



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: TUESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2023

TIME: 5:30 pm

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

Members of the Commission

Councillor Batool (Chair)

Councillor Cole (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Barnes, Haq, Joshi, Dr Moore, Pantling and Pickering

Standing Invitees (Non-Voting)

Youth Representatives

Jennifer Day

Janet McKenna

Teaching Unions representative

UNISON Branch Secretary

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

For the Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Ed Brown (Scrutiny Policy Officer)

Katie Jordan (Democratic Support Officer),

Tel: 0116 454 6350, e-mail: committees@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council, City Hall, 3rd Floor Granby Wing, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Information for members of the public

Attending meetings and access to information

You have the right to attend formal meetings such as Full Council, committee meetings, and Scrutiny Commissions and see copies of agendas and minutes.

However, on occasion, meetings may, for reasons set out in law, need to consider some items in private.

Dates of meetings and copies of public agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website at www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk or by contacting us using the details below.

Making meetings accessible to all

Wheelchair access – Public meeting rooms at the City Hall are accessible to wheelchair users. Wheelchair access to City Hall is from the middle entrance door on Charles Street - press the plate on the right hand side of the door to open the door automatically.

Braille/audio tape/translation - If you require this please contact the Democratic Support Officer (production times will depend upon equipment/facility availability).

Induction loops - There are induction loop facilities in City Hall meeting rooms. Please speak to the Democratic Support Officer using the details below.

Filming and Recording the Meeting - The Council is committed to transparency and supports efforts to record and share reports of proceedings of public meetings through a variety of means, including social media. In accordance with government regulations and the Council's policy, persons and press attending any meeting of the Council open to the public (except Licensing Sub Committees and where the public have been formally excluded) are allowed to record and/or report all or part of that meeting. Details of the Council's policy are available at www.leicester.gov.uk or from Democratic Support.

If you intend to film or make an audio recording of a meeting you are asked to notify the relevant Democratic Support Officer in advance of the meeting to ensure that participants can be notified in advance and consideration given to practicalities such as allocating appropriate space in the public gallery etc..

The aim of the Regulations and of the Council's policy is to encourage public interest and engagement so in recording or reporting on proceedings members of the public are asked:

- ✓ to respect the right of others to view and hear debates without interruption;
- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted and intrusive lighting avoided;
- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact:

Katie Jordan, Democratic Support Officer on 0116 454 6350.

Alternatively, email committees@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151.**



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
-----	------------------------

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

If the emergency alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit and proceed to the area outside the Ramada Encore Hotel on Charles Street as directed by Democratic Services staff. Further instructions will then be given.

- 1. 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
(Pages 1 - 8)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People, and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 2nd November 2023 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

- 4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 5. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any petitions.

- 6. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer to report on any questions, representations, or statements of case received.

- 7. THE LEICESTER SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP BOARD (LSCPb) 2022/23 YEARLY REPORT**

**Appendix B
(Pages 9 - 40)**

The Director of Childrens Social Care and Community Safety submits The Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPb) 2022/23 yearly report.

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission is invited to Comment on how effective the LSCPB Yearly Report has been in setting out what safeguarding partners have done as a result of local arrangements, and to seek any further clarification needed on any areas.

8. HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES **Appendix C (Pages 41 - 64)**

The Director of SEND, Early Help and Education submits a report on Home to School Travel for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities, to provide the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission with an update on the home to school and college travel provision, and costs for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

9. CHILDREN IN EDUCATION - NUMBERS ON ROLL, ATTENDANCE, AND THOSE MISSING EDUCATION **Appendix D (Pages 65 - 86)**

The Director of SEND, Early Help and Education submits a report to update the Commission on the numbers of children on roll, attendance and those missing education. The report summaries a presentation of data on the known education provision for children in Leicester up to the end of the 2022/23 academic year.

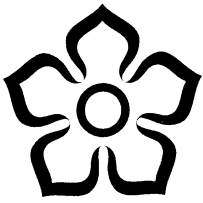
10. NEW CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES **Appendix E (Pages 87 - 90)**

The Director of Childrens Social Care and Community Safety submits a report to update the commission on the overview of progress in the development of two children's homes, Holly House and Hillview.

11. WORK PROGRAMME **Appendix F (Pages 91 - 94)**

The Commission's Work Programme is attached for information and comment.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Batool - Chair

Councillor Cole
Councillor Dr Moore
Councillor Pickering

Councillor Haq
Councillor Pantling

* * * * *

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present and led introductions.

Apologies were received from Councillor Barnes.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Pantling declared that she was Chair of Governors at Eyres Monsell Primary school.

Councillor Pickering declared that she was a Governor at Rolleston school.

Councillor Dr Moore declared that she was Chair of the Advisory Board at Millgate School (Discovery Academy Trust).

27. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 19th September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

28. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

29. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

30. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Representations were received from students of Ash Field Academy, Principal of Ash Field Academy, Tracey Lawrence and Unison representative for staff at Ash Field Academy, Tom Barker. The Chair confirmed that they each would speak during the item Call-in Ashfield.

31. CALL-IN ASH FIELD

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report informing the Commission that the Executive decision taken by the Assistant City Mayor for Education on 28 September 2023 relating to withdrawing the funding for the Residential Provision at Ash Field Academy totalling over £400k per annum, with effect from 1 September 2024 had been the subject of a seven-member call-in under the procedures at Rule 12 of Part 4D, City Mayor and Executive Procedure Rules, of the Council's Constitution.

The Chair clearly outlined the process that she would follow in determining how to resolve the call-in. The Commission was recommended to either:

- a) Note the report without further comment or recommendation. (If the report is noted the process continues and the call in will be considered at Council on 23 November 2023); or
- b) Comment on the specific issues raised by the call-in. (If comments are made the process continues and the comments and call in will be considered at Council on 23 November 2023); or
- c) Resolve that the call-in be withdrawn (If the committee wish for there to be no further action on the call-in, then they must actively withdraw it. If withdrawal is agreed the call-in process stops, the call-in will not be considered at Council on 23 November 2023 and the original decision takes immediate affect without amendment).

The Chair invited the proposer of the call-in, Councillor Bajaj, to the table and allotted them five minutes to make their case. The proposer raised the following points:

- The call-in was aimed to examine the impact of the withdrawal of funding upon the students, carers and families.
- The withdrawal of funding would jeopardise the service provided of overnight accommodation for four nights a week. Vital support would be taken away.
- The residential service was vital for students to grow independence, spend time with friends, build confidence and learn skills.
- Further to this, the residential service provided a much-needed break for parents who could be reassured that their child was safe, enjoying their time and being educated.

