block High Needs Services	1,091
DSG funded High Needs Services	44,148
DSG Funding	(44,153)
Total DSG funded High Needs	(6)
Total High Needs	19,668
DEPARTMENTAL	
Directorate	435
Premature retirement costs and other	1,707
Central Services Grant	(708)
Total Departmental	1,434
Total Social Care and Education General Fund	115,207

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The 2024/25 net budget is £115.2m as detailed in paragraph 4.4 above.

Signed: Paresh Radia

Date: 18 October 2024

5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal comments or commercial implications.

Signed: Julia Slipper Principal Lawyer, Legal Services, Ext 37 6855

Dated: 18 October 2024

5.3 Equalities implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

In doing so, the council must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

There are no direct equality or PSED implications arising from this report because it only intends to provide the commission with an overview of workload and resource in the service and no formal decisions are being taken.

Signed: Andrew Shilliam, Director of Corporate Services, Ext. 37 0131

Dated: 18 October 2024

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

Signed: Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

Dated: 18 October 2024

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission

Leicester Safeguarding Children
Partnership Board - Yearly Report
2023/24

Date of Commission meeting: 29 October 2024
Lead Director: Laurence Jones, Strategic Director Social
Care and Education



Useful Information:

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Lindsey Bampton, Safeguarding Board Manager
- Author contact details: lindsey.bampton@leicester.gov.uk
- Date of Exec meeting: 10 October 2024

1. Summary

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission will receive, at their October 2024 meeting, the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPb) 2023/24 Yearly Report which will be presented by the LSCPb Independent Chair.

The [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) abolished Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and replaced them with 'local arrangements'. This means that safeguarding partners (the local authority, integrated care board (health) and chief officer of police) must make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Leicester.

Statutory guidance ([Working Together 2023](#), para. 106) notes that safeguarding partners must jointly report on the activity they have undertaken in a 12-month period. The LSCPb Yearly Report presented to the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission provides an overview of work undertaken by the LSCPb including

- Local data
- Updates on business plan priorities
- Child safeguarding practice reviews
- Multi-agency safeguarding procedures
- Multi-agency training
- Multi-agency audits and assurance

It also outlines how the LSCPb priorities were met during 2023/24 business year and provides an overview of the priorities for 2023-25.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission is invited to:

- Comment on how effectively Leicester safeguarding partners (police, health, and local authority) have jointly reported on the activity they have undertaken in a 12-month period, with a focus on multi-agency priorities, learning, impact, evidence, and improvement.

3. Supporting Information

In line with statutory guidance the 2023/24 LSCPb Yearly Report was [published](#) on the LSCPb website before the end of September 2024.

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, as the report is providing updates on work completed by the LSCPB with no major changes proposed.

4.2 Legal implications

The attached and observe that the contents of the statutory report are noted. There are no direct legal implications arising from its contents.

Signed Susan Holmes
Dated 18th October 2024

4.3. Climate Change implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. As service delivery by the council and partners generally contributes to the council's carbon footprint, any impacts could be considered within delivery of related projects, such as encouraging the use of sustainable travel options, using buildings and materials efficiently and following the council's sustainable procurement guidance, as appropriate and relevant.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

4.4 Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

This means the council has a duty to consider the diverse needs of the individuals we serve, minimising disadvantage and ensuring the inclusion of under-represented groups. It must ensure that those organisations carrying out duties on its behalf also comply with this duty. Service providers must comply with equalities law and the commissioning authority must ensure providers are able to meet the requirements of the law.

The annual report provides an account of the safeguarding activity, service delivery, leadership, and multi-agency work carried out to protect local children across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. It sets out key priorities: safeguarding babies – improving how we work together with families before and after births to safeguard babies; child mental health, emotional wellbeing, and safeguarding; keeping adolescents safe / supporting safe adolescents; safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds; effective safeguarding of independent and out of school settings; transitional safeguarding. Those impacted upon from the work will be from across all protected characteristics, however the most likely to be affected are people with the

protected characteristics of age and pregnancy and maternity.

Having accurate equality, diversity and inclusion data is important in helping to identify gaps that have an impact on the kind of safeguarding support that needs to be provided to the varying needs of our communities. Initiatives that are designed to improve the provision of safeguarding should lead to positive impacts.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

4.5 Other Implications

In line with statutory guidance the reporting should be transparent and easily accessible to families and professionals.

- 5. Background information and other papers:**
None.
- 6. Summary of appendices:**
Full report attached.
- 7. Is this a private report?**
No. This report has been published on the LSCPB website.

YEARLY REPORT 2023/24



Leicester

Safeguarding Children Partnership Board

Yearly Report

2023/24

Report prepared and published in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children
2023

Report Date: June 2024

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Foreword

We welcome you to the 2023-24 yearly report of the Safeguarding Children Partnership for Leicester. Alongside the publication of our local multi-agency arrangements, this report is a mechanism for reporting on service delivery and leadership, providing a transparent account of our multi-agency work to protect local children.

Amendments made by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to the Children Act 2004 placed shared and equal duties on police, integrated care boards, and local authorities in a local area, to make arrangements to work together, and with relevant agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children and young people.

New for our [2023-25 business plan](#) is an impact measure for each key deliverable. This includes a frontline staff survey to be carried out in 2024/25, collection of data, and understanding the experience of children, young people, and families which will all be collated in the second year of our two-year plan and reported in our 2024/25 yearly report.

At the end of 2023 a new edition of the statutory guidance '*Working together to safeguard children*' was published. During the year we have been working to implement this new guidance and this has included reviewing, revising, and updating our local multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements. The new arrangements will be published in December 2024 and will recognise the importance of close partnership working and engagement with education at a strategic and operational level.

The purpose of this report is to bring transparency to children, families and all practitioners about the safeguarding activity undertaken in Leicester during 2023/24. We want to acknowledge the work that frontline workers and managers in organisations throughout Leicester have done and continue to do in partnership to support the welfare and safety of local children. Our thanks go to you all.

Dr Amanda Boodhoo

Independent Chair

Leicester Safeguarding
Children Partnership
Board

Alison Greenhill

Chief Operating Officer

Leicester City Council

Dr Caroline Trevithick

Chief Executive

Leicester, Leicestershire
and Rutland Integrated
Care Board

Rob Nixon QPM






















Chief Constable

Leicestershire Police

The Partnership

The joint and equal duty¹ of Leicester’s three safeguarding partners – Leicestershire Police, Leicester City Council, and Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Integrated Care Board – is 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.

Partnership attendance at our subgroup and main board meetings is recorded in meeting minutes, which show a good level of engagement from safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. This positive engagement is mirrored by the joint funding of the partnership by safeguarding partners which is explored in more detail later in the report. Our partnership arrangements outline our vision *“for children and young people in Leicester to be safe, well and achieve their full potential”*.

LEICESTER SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP BOARD (LSCP) 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	Integrated Care Board (ICB)	 
	Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT)	 
	University Hospitals Leicester NHS Trust (UHL)	
Local Authority	Children’s Social Care and Education	  
	Adult Social Care	
	Housing	
	Lead Member	
	Public Health	
Other Partnerships	Child Death Overview Panel (C-DOP)	

¹ [Children Act 2024 Section 16E](#)

Safeguarding Children in Leicester

During 2021 Leicester's population reached nearly 370,000 and Leicester was noted as the most densely populated local authority area across the East Midlands (Office of National Statistics, 2022)². It is home to around 36 people per football pitch-sized piece of land.



The percentage of households including dependent children in Leicester rose by 1.8% from 2011 to 2021. During the same period, the percentage in the East Midlands as a whole fell by 0.9%.

According to the Office of National Statistics 'In the latest census, around 213,600 Leicester residents said they were born in England. This represented 57.9% of the local population'³. The 5 most common countries of birth for the population of Leicester in 2021 were England, India, South and Eastern Africa (other than Kenya, Somalia, South Africa and Zimbabwe), Poland, and Kenya.

In 2021, 43.4% of usual residents in Leicester identified their ethnic group as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh followed by 40.9% who identified themselves as White, 7.8% as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African, 4.1% as Other ethnic groups and 3.8% as Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups (Office of National Statistics, 2022)⁴.