The Chair invited the seconder of the call-in, Councillor Haq, to the table and allotted them five minutes to make their case. The following points were raised:

- The forecast for the school's finances showed a £600k deficit in this financial year and a £800k deficit in the 2024/25 financial year. Energy costs had increased, and the cost of nursing had increased due to a shortage of staff. In addition to this, the treatment and accommodation of various medical conditions was costly.
- The Academy were trying to save £400k.
- The costs of transport to and from the residential service were raised and the impact on transport in the city should the journeys have to be made separately and independently was highlighted.
- Many parents relied on the service for respite and care which could also allow them to care for other children they may have. Therefore, it was necessary to continue supporting parents. If families could no longer look after a child, then there would be a cost implication for the Council.
- The life skills learned at the Academy were described with the aid of pictures.
- Special units were not available anywhere else.

Students from Ashfield were invited to speak on the matter and the following points were raised:

- Their independence should be a priority.
- The residential service had helped students to feel normal following the Covid-19 pandemic and help them to get back on track and learn lost skills such as cooking and interaction with others.
- A student had been able to move into their own flat with the skills learned at the residential service.
- The residential service had taught students to be as independent as possible. It was crucial to understand how important the service was for independence and social skills and how significant it was for the development of life skills such as self-regulation, socialising with others and shopping.

- It was suggested that if the funding was withdrawn, a change in students' physical and mental health would be observed. Difficulties that would arise from a potential closure would include jeopardising students' independence and social interaction with friends, since equipment needed for interactions such as sleepovers may not be available outside of the residential service.
- The service helped students fulfil their intentions to become valuable members of society.

Unison representative for staff at Ash Field Academy, Tom Barker was invited to speak on the matter and the following points were raised:

- Unison members worked alongside other students and staff.
- The Deputy City Mayor, Housing and Neighbourhoods, had visited the Academy to explain why funding was being withdrawn. Justifications had included the suggestion that the service provided was not education and therefore should not be funded by the High Needs Block. This was suggested to show a lack of understanding of what education was and was suggested to be an ableist viewpoint as it was a definition of education that discriminated against those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Helping students to socialise was as educational as traditional academic subjects such as mathematics and English.
- The Council had initially provided two-years notice of any withdrawal of funding so that alternative funding arrangements could be made. The academy was initially told that they would know the outcome of the consultation in January 2023, however a decision was not made until October 2023, which left staff and students with 10 months' notice.
- It was acknowledged that the government had cut funding to local authorities and added financial rules to oblige local authorities reduce funding on schools, however, it was suggested that the Council could still overspend in this area if it decided to, and services could be kept open.
- It was stated that Unison had offered to assist in liaising with the government in relation to the overall funding situation, though this had not been taken forward.
- It was suggested that if funding was cut the service would be unable to remain open.

The Chair invited Assistant City Mayor for Education, Libraries and Community Centres, Councillor Dempster, to respond and the following points were raised:

- There were many reasons for the City Council to display its commitment to young people.
- The decision referred to the removal of local authority funding rather than the closure of the unit and the Council were prepared to work with the School and the NHS to look into other opportunities for funding.

- The decision was not based on school standards and the Council was aware that the service was outstanding.
- The crux of the matter was that the funding was coming out of the High Needs Block, when according to Department for Education (DfE) rules, it should not.
- The Council were not in receipt of sufficient money, particularly money from central government and as such the High Needs Block was overspent. The DfE had made it clear that it was necessary to get spending under control or the DfE would intervene and make decisions on behalf of the Council.
- Regarding respite care, it was important to work with the NHS and Social Care where there was responsibility to provide respite care, although it was also important to recognise that they also had budget difficulties.

Members of the Commission discussed the report which highlighted the following points:

- The Council were obligated to make the decision to reduce the overspend to the High Needs Block by the DfE.
- There was still time to find alternative funding.
- There was agreement that the service supported independence, and taught skills that could not be learned in the classroom.
- It was important to note that the Council were not closing the facility.
- If the Council did not follow DfE advice, then the DfE would make decisions on behalf of the Council and the Council would not have any control over action taken by the DfE. This could potentially affect more children.
- The service should not be funded from the High Needs Block as this can only be used for educational purposes as dictated by the by the DfE.
- There was a need for equity and equality across the city for SEND children. There were various pots of money such as those in NHS and Social Care that would be more fitting for the service.
- Transport costs were raised again; however, it was noted that transport spending came from a different budget.
- There was a conversation to be had between the Council and the Academy on tapering the withdrawal of funding so that it was not all withdrawn at once and would allow an easier transition to alternative sources of funding.

The Chair asked if the proposer wished to withdraw the call-in. It was noted that the proposer wished for the call-in to proceed.

Councillor Dr Moore moved that, following the points raised during the meeting, the call-in be withdrawn. This was seconded by Cllr Pantling and upon being

put to the vote the motion was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

1. That the call-in be withdrawn.
2. That further discussions be held between Leicester City Council and Ashfield Academy on the tapering of funding.

32. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK - VERBAL UPDATE

The Director for Social Care and Education gave a verbal update to confirm the detail of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) report, due to go to the December meeting. He also gave an outline of informal Scrutiny work on this matter.

The Principal Education Officer joined the meeting to assist with the discussion of this item.

Key points included:

- The Local Authority had overspent on the High Needs Block and was now subject to discussions with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who required the Council to provide a recovery plan.
- There was currently a forecast overspend of £11.1m for the current financial year.
- There were pressures due to not having the correct level of funding and a high level of demand regarding SEND children.
- The recovery plan had been submitted by 15 September following which the ESFA were met with to discuss the proposals.
- Data was provided on the future prediction on the number of children based on demographics and school placements.
- Models had needed to be presented showing what the data would look like both with mitigations and without mitigations.
- Feedback on the meeting with the ESFA was still being awaited despite chasing. It was difficult to know whether the plan would be robust until feedback was received.

In response to questions, the Commission were informed that:

- The majority of local authorities were overspent with different councils at different levels of overspend. Information on this would be provided as part of a report to be brought to a future meeting.
- If action was not taken on the overspend, commissioners from the DfE would make decisions on behalf of the Council.
- There was a burden on SEND placements and support in mainstream schools and the budget was not increasing. The ESFA had required the Council to look at everything they did. The Council were looking at every way they could support children in schools.

- There was pressure on schools in terms of the number of children in schools needing a plan, and the Council were in a similar situation to the situation across the country. Starting from a low base in terms of supporting, there were a lot of children with needs. There was a legal duty to educate children and there was less money and more demand.
- There were many children awaiting health assessments, including on conditions such as ADHD and autism. Many children in schools were struggling and many had a plan but no formal diagnosis. There was an 18-month wait for speech and language therapy.
- The ESFA had asked the Council to produce a forecast based on current demands and what this would look like in terms of the money needed. This was a particularly high amount. The Council were then asked to look at the figures taking mitigating actions into account. There was a need to ensure that the right organisations paid in order to bring down the overspend.
- Children could have good outcomes without an education healthcare plan. There was lots of good practice regarding SEND that would be good for all children in a class.
- Formula funding in no way matched the needs it was supposed to, and members needed to consider ways to address this.
- Regarding SEND Schools in Academy Trusts, there was a banding system based on a child's needs. The bandings had been reviewed two years ago and a modulation process was being worked on across the city. There was a peer review on banding so that there was confidence that the banding was fair.

AGREED

1. That the verbal update be noted.
2. That the full report come to the Commission once feedback was received from the ESFA.
3. That informal scrutiny work be initiated following the receipt of this report to a future scrutiny commission meeting.

33. WORK PROGRAMME

Support for some informal scrutiny on how the High Needs Block was used and the effectiveness of its use was voiced.

It had been suggested that once feedback was received from the ESFA, a list of measures would be put forward. It was further suggested that instead of reviewing everything, it might be that a certain aspect is chosen to examine. It was suggested that this might help assist the informal scrutiny work.

It was clarified that such any group that undertook some informal scrutiny would need to set a finish date.

The Chair further clarified that if the Commission decided upon it, such informal could be set up immediately following the receipt of feedback from the ESFA. And carried over into the next municipal year if required.

The Work Programme was noted.

34. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a query regarding the connection of heat pumps to schools, the Principal Education Officer would find out the details and convey them.

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 18:57.

LSCP B Yearly Report

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny
Commission

Date of meeting: 19 December 2023

Lead director: 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
- Report version number: 1.1

1. Summary

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission will receive, at their 19th December 2023 meeting, the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPb) 2022/23 Yearly Report which will be presented by the LSCPb Independent Chair.

The 2022/23 LSCPb Yearly Report was [published](#) on the LSCPb website on 21st September 2023.

2. Recommended actions

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

- Comment on how effective the LSCPb Yearly Report has been in setting out what safeguarding partners have done as a result of local arrangements, and to seek any further clarification needed on any areas.

3. Detailed report

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 2018](#), para. 41) notes that *'In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.'*

The LSCPb Yearly Report presented to the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission provides an overview of work undertaken by the LSCPb including

- 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 2022/23 business year and provides an overview of the priorities for 2023-25.

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

6.1 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.

6.2 Legal implications

The relevant statutory requirements for the Safeguarding Partners to publish a report are stipulated within Working Together 2018 Chapter 3, paragraphs 41-46. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Pretty Patel, Head of Law, Social Care & Safeguarding 0116 454 1457

6.3 Equalities implications

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 and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, 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 and sexual orientation.

The report looks at the LSCPb yearly report and how effective it has been in setting out what safeguarding partners have done as a result of local arrangements. The report will have an impact on children and young people from across a range of protected characteristics. The yearly report has focussed on a number of areas with priorities for 2023-25 including child mental health, emotional wellbeing and safeguarding and safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds. Going forward we need to ensure equality considerations continue to be a central theme for the board and any issues identified are addressed appropriately with relevant mitigating actions put in place.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, 454 4175

6.4 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are limited climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

LEICESTER SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP BOARD

YEARLY REPORT

2022/23



Leicester

Safeguarding Children Partnership Board

Yearly Report

2022/23

Report prepared and published in accordance with Paragraph 42 of Working Together 2018

Report Date: June 2023

Contents

Foreword	4
The Partnership.....	5
Safeguarding Children in Leicester	6
Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	16
The Work of the Partnership	10
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures.....	10
Training.....	11
Performance	13
Partnership Priorities	16
Priorities 2023-25.....	26
LSCP Structure Chart 2022/23.....	26



Foreword

In line with Working Together 2018, at least once in every 12-month period, we as Leicester's safeguarding partners, must publish a report setting out what we have done as a result of our multi-agency arrangements, including how effective our arrangements have been in practice.

This report sets out what we have done as a result of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews during 2022/23 and how we have implemented (or plan to implement) the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.

We will tell you about the training that we have facilitated as a partnership and the impact of this training on outcomes for children and families in Leicester.



















The purpose of this report is to bring transparency to children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken in Leicester. We hope it achieves this for you.

Leicester Safeguarding Partners

The Partnership

The shared and equal duty of Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board’s three safeguarding partners – Police, Health and Local Authority¹ – is to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Leicester. This includes agreeing on ways to co-ordinate safeguarding services, acting as a strategic leadership group to engage and support others, and implementing learning from local and national serious child safeguarding incidents.

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

LEICESTER SCP MEMBERSHIP		
Courts, Criminal Justice, and Blue Light Services	Leicestershire Police	
	National Probation Service (NPS)	
	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service	
	East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)	
	Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS)	
Education	Primary Schools	
	Secondary Schools	
	Further Education Colleges	
Health	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 Members	
	Public Health	
Other Partnerships	Child Death Overview Panel (C-DOP)	
PVI Sector	Voluntary Community Sector	

¹ In Leicester this is Leicestershire Police, Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board, and Leicester City Council. Each is highlighted in the table above.

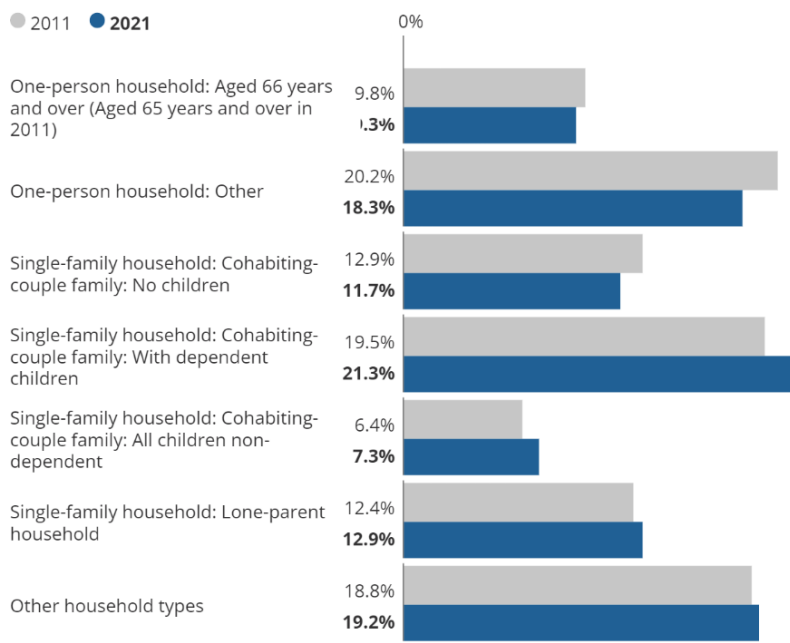
Safeguarding Children in Leicester

During the 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%.