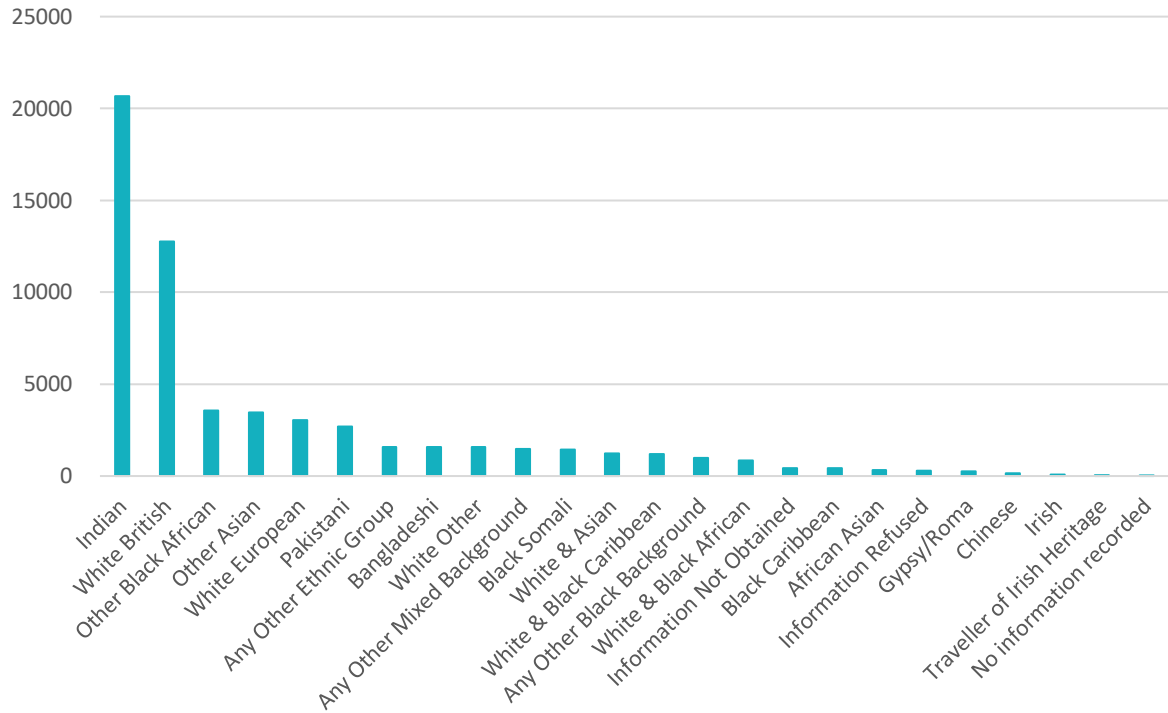
The Spring (January 2024) School Census recorded at least 182 languages spoken by children in schools across Leicester with 47.8% of school children in Leicester recorded as Asian / Asian British, 29.5% as White / White British, 10.6% as Black / Black British, and 8% as Mixed.

² Office of National Statistics (2022) How the population changed in Leicester: Census 2021 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E06000016/>

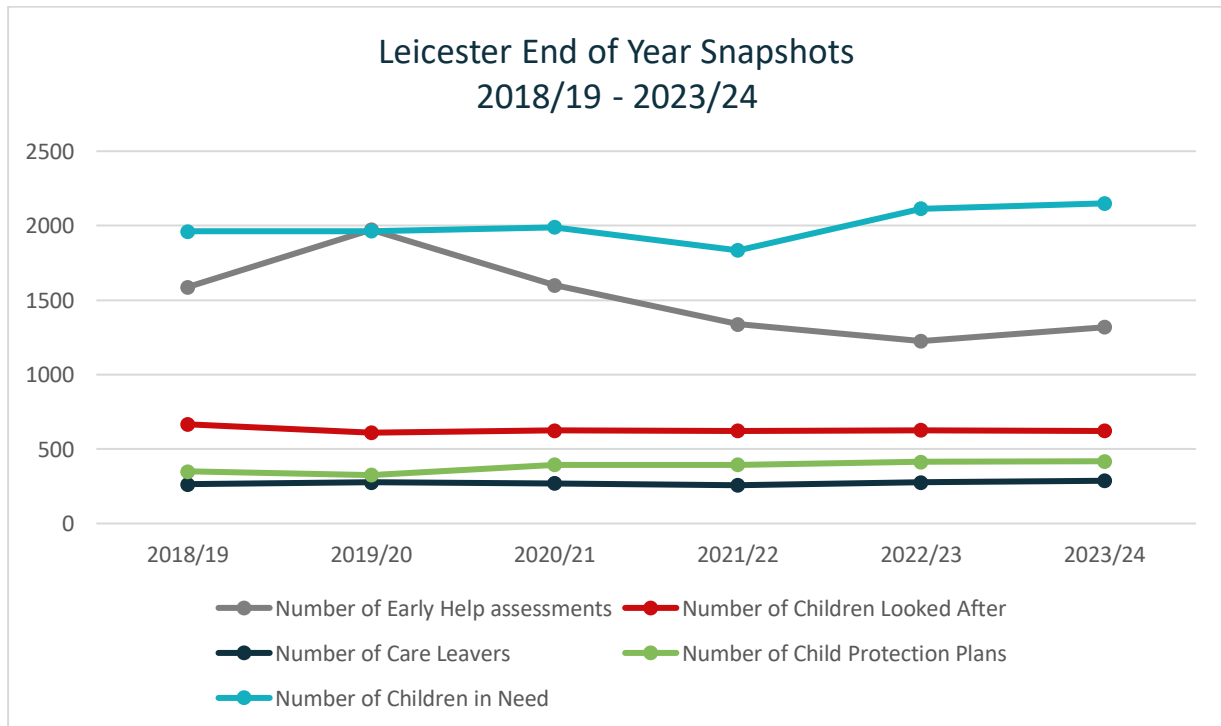
³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

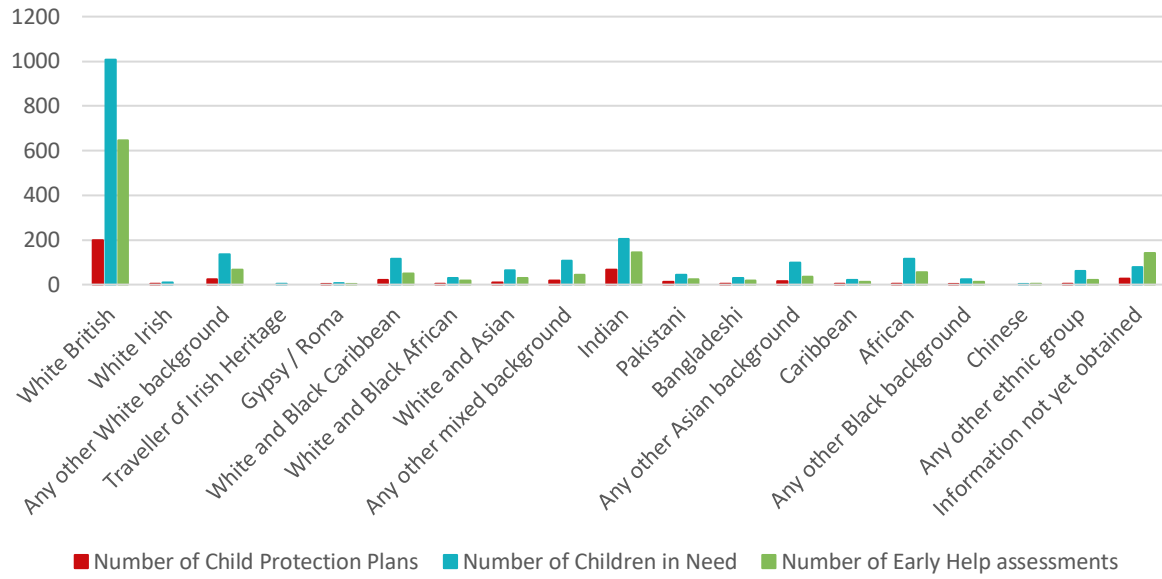
Spring School Census 2024 Ethnicity Summary - Leicester