Percentage of households by household composition, **Leicester**



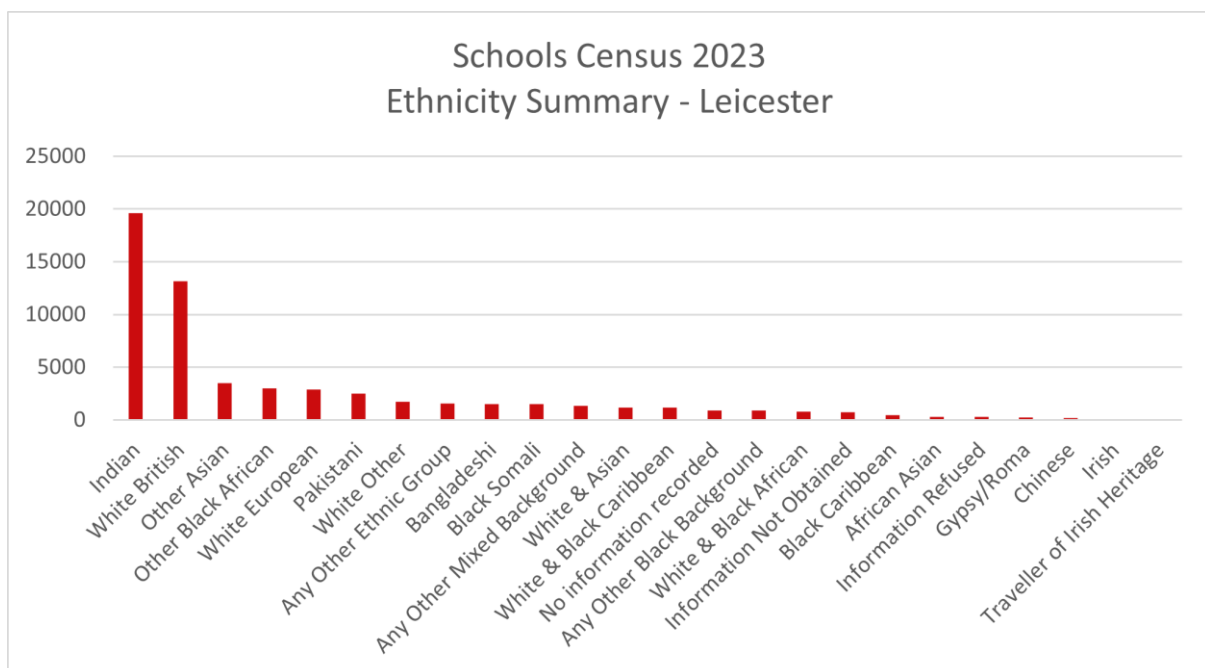
Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021

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

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.

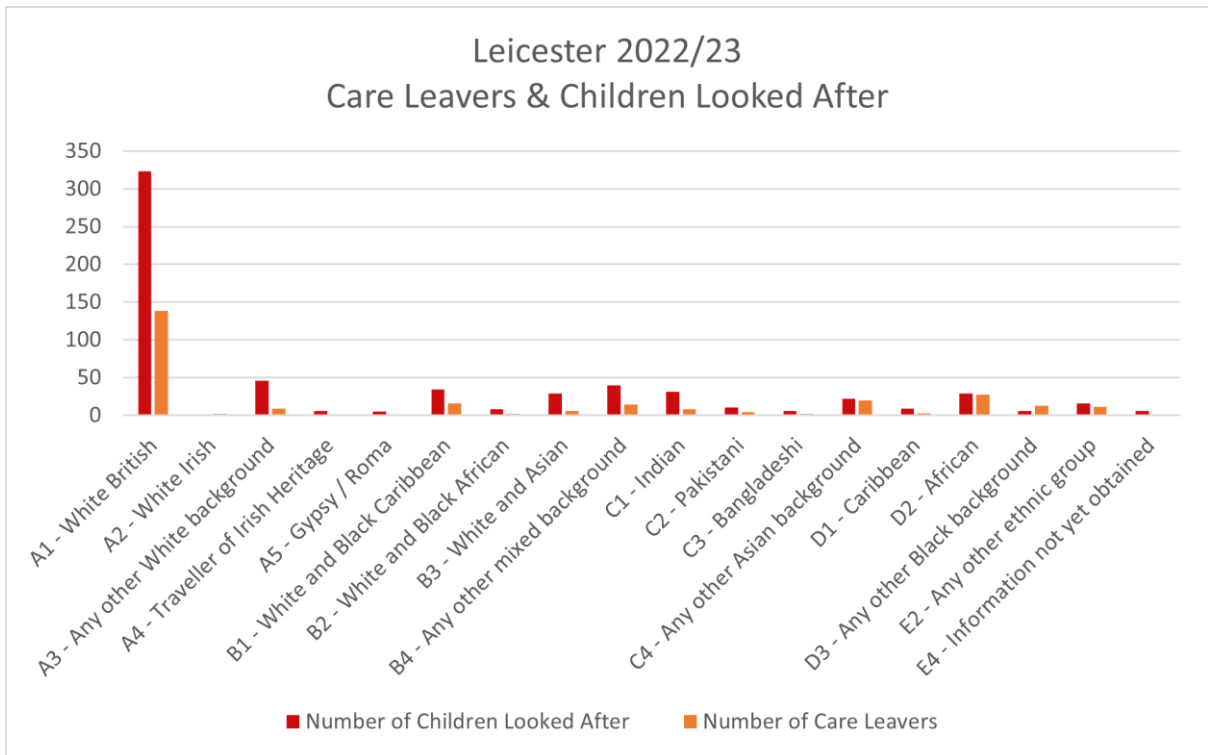
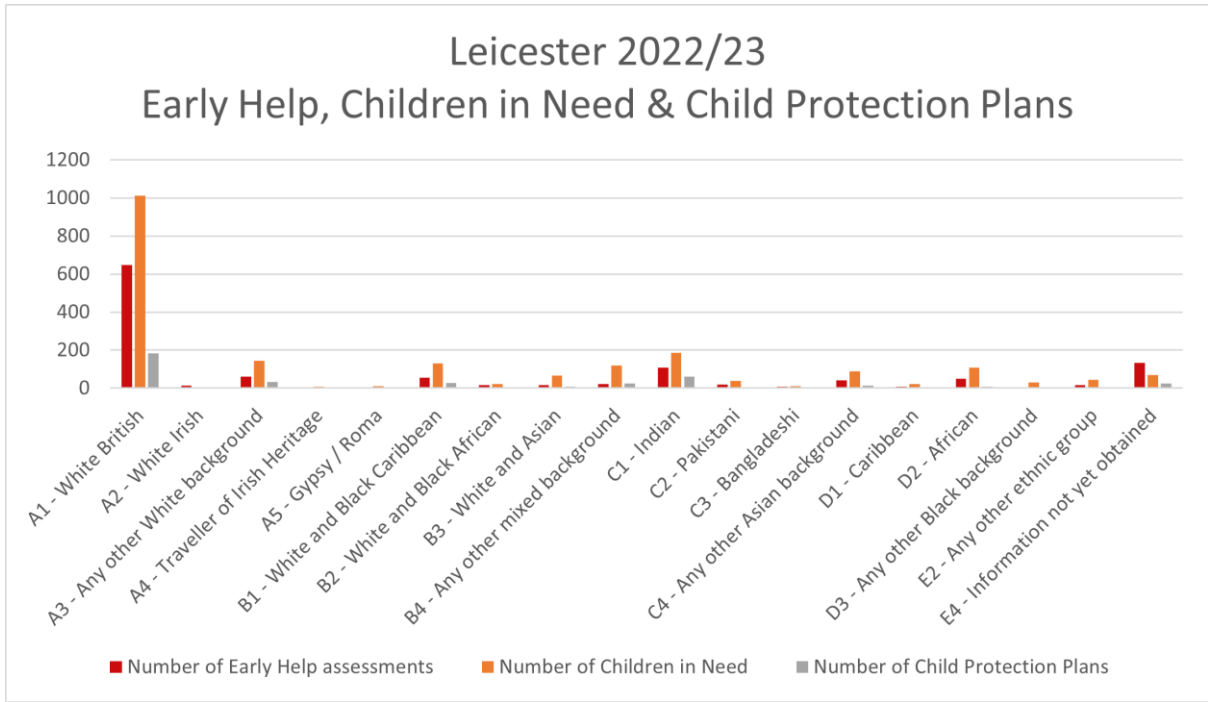
In 2021, 43.4% of usual residents in Leicester identified their ethnic group as “Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh” followed by 40.9% who identified themselves as “White”, 7.8% as “Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African”, 4.1% as “Other ethnic groups” and 3.8% as “Mixed or Multiple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

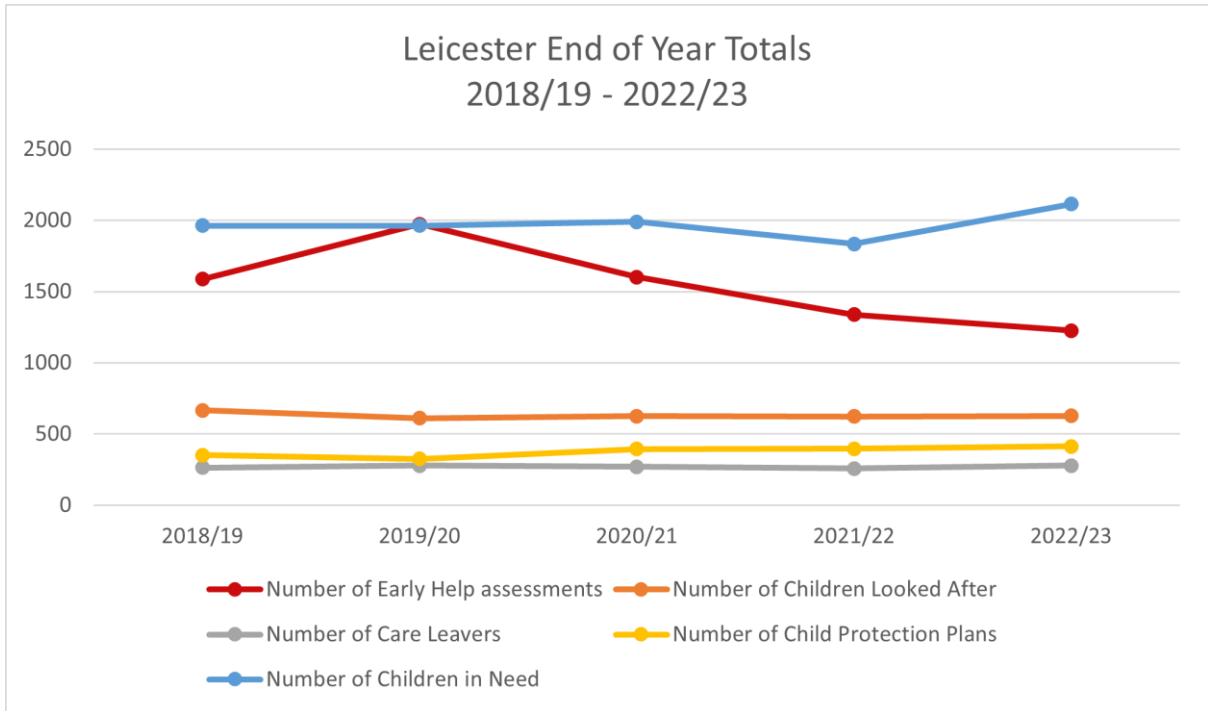
Leicester’s 2022/23 Safeguarding Children Data



³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid





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

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 2018. Throughout 2022/23 the following procedures were revised in response to learning from local and national reviews and assurance processes:

- Children and Young People go Missing from Home or Care
- Children and Families Moving Across Local Authority Boundaries
- Bruising, Marks, or Injury of Concern in Pre-Mobile Babies and Non-Independently Mobile Children
- Fabricated or Induced Illness
- Child Exploitation, CSE and Assessment of Risk Outside the Home (Contextual Safeguarding)
- Bullying
- Children of Parents with Learning Disabilities
- Children of Parents who Misuse Substances
- E-Safety: Children Exposed to Abuse through the Digital Media
- Gang Activity, Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation Affecting Children
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Safeguarding Children Vulnerable to Violent Extremism (PREVENT)
- Underage Sexual Activity
- Agency Roles and Responsibilities
- Allegations Against Persons who Work with Children
- Domestic Abuse
- Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning
- Self Harm and Suicidal Behaviour



Leicester and the Leicestershire and
Rutland Safeguarding Children
Partnerships Procedures Manual

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

A 'building confidence in practice' resource on professional curiosity was developed by the



- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- Exercise in reflection....
- Top Tips
- Understanding what it looks like in practice
- How to Refer, Procedures & Resources

Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group (MALDG) in partnership with Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Boards and was [published](#) in March 2022. The resource pack aims to

address Professional Curiosity so that practitioners can fully understand what it is and how to develop their skills when they are working with people whether they are children or adults. The expectation is that practitioners and managers will use it in team meetings, as part of a group/individual supervision, and for their own development. 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 LSCPB is working on with the use of a learning management system. Now this local resource is in place, training for managers around supporting professional curiosity in staff is in the process of being developed. This training will be in the form of videos that will then be promoted to managers across the partnership.