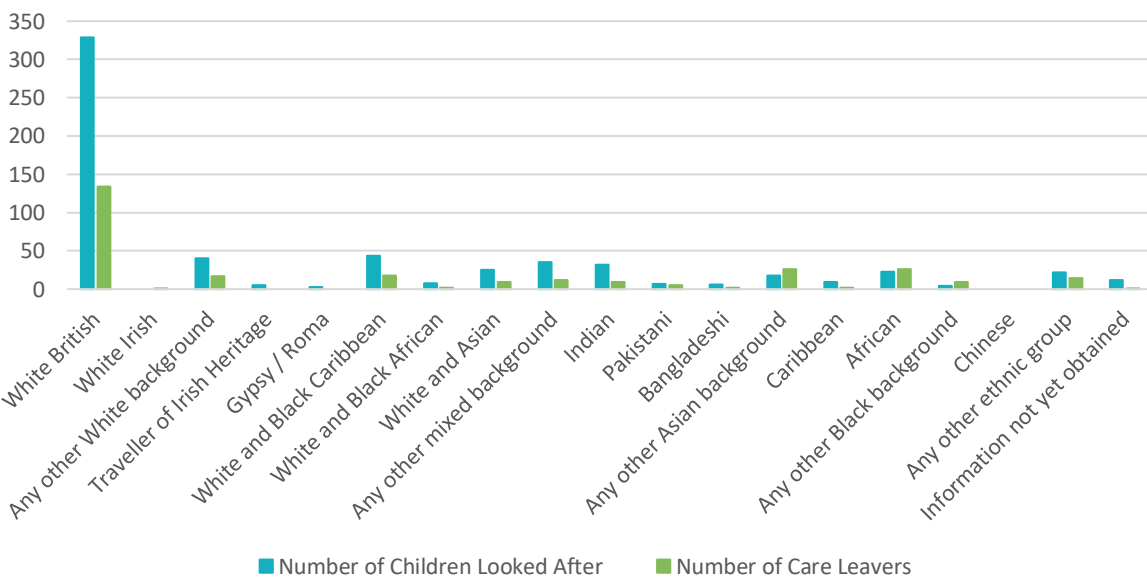
Leicester's Safeguarding Children Data 2023/24



Leicester 2023/24 End of Year Snapshot Early Help, Children in Need & Child Protection Plans



Leicester 2023/24 End of Year Snapshot Care Leavers & Children Looked After



Ongoing work continues to explore, understand, and address disproportionality identified.

Partnership Priorities

The 2023/24 priorities of the partnership are outlined in the 2023-2025 [joint business plan](#) across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. These priorities are safeguarding babies – improving how we work together with families before and after births to safeguard babies; child mental health, emotional wellbeing, and safeguarding; keeping adolescents safe / supporting safe adolescents; safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds; effective safeguarding of independent and out of school settings; transitional safeguarding.

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

Rationale:

- Recent local and national case reviews as well as assurance work of the partnership has highlighted safeguarding risks to babies
- National increase in number and proportion of serious safeguarding incidents that relate to baby deaths and harm to babies
- Two national reviews, three local reviews, and three further rapid reviews regarding baby deaths, exploring: shaken babies; contact and working with fathers/males; substance misuse; pre- and post-birth planning; safer sleeping; possible coercive reproduction

What we did: Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board led on a partnership project obtaining data and information to measure the impact of the implementation of [ICON](#) across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The partnership completed a safeguarding babies (pre-birth) multi-agency audit. We also developed and published [practice principles engage fathers and male carers in effective practice](#). The safeguarding board office facilitated multi-agency training on coercive reproduction with additional sessions on coercive control including coercive reproduction that continue to be run. Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Authorities, University Hospitals of Leicester, the local Child Death Overview Process (CDOP) and Live Well Little Ones worked together to develop [safer sleep risk assessment tools](#) which have been launched and [disseminated across the safeguarding children partnerships via Safeguarding Matters Live](#).

Around 390 delegates attended the Safeguarding Matters Live session on safer sleep risk assessment tools with a further 39 views of the video of this session. They were also presented at the partnerships' Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) safeguarding forum, reaching further into the voluntary and community sector. Additional impact will be measured via our frontline practitioner audit which is being progressed during 2024.

Promotion of ICON via EVA Radio delivered the radio ICON messages in Urdu, Somalian and Hindi, followed by interviews to discuss the importance of ICON using interpreters to translate the questions and answers. Reach within the FM frequency would be on average

of around 85,000 people giving consideration of programme demographics and other local radio stations within Leicester. Promotion on GEM Radio reached 283,000 adults and Greatest Hits Radio Stamford & Rutland reached 13,000 adults.

Six ICON touch points were delivered by health staff across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland: touch points 1, 2, and 3 provided by midwives (touch point 1 antenatally, 2 post birth and 3 at discharge in the community). Touch points 4 and 5 delivered by health visitors at the 10-14day birth review and then by SMS text and touch point 6 by the GP at the 6-to - 8-week baby check. An audit of midwifery was undertaken with findings that 10% had evidence of ICON being discussed. At new birth visits, within a 12-month period, there were 12,574 contacts where families received both touch point 4 face to face and the touch point 5 text when their baby was 3 weeks old. In Leicester's Early Help bumps and babies group 32 parents received the ICON message. Neonatal Units delivered ICON messages through the STORK programme to 821 adults and The Home Care Team delivered ICON messages to 226 parents in their own homes. Between October 2022 and January 2024 ICON messages were given by Turning Point to 11 fathers to be and 17 mothers to be.

The ICON touch Point video was commissioned and filmed with local health staff and parents in 2022 and launched in 2023 to support ICON training. The video was initially used across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland but in 2023 became available nationally through the ICON website www.iconcope.org.uk. The total number of hits during 2022 to 2023 were 560, full ICON launch 165, Never Shake a Baby total 222, Touch Point Video total 173. Total number of hits in 2023 were 600, full launch 48, Never Shake a Baby total 163, Touch Point Video total 389.

A frontline audit is being planned for 2024/25 to determine the reach and impact of practice principles to engage fathers, coercive reproduction training and awareness raising, and safer sleep risk assessment tools.

Child Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing, and Safeguarding:

Rationale:

- Case reviews, assurance work and work with young people have identified the following which require further work and assurance:
 - Gap in joint working when children in need of safeguarding have been referred to mental health services
 - Local collaborative response to suicidal ideation in children and young people
- Young people tell us that effective mental health support remains a high priority for them
- Continued follow up to 2021/22 and 2022/23 assurance work regarding safeguarding and CAMHS waiting list

What we did: Sought assurance that mental health and safeguarding are effectively addressed together locally. Received a monthly Child and Adolescent Mental Health service (CAMHS) highlight report. Completed a multi-agency spotlight audit focusing on children

being safeguarded and in receipt of CAMHs. Began reviewing and updating local suicide prevention procedures and guidance, taking into account local reviews and the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) themed suicide review.

Keeping Adolescents Safe / Supporting Safe Adolescents:

Rationale:

- Work to develop a life-stage approach to safeguarding children relating to extra-familial threat/harm outside the home
- Ongoing concerns regarding a clear response to peer-on-peer sexual abuse
- Developing national approach regarding 'serious youth violence'

What we did: Received assurance from the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) about how feedback is sought from children and how children are engaged in evaluating and improving services for children affected by serious youth violence and/or exploitation.

Explored the development of links between the Adolescence Safety and Diversion Board (ASD) and the safeguarding children partnerships.

Supported the Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) hub in undertaking a regime of audit work.

Safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds:

Rationale:

- The SCPs require more information about how agencies work together with children and their families to safeguard children in the context of intersectionality (the interaction of systems of inequality based on protected characteristics and other forms of discrimination).
- Learning from local reviews has identified a need to consider the role of immigration status, culture, faith, and parenting in safeguarding.
- Recognising the significant increase in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in LLR (particularly in Leicester City) and the additional needs and risks for these children and young people.

What we did: Accessed East Midlands Council's [quarterly migration briefings](#) including training and promoted it across the partnerships. Each quarter, the East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership publish a briefing that brings together different sources of information relating to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, as well as upcoming training and events.

In addition, the learning and development group chaired by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust has set up a task and finish group to develop learning and training around the role of

immigration status, culture, faith, and parenting in safeguarding children. This work will continue into 2024/25.

As a result of the partnership making safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds a priority, and accessing and promoting East Midlands Council's quarterly migration briefings, training such as 'IOM [International Organisation for Migration] UK Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Information Session' is regularly promoted across the partnerships and attended by managers and practitioners.

This enables and supports local practitioners and managers who work with children, to develop their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds. For example, the information session referred to focused on how unaccompanied children fit within the global context of migration, how children become unaccompanied, routes and journeys of unaccompanied children, situations in Europe, and mental health and wellbeing of unaccompanied children. This knowledge will support local safeguarding partner agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children and young people.

Effective Safeguarding in independent and out of school settings:

Rationale:

- SCP consideration of IICSA reports and local LADO and national data identify the need and opportunity for further work with religious institutions, alternative education, and other out-of-school settings to support robust safeguarding.
- Recognition of the importance to continue to engage with independent schools via the forum set up during 2022/23.
- National Child Safeguarding Practice Review [safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings](#)

What we did: Developed and promoted [information leaflets for parents and carers](#) about keeping children safe in out of school settings. Continued to host the local Independent Schools Safeguarding Forum, expanding membership across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Transitional Safeguarding:

Rationale: • Learning from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) and Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)

What we did: A task and finish group was set up to consider 'Are you confident that we are managing transitional safeguarding in the most appropriately effective way? What assurance do we have of this?'. The group were not assured and has since been tasked with

developing a multi-agency Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland transitional safeguarding policy or practice guidance.