A regular trainers' network has been facilitated, weekly briefings and regular Safeguarding Matters [newsletters](#) have been published, and the [LLR SCP's YouTube channel](#) has continued to develop.

This year, Safeguarding Matters Live was launched: a live online briefing for all staff across the children and adults multi-agency partnerships. The live briefings run online share learning from reviews and audits, procedure and guidance updates, and resources to support practice. The June 2022 briefing was attended by 289 delegates with the December 2022 briefing attendance increasing to over 500 delegates. The December 2022 session is [available to watch](#) on the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' YouTube Channel.

P1	NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)
P2	The Dynamic Support Pathway (DSP) is an all-age early intervention pathway for people with Learning Disabilities, Autism or both
P3	Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Procedure and Guidance updates
P4	LLR Safeguarding Children
P5	LLR Safeguarding Adults
P6-9	Trading Standards - Scam News
P10	Assessing Whether a Child is Throwing Toys
P11-18	Thematic Briefings
	Domestic Homicide Review
	Safeguarding Adult Reviews

Welcome to the latest edition of Safeguarding Matters.

The focus of this edition is to share the learning from a number of case reviews that have been undertaken across the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Partnerships, linking to national themes and safeguarding priority areas.

The cases under review cover a wide spectrum and it is recommended that you don't just consider those with direct relevance but development your 'Whole family/community' awareness.

The learning is presented to enable reflection on practice and service development. There is an action plan that you can use to plan how you might take the learning forward as an individual, within a team, department or organisation.

Thematic Briefings:

- Child Neglect
- Safeguarding the Unborn Baby
- Perplexing Presentations – Fabricated and Induced Illness

Domestic Homicide Review:

- Frank DHR Co existing Care and Support, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health

Safeguarding Adult Reviews:

- Dora and Keith – Isolated couple and non-engagement with services
- Person D – Co-existing Substance Use & Mental Health (SUMH)
- Martin – Self-neglect in the context of harmful alcohol misuse
- Mrs Mayo- Co existing Care and Support, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health

In other News

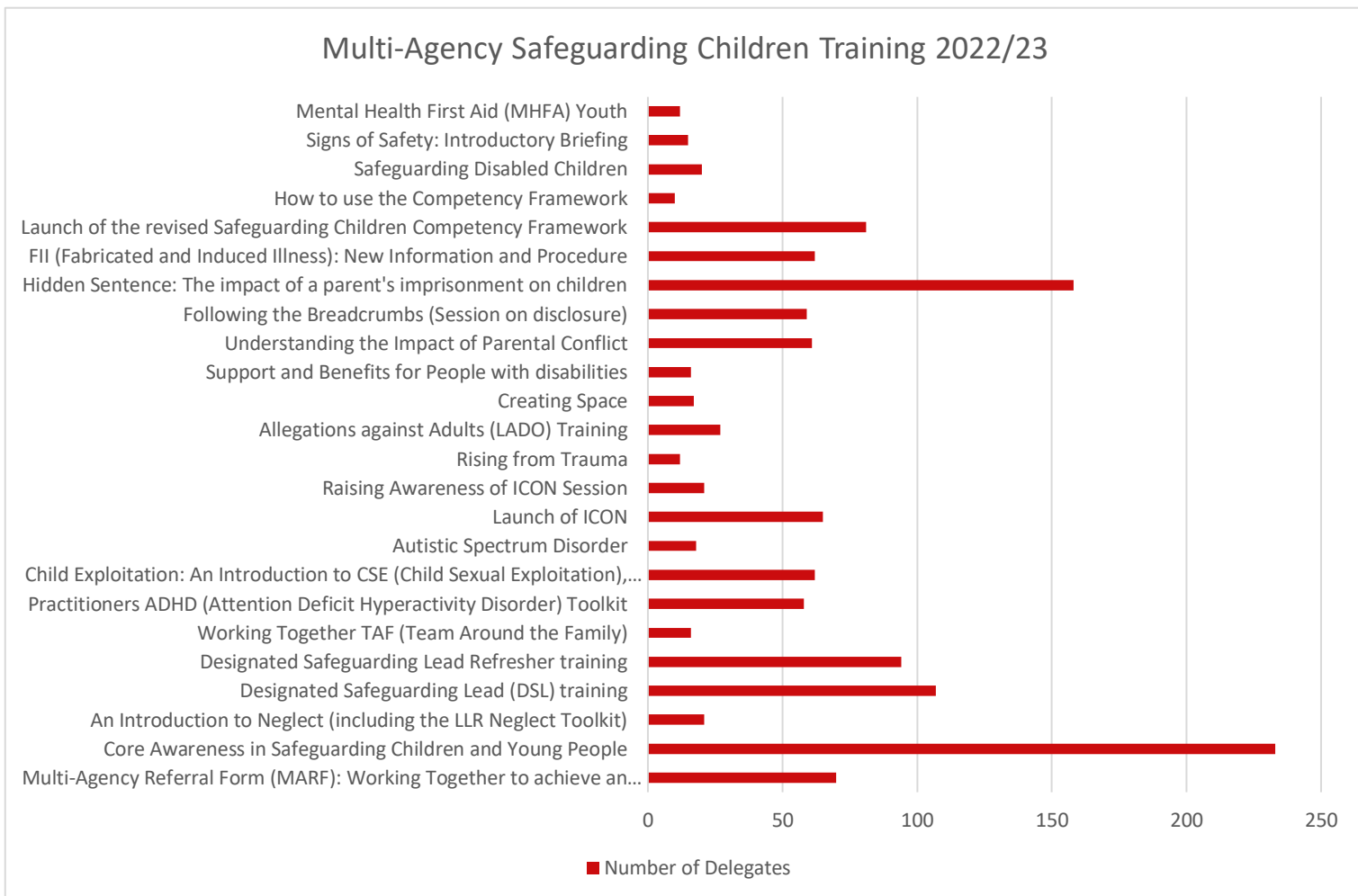
NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)

NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are statutory bodies established from 1 July 2022, replacing Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). In Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland this means that the functions of Leicester City CCG, West Leicestershire CCG and East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG will become the NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board.