The Work of the Partnership

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 to Safeguard Children 2023. Throughout 2023/24 the following procedures were revised in response to learning from local and national reviews and assurance processes:

- Bruising, Marks or Injury of Concern in Mobile Children: this guidance outlines patterns of bruising, marks or injury that could be indicative of physical abuse.
- Sexual Abuse: Details have been added of how to make a referral to the East Midlands Children and Young People Sexual Assault Service.
- Female Genital Mutilation and Other Harmful Practices: a new section has been added on 'other harmful practices'.
- Children of Parents who Misuse Substances: this chapter has been revised throughout.
- Child Protection Enquiries – Section 47 Children Act 1989: a new section on the national multi-agency practice standards for child protection has been added.
- Early Help Assessment: information has been added from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 on identifying children and families who would particularly benefit from early help.
- Recognising Abuse and Neglect: definitions have been updated in line with the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Sexual Abuse: the Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment procedure has been updated.

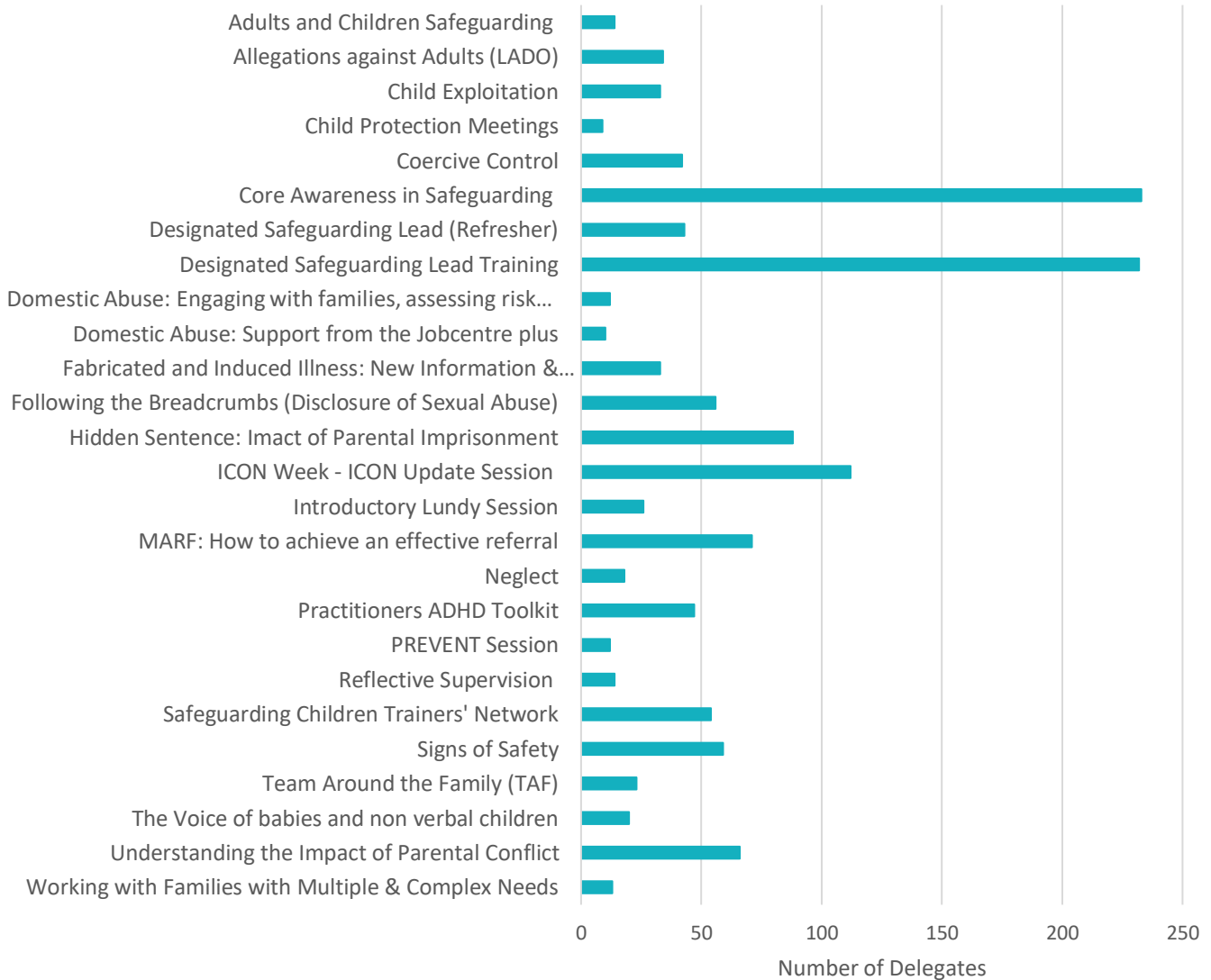
A full list of new chapters and amendments made can be found on the ['amendments' page](#) of the Leicester and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual.

Training

The Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group (MALDG) on behalf of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships, has facilitated multi-agency safeguarding children training across the locality.

During 2023/24 a total of 1,658 delegates attending a combination of our regular multi-agency safeguarding children training (attended by 1,374 delegates) and a festival of learning focusing on safeguarding babies (attended by 284 delegates).

Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-Agency Training 2023/24

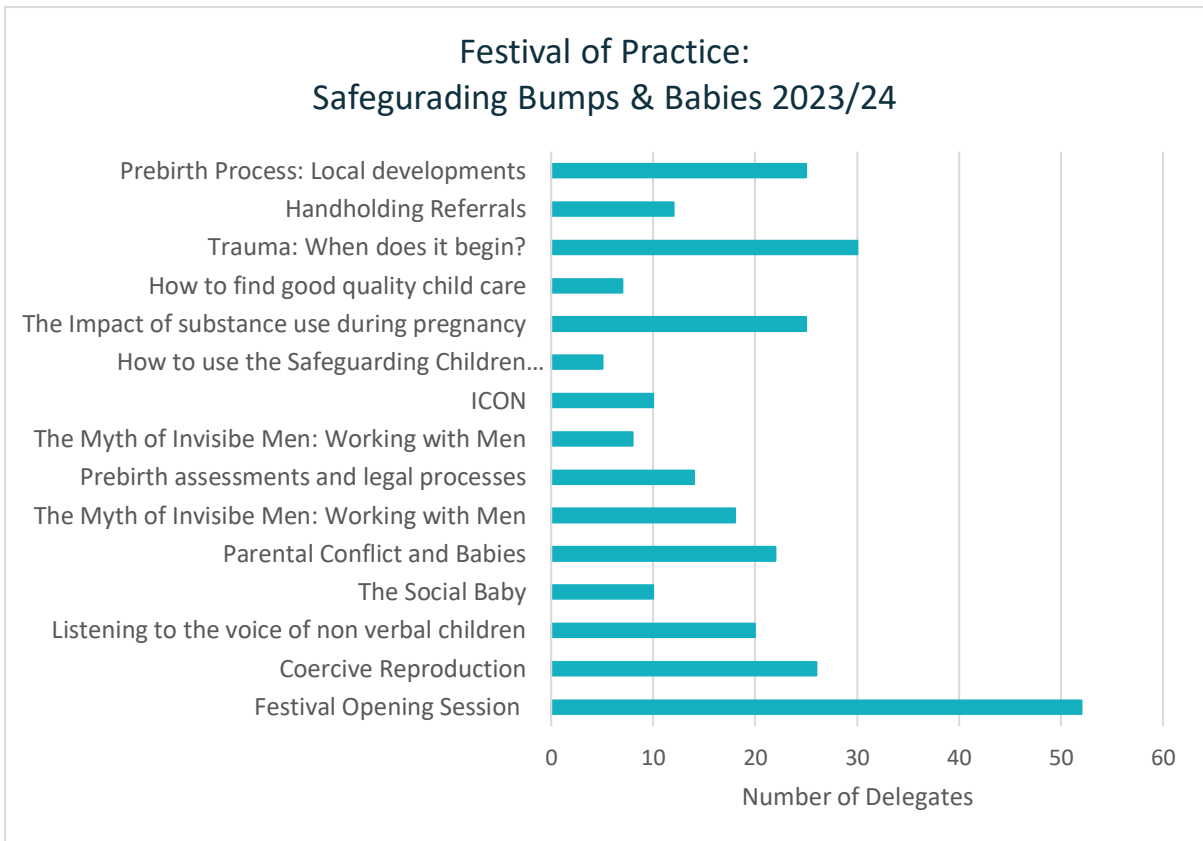


“THIS WAS A COMPLETELY NEW TOPIC OF TRAINING FOR ME AND I LIKED THE PACE AS IT WAS EASY TO FOLLOW AND NOT TOO RUSHED - THE VARIETY OF VIDEOS, VISUAL SLIDES AND VERBAL INFORMATION WAS USEFUL AND KEPT ME INTERESTED IN THE CONTENT THROUGHOUT.”