The ICB is part of the integrated care system (ICS) with partners in LLR and will deliver a health and care system in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland that tackles inequalities in health, delivers improvements to the health and wellbeing and experiences of local people as well as providing value for money.

Follow this link to the website: [NHS Integrated Care Boards \(ICBs\)](#)

In addition to developing resources, hosting regular trainers’ networks, providing weekly briefings, publishing regular Safeguarding Matters [newsletters](#), facilitating Safeguarding Matters Live, and developing the [LLR SCP’s YouTube channel](#), the LSCPb in partnership with Leicestershire and Rutland SCP, also facilitates multi-agency safeguarding children training across the two partnerships. During 2022/23 a total of 1,315 delegates attended our regular multi-agency safeguarding children training.



737 delegates completed pre and post evaluation forms. Professionals are asked to rate their own knowledge, skills and confidence before and after the training sessions and to set themselves three key actions which they will put into practice. These key actions are considered during impact evaluations, which explore how knowledge has been used in day-to-day work.

“...A MORE HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE IMPACTS OF PARENTAL IMPRISONMENT ON CHILDREN AND THE WIDER FAMILY. KNOWING A LITTLE MORE ON HOW TO SUPPORT THE CHILDREN AND PARENTS IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.”

Evaluation of Families Affected by Imprisonment training

“I ATTENDED THE TAF TRAINING JUST BEFORE I HELD MY FIRST MEETING AND IT HELPED ME ORGANISE HOW I WAS GOING TO RUN IT AND GAVE CLEAR ACTIONS AND GOALS FROM THE MEETING.””

Evaluation of Holding an Effective Team Around the Family Meeting training

In addition to our regular training, the following larger events and conferences were facilitated, with a further 1,254 delegates attending from across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland:

Conferences Facilitated by MALDG (to delegates across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) During 2022/23		
Conferences	Number	Total attendees
Missing from Home Joint Protocol	2	77
Looked After Children Health Summit	1	45
Supporting Families – Reducing the Impact of Parental Imprisonment	1	50
Safeguarding Matters Online Briefing	2	789
Learning from Reviews: Baby’s first Home (womb)	1	108
Learning from Reviews: Baby’s first Home (womb) (film played as trainer unavailable)	1	95
Young Carer’s Awareness Training	2	90
		1,254

The MALDG also supported the advertising and booking of the trauma-informed training programme designed and delivered by Barnardo’s and funded by the local Violence Reduction Network. In addition, the subgroup supported Disability Allowance Training by the Department of Work and Pensions Team, as well as promoting the ‘What is Adult Safeguarding?’ sessions run by the local Safeguarding Adults Boards.

Performance

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

Self-Assessment (Section 11)

During 2022/23 a self-assessment audit was carried out, the results of which will be considered at the start of 2023/24.

Audits & Bi-monthly Dip Sampling

A multi-agency audit focusing on Electively Home Educated (EHE) children was undertaken during 2022/23. This group of children appears to have increased post pandemic and given learning from national high-profile cases, a Leicestershire rapid review, and a Leicester serious case review, it was agreed that an audit to consider visibility of children in this cohort would be valuable. Data made available suggested that there were the following numbers of children in each of the Local Authorities who were EHE:

- Leicester: 640
- Leicestershire: 882
- Rutland: 30

The audit considered how well information is being shared across agencies and whether there are missed opportunities to support children in this cohort was conducted. 20 cases each were considered for Leicestershire and Leicester and 10 cases for Rutland. The scope of the audit was one calendar year from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021. Findings suggested a number of areas of development including:

- Gaining an understanding of current information sharing practice within and across agencies across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland linked to Education, Health and Care (EHC).
- Developing improved and systematic information sharing to notify key agencies that a child has become Electively home Educated, taking account of any information governance issues and current practice, including use of the Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) appropriately.
- Review of how information is captured in the process of EHE starting, to include potential risk factors increasing a child's future vulnerability when children are referred to Inclusion teams.
- Consider any awareness raising work that is required including training to support professional understanding of the impact on children of their EHE status.
- Engagement work with parents to understand barriers to engagement with Education services including any method to establish links to Early Help offer or improve cooperation.
- Consider how EHE children are offered the opportunity of seeing the school Nurse/11+ Teen Health Service routinely as part of a targeted support offer.

A task and finish group will be set up to complete the required work.

In addition to in-depth audits, a programme of bi-monthly dip-samples were set up by the Safeguarding Children Partnership in January 2023 to enable them to frequently provide assurance and evidence current multi-agency working. The first dip-sample focused on repeat referrals, and the second is due to consider contacts with children experiencing mental ill health.

Other Assurance Work

Information Sharing Agreement

The local information sharing agreement, shared between Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards was updated throughout 2022/23 and [re-published](#) in April 2023.

Internal Quality Assurance Processes

The Assurance and Audit Group (AAG) sought assurance from partner agencies around their internal quality assurance processes. The aim was to provide a picture of activity that agencies have completed over the previous twelve months, giving an overview of what the key successes have been, what are the areas for development and any key actions for the forthcoming year linked to the business plan priorities.

It was positive to note that agencies reported the dissemination of learning from reviews and audits internally through a number of different briefing methods. Additionally, examples were shared of learning workshops to support front line practitioners to strengthen safeguarding practice.

The group recognised that given the key role schools play in safeguarding, a stronger connection between the AAG and education was required. Options are being explored to create links to quality assurance work focused on safeguarding taking place in local schools.

Paediatric Sexual Assault Referral Centre (PSARC)

We have improved engagement with the East Midlands Children and Young People's Sexual Assault Service (EMCYPAS) raised concerns with LLR Safeguarding Children Partnerships to ensure that EMCYPAS is included in strategy discussions for children and young people who have experienced sexual assault.

Between October 2022 - January 2023 EMCYPAS received **103** Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland invites to Strategy discussions which was a significant increase on previous engagement.

The impact of this work is enabling an increased number of children and young people who have experienced sexual assault to access the full range of sexual health screening, counselling and follow up including psychosocial therapy, and contact with a Child Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (CHISVA)

The requirement to refer children and young people who have experienced sexual assault to the EMCYPAS has been incorporated into LLR SCP procedures and together with briefings for staff, this will support maintaining this improved response.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

This report must ‘provide a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report’s period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvement’ (Working Together, 2018, p.83).

Rapid Reviews & Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs)

Safeguarding Children Partnerships have a statutory duty to ensure the following arrangements are in place in line with the Working Together 2018:

All serious child safeguarding incidents⁵ must be reported 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 requested to undertake a Rapid Review of partnership records to assemble the facts and identify any immediate learning.