Evaluation of Fabrication or Induced Illness (FII)

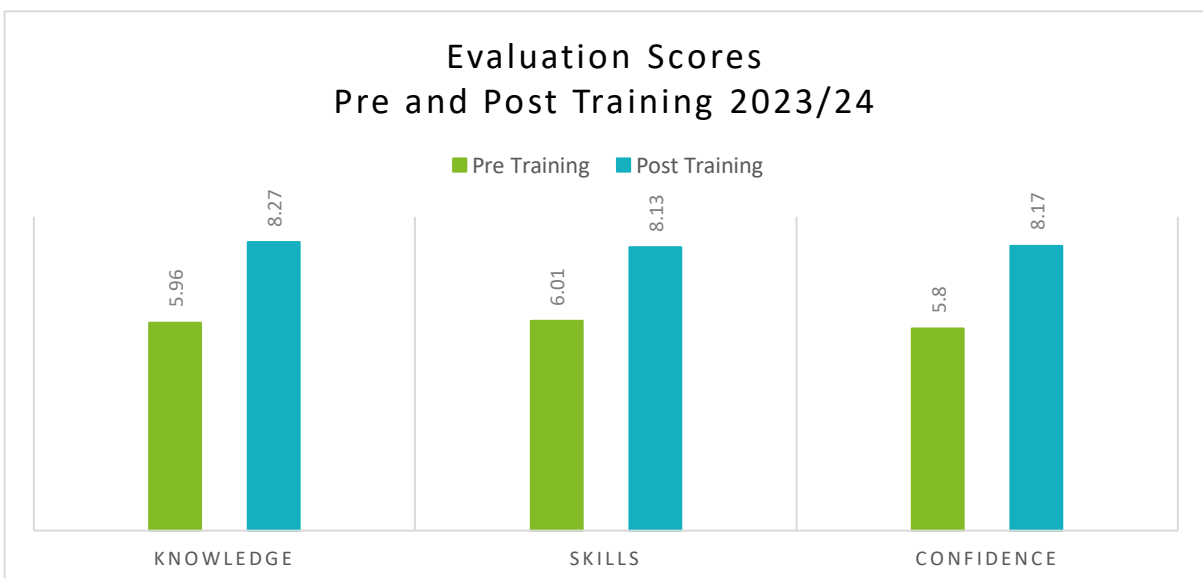
“THE TRAINERS WERE REALLY INSIGHTFUL. I THOUGHT IT WAS BRAVE AND EMPOWERING HOW THEY USED THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES TO EXPLAIN HOW WE CAN MANAGE DISCLOSURES DIFFERENTLY.”

Evaluation of Following the Breadcrumbs: Working with Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse



Where courses were popular during the festival of learning (i.e. coercive reproduction, the myth of invisible men, safer sleep toolkit, and the voice of babies and non-verbal children) they were incorporated into the future regular training offer for 2024.

Delegates completed pre and post evaluation forms with professionals being asked to rate their own knowledge, skills, and confidence out of 10 before and after the training sessions and to set themselves three key actions which they will put into practice. Across the measurement of knowledge, skills, and confidence there has been an average improvement post training of 2.3, 2.1, and 2.4 points respectively.



The safeguarding children partnerships also facilitated 5 Safeguarding Children Trainers' Networks attended by a total of 54 delegates.

The joint Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Boards' [newsletter](#) for staff 'Safeguarding Matters' was published throughout 2023/24 reaching 700 people, and a regular digest was circulated throughout the year with local, regional, and national updates.

Safeguarding Matters Live (a live version of the newsletter presented via MS Teams) was run in June 2023 and December 2023 with attendance from up to 510 and 550 multi-agency delegates respectively. These sessions can be viewed on the new [YouTube channel](#) of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships along with videos from the festival of learning, including the [keynote speech](#), the launch of our local [safer sleeping toolkit](#), and the [closing session](#) from Research in Practice on the Pre-birth assessment Change Project.

The local Safeguarding Children Partnerships also worked with the local Safeguarding Adults Boards to develop and launch a ['building confidence in resource pack'](#) focusing on professional curiosity for managers and supervisors. It has not been possible to determine how many times this resource has been accessed, and therefore the impact, but this is something that the partnership is working towards with the long-term goal of implementing a learning management system.

Performance

The partnership has a Quality Assurance Framework is shared with the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership and the work is carried out by the Audit and Assurance Subgroup.

Self-Assessment (Section 11):

The partnership noted that the three safeguarding partner organisations (Police, Integrated Care Board, and local authority children's social care) rated themselves as 'fully effective' in all areas of the 2022 Section 11 Audit, resulting in no requirement for areas for improvement to be progressed (as there were none).

During 2023/24 it was agreed that a frontline practitioner survey would be carried out in lieu of the Section 11 audit for 2024/25. This will allow the safeguarding children partnerships to understand how well learning and resources are reaching the frontline. This work will be progressed throughout 2024/25.

Audits & Dip Sampling

Our audits and dip samples areas of focus were chosen in line with our business plan objectives.

Dip Sampling: Contacts re Children with Mental Health Needs. Ten records were identified for a dip sample audit focused on children with mental health needs. The aim was to

understand the response to the initial contact and if this was proportionate and based on robust information sharing. It also aimed to understand how Child and Adolescent Mental health Service (CAHMS) had been involved in the referral process.

The audit highlighted that the mental health triage system following a referral is not fully understood by safeguarding partners. As a result, information was disseminated to agency leads to raise awareness with front line staff about the referral process to support a child's emotional and mental health and access to CAMHS. This information will enable front door services to ask exploratory questions when they are notified that a child has been referred to 'CAMHS' and to understand whether the child has been offered and attended Early Support Services or is waiting for or has received a CAMHS assessment.

Dip Sampling: Neglect. The aim of this audit was to see how well the Children's Social Care services follow up information that is shared and / or cross check and triangulate information across partner agencies. Ten cases were audited, four of which were from Leicester City. Audits were carried out by the following agencies:

- Leicestershire County Council (Social Care, Early Help)
- Leicester City Council (Social Care, Early Help and Leicester City Inclusion Service)
- Rutland County Council (Social Care & Rutland Inclusion Service)
- Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT)
- Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Integrated Care Board
- University Hospitals of Leicester
- Leicestershire Police
- Probation Service
- Turning Point (substance misuse support services)
- Living Without Abuse (domestic abuse and sexual violence support services)
- Harborough District Council

Leicester's areas for improvement were identified as: The local neglect toolkit was not considered or used in any of the 4 cases; on one occasion significant information held by LPT was not requested; contact with GPs was a concern in 3 out of 4 cases; in all four cases fathers were invisible and their voice was not sought.

Good practice included multi-agency procedures being applied; in all audits all children were judged to be safe; assessments were completed for all cases; the voice of the child was captured in all cases; there was evidence that health records contained good information about children and in the main good information sharing was evidenced.

Recommendations from the dip sample were:

- Raise awareness about the local [Neglect Toolkit](#) and how useful it can be.
- Strategy discussions need to be clear on child protection medicals being required for neglect and physical harm – raise awareness of this and ensure all strategy discussions consider and document the need for medicals.
- Explore how GP involvement in safeguarding concerns can be strengthened.

- Raise awareness of importance of including fathers in assessments and making fathers visible (include stepfathers and partners).
- Seek assurance on the implementation of the single digital solution for health agencies.
- Raise awareness about professional curiosity and parenting assessments.
- Ensure that health agencies are requested to attend meetings and have access to appropriate information and or reports to contribute.

The impact of this work will be measured through the frontline staff survey currently being progressed.

Pre-birth Audit. A ‘deep dive’ multiagency case file audit of a total of cases across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Ten cases were audited, five of which were from Leicester City. Audits were carried out by the following agencies:

- Leicestershire County Council Children’s Social Care
- Leicester City Council Social Care
- Rutland County Council (Social Care)
- Leicestershire District Councils (North West Leicestershire District Council)
- Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Integrated Care Board Primary Care (ICB)
- University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL)
- Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) 0 – 19 Healthy Together Service
- Turning Point (substance misuse support services)
- Living Without Abuse (domestic abuse and sexual violence support services)
- Probation Service

What worked well?

- ✓ In four of the five Leicester cases a clear history of risks was identified.
- ✓ Timely actions were undertaken in four out of the five Leicester cases.
- ✓ Creative work by the social worker and tenacity over the time working parents was seen in three out of the five Leicester cases.
- ✓ Two out of the five babies were able to stay with parents.
- ✓ There was good multi-agency engagement in four of the five Leicester cases.
- ✓ All Leicester cases were referred as soon as possible by midwifery and safeguarding referrals by midwives linked to [signs of safety](#) to help generate maternity safeguarding plans.
- ✓ Seven of the twelve cases were discussed at monthly GP Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings; in three cases these included discussions with health visitors. This reflected good knowledge of the cases and risks to the unborn were demonstrated clearly in eleven of the twelve cases.
- ✓ Where required two of the babies were seen in their foster care placements by the health visitor within the scoping period. Where relevant there were clear details recorded of foster carers in two cases.

- ✓ Where a baby became looked after, the Initial Health Assessment was timely. Where another baby was going to be adopted the adoption medical was also completed in a timely fashion.
- ✓ There was evidence of good liaison across health services by LPT in six of the twelve cases.
- ✓ The Probation Service evidenced a good awareness of the risk to the unborn / baby, good management oversight, and good multi-agency working however there was a lack of knowledge of the [multi-agency pre-birth procedures](#).
- ✓ In the one case where Living Without Abuse (LWA) had involvement, they reported good communication between their practitioner and the social worker.

What were we concerned about?

- ✗ GPs were informed late or not invited to conferences in five of the twelve cases.
- ✗ Whilst one Leicester case demonstrated good voice of the child, this was not evident in five of the twelve cases.
- ✗ Children's Social Care had good engagement and worked with fathers in three of their five cases but overall there needs to be better engagement of fathers and families / friends / support networks.
- ✗ Understanding and reflection of cultural and diversity needs.
- ✗ There were four cases where a parent or parents had a learning disability or a learning need. There needs to be better reflection in such circumstances, including ensuring an understanding of the extent of that disability or need.
- ✗ A need for Improved record keeping – this includes comprehensive chronologies and genograms to understand family networks and relationships. Improved recording of safeguarding within maternity services.
- ✗ Improved supervision and management oversight of some cases for some services. In Leicester city there was good oversight in three of the five cases.
- ✗ A need to strengthen communication between services and across services from other areas outside Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
- ✗ Better use of resources for example: The Neglect Toolkit was only used in one case from Leicester city whereas previous historical neglect of a child or children was evidenced in three city cases.

Recommendations from this audit were:

1. Raise awareness and learning and increase skills in relation to working with parents who have a learning disability or learning difficulty and / or mental health needs.
2. Continue to monitor and seek assurance around the development and implementation of a single digital solution for access to and information sharing between Health Visiting and Midwifery.
3. Improved reflection of culture, race, and ethnicity – there is a need for increased learning in this area across agencies.
4. Continue to monitor and seek assurance around a single digital solution across health agencies to allow access to and sharing of information, including fathers and male carers/partners.

5. Strengthen cross agency presence at conferences and key meetings. It is important to recognise that no single health practitioner represents all of health.
6. Review and refresh of the pre-birth procedure and flowchart, in the light of this audit and national pre-birth assessment Change Project.
7. Consider services to parents after their baby is removed.

The review and refresh of pre-birth procedures has been completed and the re-launch was promoted via the learning and development group in June 2024.

Child Exploitation Audit. The Audit and Assurance Group supported the Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) Hub in undertaking a new regime of audit work analysing 60 cases where child exploitation was a feature. Findings will be reported into the safeguarding children partnerships during the 2024/25 business year.

Safeguarding Keep in Touch Meetings

The Audit and Assurance Group considers updates from the monthly Keep in Touch (Kit) meetings which provides opportunities to reflect on safeguarding issues emerging for partners at a strategic level.

Information shared at the meetings throughout 2023/24 has enabled senior managers to inform their frontline practitioners about new staffing initiatives by partner agencies who have designed specialist roles to focus on children and parents at risk, and for staff to be aware of any anticipated workforce shortage and mitigation in their area of work.

At the start of 2023/24 a data set was agreed with the three Local Authorities to be presented to these meetings to track changes in contacts and referrals into Children's Social Care from different staff groups. The data supports early recognition of areas of the workforce that may benefit from enhanced support from agency safeguarding leads.

Regional data is also regularly considered at these meetings.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

This report should include *'a record of key decisions and actions taken by the safeguarding partners in the yearly cycle, including in relation to implementing the recommendations from any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews and the impact this has had'* (Working Together, 2023, p.41).

Local Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs)

In line with Working Together 2023, safeguarding partners must identify serious child safeguarding cases that raise issues of importance in relation to their area and commission and oversee the review of those cases if they consider a review to be appropriate.

All serious child safeguarding incidents must be reported⁵ by the local authority to the national Child Safeguarding Review Panel (established under the Children and Social Work Act 2017). Following notification, safeguarding partners are required to undertake a rapid review (a review of multi-agency records to assemble the facts and identify any immediate learning). Upon completion of a rapid review, partners must then consider whether the circumstances meet the criteria and guidance for a local child safeguarding practice review⁶.

Meeting the criteria does not mean that safeguarding partners must automatically carry out a local child safeguarding practice review and it is for safeguarding partners to determine whether a review is appropriate, given that the purpose of a review is to identify improvements to practice (Working Together 2023, p.135). Independent scrutiny of safeguarding partner decision making related to reviews is provided locally by the partnership's Independent Chair.

At the start of 2023/24 one local child safeguarding practice review remained in progress. This review was concluded during 2023/24. The completed report did not make recommendations but instead provided findings and questions for the safeguarding children partnership to consider. These findings and resulting assurance and action undertaken can be found in the [briefing published](#) on our website.

During 2023/24, Leicester safeguarding partners completed seven rapid reviews which led to learning being identified, with resulting action plans being monitored by the partnership. In addition, and in agreement with the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel](#), one local child safeguarding practice review was commissioned in January 2024.

National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

In April 2023 the [Phase 2](#) report from the national safeguarding practice review into 'safeguarding children with disabilities and complex needs in residential settings' was published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. The Phase 1 report was published during 2022/23 and reported upon during that business year. Further evidence from the investigation in Doncaster, including additional national learning, was incorporated into the Phase 2 report. On 02 May 2024 Leicester safeguarding partners attended the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Webinar: Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings and fed learning back into their organisations.



⁵ [Guidance: Report a serious child safeguarding incident \(June 2018\)](#)

⁶ [Children Act 2004 Section 16F](#)

In response to the publication of [Working Together 2023](#) safeguarding partners undertook a review of the safeguarding children partnership arrangements in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Independent Chair adopted the approach of “constructive critical friend” to promote reflection to drive continuous improvement within the partnerships. Updates to local multi-agency arrangements are in development and new arrangements will be published in line with the statutory timeframe of December 2024.

The Voice of Children and Improving Professional Curiosity

Safeguarding partner organisations and relevant agencies have detailed, for this yearly report, how they hear the voice of children in their work:

Leicester City Council Contribution:

“**Adult social Care (ASC)** continues to interface with children’s safeguarding in the context of working with families this is reinforced through safeguarding adults training and safeguarding competence framework. ASC practitioners have a specific role in identifying and reporting concerns in their work with adults who have care and support needs. Work has already been undertaken to support early identification and timely reporting of children who require safeguarding intervention through embedding practitioner understanding of the trilogy of risk and through training delivered internally to all staff. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Social Care held a Festival of Practice in October 2023 which was open to both Children’s and Adults Social Care staff there are a number of sessions running throughout the week including Exploring Rights, Diversity & Inclusion through a Trauma informed Lens and Relational Engagement through a Trauma Lens.”

“Children’s Social Care

Signs of Safety and the LUNDY model of participation are embedded across all work reiterating the voice and experience of the child, their family and network, ensuring they are central in all interventions with families, including collaborative working on safety / wellbeing / success goals and plans. Collaborative audits include feedback from families wherever possible.

All assessment and planning forms include children and families views across all aspects of the progressing plan to ensure their understanding and views. This is monitored and reviews by managers within supervision and Independent Chairs / Independent reviewing Officers for children subject to Child Protection plans or looked after.

Feedback from children and families is requested at all review meetings and across the work of Family Therapy teams. There are specific Quality Assurance activities to gather feedback and collaborative case file audits routinely include views of family.

Complaints and commendations are monitored and reported on allowing any emerging themes to be responded to.

We complete sessional evaluations for children attending our children in care council, care experienced consultants and young people's council. Young people attend and engage in Scrutiny commissions – Overview Select, Health and Children and Young People. Young people regularly attend Corporate Parenting Board.

Our Children's Rights and Participation Service have supported young people to feedback their views around improving services for all young people – including taking part in the National Policing consultation, consultation of NHS vaccines, consultation of Libraries service development with research partners, Activist and consultation on the SEND transitions strategy.

Within this year we have trained care experienced young people to quality assure our independent children's homes.

Young people have Coproduced the Leicester Asks consultation/questionnaire which will be undertaken in the coming year with all looked after children."

Leicestershire Police Contribution:

"DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence) risk assessments capture child impact during domestic abuse deployments

Public protection notices – these are completed by officers and staff for a broad range of circumstances when the police encounter children. Within the template of this report there is dedicated space for the voice of the child to be captured (amongst other elements) to sign post officers

Case conference reports – the voice of the child is captured from existing police interactions and features within this space

Dedicated specialist investigation teams – the child abuse investigation unit and Child Exploitation Team have additional specialist training to capture the voice of the child during investigations

Specific templates within our case recording systems are embedded to sign post and remind responders and investigators to capture child's voice at relevant junctures.

Operation Encompass – this is a national programme that takes the reports of Domestic Abuse (and broader child protection matters) and shared this information with schools proactively. This process captures the child's voice (with processes detailed above) and shared with professionals to offer proactive silent support to children.

Leicestershire Police is supported by an excellent CHISVA (Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advocate) service. Feedback on cases is received by them to direct and tailor how we provide our service to children.

Victims needs assessments – each report involving a crime with a child involved have a tailored victim needs assessment.

Multi-agency Child Exploitation Audit regime captures child voice.

Internal Police audit regime has specific focus on child's voice.

All of this narrative and feedback then form individual plans for how to respond or tailor the investigation/report on a case-by-case basis.

Core member of the Violence Reduction Network which includes a workstream on child/youth voice from children/young people most affected by violence.

Police representation at the Leicestershire Hope Hack and the Policing Hope Hack wherein children/ young people generated insights on violence and solutions to preventing violence and vulnerability locally.

Close working with Violence Reduction Network (VRN)-funded interventions which routinely gather insights and feedback from participants with the aim of continuously improving the service offer."

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board Contribution:

"During the 2023/24 business year the ICB has not engaged directly with children in relation to safeguarding children work. The last time we did this was when we commissioned the Barnardo's Domestic Violence report and the Was not Heard film.

However, we have led initiatives to support front line staff in consultation and discussion with children to identify abuse, sexual abuse, child exploitation and serious violence:

From the three City Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) where the children were all abused in care: we have disseminated information to ensure children are given the opportunity to be seen by themselves and out of earshot of parents/carers during consultation, and to 'think the unthinkable' in terms of recognising and asking the right questions in relation to the potential for children in care to be subjected to abuse by foster carers/care homes, or for the abuse to continue if family have access to the child.

In addition: we have disseminated prompt questions to front line health staff across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to identify through discussion with a child or young person whether they are subject to child exploitation or serious violence.

We have negotiated questions that are now included in the assessment undertaken by Barnardo's key workers when a child with Learning Disability / Autism is on the Dynamic Support Register and at risk of hospital admission, to identify whether a child is subject to child exploitation or serious violence."

East Midland Ambulance Service (EMAS) Contribution:

“The majority of EMAS attendances are to adults and as EMAS is an emergency service we do not case hold, it can at times be challenging for EMAS to gather feedback from children and to involve them in service development however there is a continual push to build on what we already have in place.

EMAS safeguarding training is delivered as think family and promotes the voice of the child. The referral form has section for the crews to document the voice of the child, in particular their wishes for the referral.

EMAS have a communication tool that has been designed with a visual pain score and body map to promote communication with younger children and non-verbal children. Education has been provided on learning disabilities and Autism to empower staff to engage with patients.

During 2022-2023 There have been no complaints raised by children that crews have not listened to them. EMAS have an easy read PALS leaflet to provide information as well as an easy read investigations form that can support the PALS team in liaising with children to gather their opinion.

EMAS policy provides clear direction around the voice of the child in relation to providing care. EMAS education is delivered from a think family perspective emphasising the importance of engaging with children.

All EMAS redesign of services must have an Equality Impact Assessment, Well Being Impact Assessment and Quality Impact Assessment completed to ensure that all individuals' needs are met.

EMAS will engage with specified patient groups as and when the need arises.

The EMAS Clinical Audit & Research Unit (CARU) are undertaking some research in which involves children and young people participation. The project is expected to run over the next 3-4 years. Please see link to a published abstract of the work completed so far.

[https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/12/Suppl_1/A2.2.](https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/12/Suppl_1/A2.2)”

Finances

LSCP B 2023/24 Contributions	
Police	£51,850
ICB	£51,850
Leicester City Council	£111,100
DfE Grant Funding	£47,300
Total	£262,100

LSCP B 2023/24 Spend	
Independent Chair	£10,391
Board Office Staffing	£166,011
Membership Fees	£914
Case Reviews	£0
Engagement and Comms	£1,000
Procedures	£3,400
Training	£5,000
Miscellaneous	£154.04
Total	£186,870

Observations from our Independent Chair and Scrutineer

This is my first opportunity to contribute to the annual report, having been in role now since July 2023. I was delighted to be appointed to the role of independent chair and scrutineer. This was a jointly appointed role, working across Leicestershire and Rutland and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

The role of the independent scrutineer is to act as a critical friend to promote reflection and drive continuous improvement. The independent scrutineer considers how effective our local safeguarding arrangements are and provides constructive feedback and recommendations on this to the strategic partners for their consideration. The independent scrutineer also scrutinises the partnership's annual report.

This annual report acknowledges the progress made by the partnership throughout the year and the challenges that remain, which the Partnership is committed to addressing in the coming year.

During my first year of undertaking the role I have Chaired the meetings of the Joint Leicestershire and Rutland and Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnerships Board and have attended monthly meetings with the statutory partners.

I have used the 'Six Steps to Independent Scrutiny' (now called Checklist for Independent Scrutiny), published by Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) to develop a workplan to inform the scrutiny process.

As part of this workplan, in collaboration with the statutory partners I have undertaken in depth scrutiny as part of a review of the safeguarding arrangements, which immediately highlighted commendable strengths and practices as well as identifying areas to be taken forward in the form of developments to comply with the requirements as set out in the 2023 Working Together to Safeguard Children. Areas of scrutiny have included:

- Terms of reference and membership for the partnership and sub-groups
- The Business Plan
- Minutes of meetings
- The identified priorities
- The learning and development offer
- The quality assurance framework and data set
- The 2022-2023 annual report
- Published strategies and documents
- Structures and roles of the business team members
- Meeting with individual partners and practitioners
- Observation of subgroups

- Observation of rapid reviews and the local child safeguarding practice review process, scrutiny of the subsequent reports and observation and scrutiny of the approach to implementing and assessing the impact of learning
- Observation of training and learning and development events
- A co-production exercise to gain the views of all partners.

Future opportunities to engage with children and families is planned.

In undertaking the role of independent Chair and Scrutineer there is clear evidence of robust partnership arrangements to ensure that children in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.

The safeguarding arrangements are supported by strong and committed leadership, with all statutory partners fully committed to the safeguarding ambitions of the Partnership. There is a culture of openness, respectful challenge, and a willingness to learn. There is positive collaboration and joint working with the Safeguarding Adult Board statutory partners to consider joint priorities.

The Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements for the Safeguarding Children Partnership continue to comply with Working Together 2018 and is well placed to take forward the changes and new arrangements in Working Together 2023 with minimal disruption.

In the coming year the need to strengthen the partnership arrangements is recognised, and significant efforts are already underway. *Strong change management, systems leadership, and systematic processes will be crucial for future developments.*

As the Independent Scrutineer, I am committed to hearing directly from children, young people, families, and frontline practitioners to understand what is working well and how multi-agency working can be improved. While challenges lie ahead, I have confidence in the ability of Leicestershire and Rutland and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnerships to build upon its strengths and I will continue to scrutinise and support the Partnership in navigating risks and challenges.

Dr Amanda Boodhoo

Independent Chair and Scrutineer, Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership

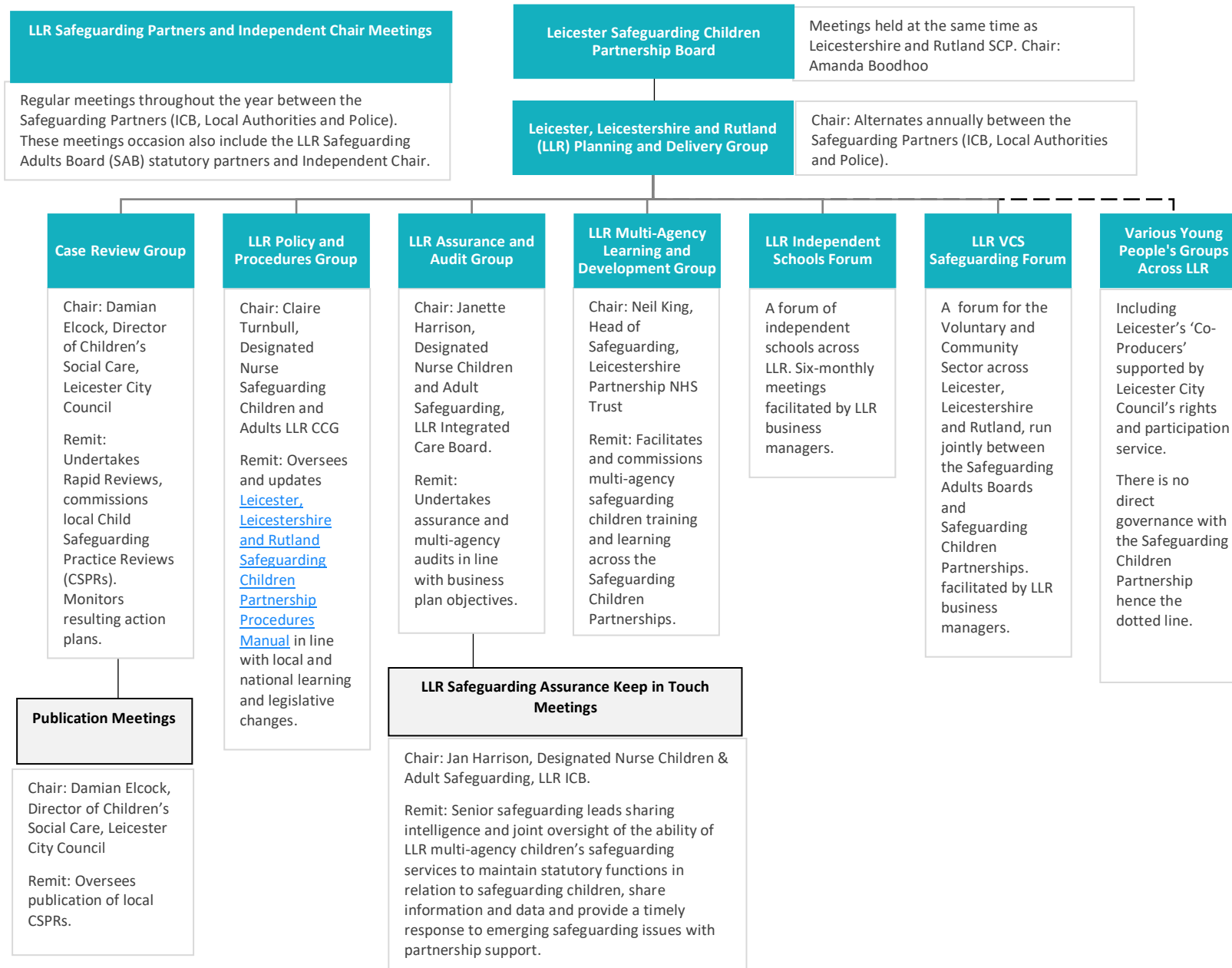
Priorities 2023-25

We have identified five priority areas for us to focus our collective efforts, following the principle that we should concentrate our capacity on a small number of topics, in order to have significant impact, rather than dissipate our resources by trying to do everything. Based on our analysis of the situation across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) we have identified the following priority areas:

1. Safeguarding Babies – Improving how we work together with families before and after births to safeguard babies
2. Child Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing, and Safeguarding
3. Keeping Adolescents Safe / Supporting Safe Adolescents
4. Safeguarding Children from Diverse Backgrounds
5. Effective Safeguarding in Independent and Out of School Settings

For each of these areas, we have set out our rationale for prioritising the topic, and presented the key deliverables, leads, activities, impact measures, and timescales. This will enable us to monitor progress and secure assurance that our actions are making a positive difference to the lived experience of our residents. Our full business plan has been [published on our website](#).

LSCPb Structure Chart 2023/24



**Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission (CYPE)
Work Programme 2024 – 2025**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
19 June 2024	<p>Questions, Representations and Statements of case.</p> <p>Introduction to CYPE Scrutiny Commission including new Directors.</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p> <p>Education Performance Report.</p> <p>Children Seeking Safety</p> <p>Post-16 SEND Home-to-School Travel - Update</p>	<p>Set up session to help members understand the issues surrounding community asset transfer.</p> <p>Briefing to be given on finance and resources in CYPE.</p> <p>Staff turnover figures to be provided.</p> <p>Updated briefing on CYPE to come to Commission once more is known after General Election - to include information on finance and resource and the workforce.</p> <p>Influence on deprivation on performance to be investigated, particularly with regard to white children and those eligible for free school meals.</p> <p>Regional director from DfE to be invited to the Commission to inform on academy schools in the area.</p> <p>Monitor the emergence of a national plan.</p> <p>Report to come to the Commission on Childrens Centres and Children's Services.</p> <p>Commission to be kept informed of developments regarding Children Seeking Safety.</p> <p>Consultation to be shared with Commission in advance. (via email rather than at a meeting due to schedule)</p>	<p>To be shared in a later paper with scrutiny</p> <p>To be shared in a later paper with scrutiny</p> <p>To be shared in a later paper with scrutiny</p> <p>No national plan announced to date</p> <p>Will be shared when available.</p>

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
20 August 2024	<p>Family Hubs and Children's Centres</p> <p>Use of Capital Programme in Schools</p> <p>Youth Justice Plan Refresh 2024/25</p> <p>Adventure Playgrounds Update</p>	<p>Mapping for Change to be added as an item to the Work Plan. To come to the Commission once the final report was reviewed.</p> <p>Added value to be included in future reports.</p> <p>Plan to be sent to Schools.</p> <p>Engagement Strategy to be shared with Councillors, and offer made to Councillors to attend meetings on participation of young people in the service.</p> <p>Update report on the situation regarding Adventure Playgrounds to come to the Commission after September.</p> <p>Cllr Russell and Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss possible engagement with play associations to get progress updates.</p>	
29 October 2024	<p>DSG high-needs block recovery plan</p> <p>Adventure Playground Update</p> <p>Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report</p> <p>Workload and Resources</p>	<p>Task Group to happen after DSG Report.</p> <p>Report to include data on the level of overspend at different Councils.</p> <p>To include update on current position.</p> <p>To include information on funding sources and recruitment and retention.</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
14 January 2025	<p>Sufficiency Strategy</p> <p>Update from Impower</p> <p>Update on Children from Abroad Seeking Safety</p> <p>Academies – Performance Report</p>	<p>To include provision of Care Packages/Residential Accommodation for CLA – Council provision and the private sector.</p> <p>Requested following discussion about costs/appropriateness of placements during scrutiny of the Revenue Budget.</p>	
25 February 2025	LADO Annual Report		
8 April 2025			

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Needs Assessment in Relation to Families in the City		
Children not in state-maintained schools e.g.: Academies, Independent, Faith schools		
Multi-Academy Trusts - Overview		
Post-16 SEND Home-to-School transport		
Update from local DfE Officer		
Fostering Annual Report	To include costs relating to Customer Relationship management tool, the Ofsted thematic report, information on family finding events and more detail on advertising techniques for recruitment.	
Fostering Community Champions update	Deferred from 26 March 2024	
Corporate Parenting Update	Annual report.	
Fostering Service – Marketing Strategy		
SEN support and funding		
Pupil Place Planning (Primary and Secondary)		
Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Report		
Youth Services - overview		
Children in Care Council/Care Leavers		
School Holiday Activity and Food Provision		
Education Govt reports e.g.: white paper / green paper		

Ofsted Inspection reports		
Children's Social Care – Recruitment Issues		
Mental Health impacts on children	Likely to be examined jointly with other commissions	
Informal Scrutiny on DSG High Needs Block	To commence following the full report to the Commission.	
Leicester Children's Services – Self Evaluation		
Covid impact and response to early childhood development		