If a Rapid Review identifies whole system learning partners notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and commence a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review. An independent author is commissioned to conduct the review and write an independent report.

If a Rapid Review identifies learning points that can be made locally without the requirement of a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel are notified and will advise the Safeguarding Children Partners if they agree with this decision.

During 2022/23 the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel supported Leicester’s SCP decision not to commission an LCSPR following three rapid reviews. For the purposes of transparency, a table of 2022/23 referrals, recommendations, and outcomes is provided:

CASE REVIEW GROUP (CRG) REFERRALS AND DECISIONS 2022/23			
Referral Date	Date Rapid Review Completed	Recommendation	Outcome
01.04.2022	25.04.2022 (14 working days)	A causal link between any abuse or neglect and the outcome was not identified. Learning from the rapid review enabled the safeguarding partnership to progress work on improving local policies and procedures. C-DOP (Child Death Overview Panel) will be undertaking a review. An LCSPR was not recommended.	No LCSPR
09.11.2022	02.12.2022 (17 working days)	The CRG were of the view that the criteria for a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) had been met, but there was consensus across agencies that information provided to the rapid review allowed a full evaluation of	No LCSPR

⁵ The criteria for a serious child safeguarding incident can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-child-safeguarding-incident>

		the circumstances and identification of learning. An LCSPR was not recommended.	
16.02.2023	13.03.2023 (17 working days)	Comprehensive systems learning was identified through the rapid review. A detailed multi-agency action plan was developed to address this learning and allow the focus of local agencies to be on making the required changes. An LCSPR was not recommended.	No LCSPR

During 2022/23 Leicester’s SCP concluded three Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and one remains in progress. Partnership action to implement the recommendations of one of the three concluded reviews has included:



- Updating our local practice guidance ‘LLR Practice Guidance: Supporting Children and Young People who Self-Harm and/or have Suicidal Thoughts’. This work is currently in progress.
- [Thresholds for Access to Services for children and families](#), and [Practice Guidance: Supporting Children and Young People who Self-Harm and/or have Suicidal Thoughts](#) have been shared with LSCPB members to continue to promote within their organisations.

These important documents – which outline how partners work together to safeguard local children – have also been promoted in the October 2022 print edition of our local newsletter, [Safeguarding Matters](#) (p. 3).

They have also been promoted via our Safeguarding Matters Live online session held on 7 December 2022, which is [available to rewatch](#) on our YouTube channel. This session was attended by over 500 delegates across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

- The SCP received assurance from the Child Death Overview Panel (C-DOP) that, with a view to prevent further deaths, integrated provision and enhanced joint working is available locally when a young person has died by suicide.

For two of the three reviews, action plans are in the process of being confirmed and these will be progressed throughout 2023/24 along with publication decisions.

National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

During the 2022/23 business year, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s ‘Child Protection in England National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo Hughes and Star

Hobson' was published, on 26 May 2022. It set out recommendations and findings for national government and local safeguarding partners to protect children at risk of serious harm.

At the end of September 2022, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel [published](#) their second national briefing, this time setting out findings from a thematic analysis of rapid reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) where domestic abuse featured.

In October 2022 the [Phase 1 report](#) of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's 'Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings' was published.

The Safeguarding Partners considered each of these publications in turn and took action and received assurance where required, including:

- The LSCPB received Leicester City Council's audit of children with complex health needs and disabilities placed in dual registered special schools and children's homes. The report provided assurance to the partnership that no safeguarding concerns had been identified in respect of the children from Leicester City placed in qualifying dual residential special schools and children's homes by the audit or by the Local Authorities hosting the establishments over the past three years.
- Assurance provided that rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews in Leicester do involve local specialist domestic abuse services in reviews where domestic abuse is present (either current or non-recent).
- Local templates for rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews have been updated to ensure that protected characteristics of each family member, along with details of the whole family are recorded, to ensure that families' diverse needs, experiences and wider family networks are identified and analysed appropriately.
- Revision and relaunch of the local [domestic abuse policy](#).
- Independent scrutiny of workforce capacity across the partnership took place.
- Following the reviews into Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo Hughes's deaths, one of the identified learnings was that the agencies involved should have been more robust in their response to contacts and concerns raised by family members or anonymous sources. LSCPB sought assurance from our Local Authority partners in response to a request issued by the National Panel

'All Safeguarding Partners should assure themselves that referrals are not deemed malicious without a full and thorough multi-agency assessment, including talking with the referrer, and agreement with the appropriate manager'.

Each Local Authority locally completed an internal audit to assure itself and LSCPB. Leicester city considered no less than 15 contacts received via the front door from source Anonymous/Family within the previous six months. The Local Authorities reported the following:

- Generally, the dip sample evidenced a positive picture with partner agency information considered and appropriate action taken resulting in the right services for children and young people.
- Information and discussions were held with parents to gain further information where required and appropriate and in the majority of these cases children were also spoken to, with information sought from them regarding their day-to-day experiences.
- The audit has highlighted that there is a need to focus on strengthening manager rationale for case closure.

Partnership Priorities

During 2022/23 business year, the priorities of the partnership were safeguarding babies, child mental health and emotional wellbeing, keeping adolescents safe / supporting safe adolescents, safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds, and effective safeguarding in independent and out of school settings.

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

What we did: Early in 2022/23 [ICON](#) was launched across the local Safeguarding Children Partnership. ICON is a programme that focuses on effective interventions and research into the prevention of Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) triggered by crying. I

It offers advice to parents/cares to enable a greater understanding of infant crying and consider that they plan how they will manage crying and get support. The ICON mnemonic stands for:

I infant crying is normal and will stop

C comfort methods can sooth a baby and the crying will stop

O it is OK to walk away

N never, ever shake a baby

National ICON Week took place from 26-30 September 2022 and was supported by the local Safeguarding Children Partnerships which included:

- Engaging male carers in ICON messages through promoting two [videos aimed at young fathers](#)
- Launching and publicising the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' [ICON web pages](#) which offer national and local resources to help parents cope with infant crying and reduce Abusive Head Trauma (AHT).
- A radio campaign delivered by EAVA community radio using ICON messages aimed at members of our diverse community voiced in Somalian, Gujarati, Hindi.
- Radio campaigns in English across Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland by GEM Radio and Greatest Hits Radio and an interview about ICON by BBC Radio Leicester.
- The touchpoint video films local parents and health staff discussing the six touchpoints for ICON delivered by midwives, health visitors and GPs across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. This is the video link ([Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICON Touch Point Video - ICON Cope](#)) and is now available on the national ICON website.
- [Social media communications](#) about ICON week sent out across our partnership organisations.

A request has been made for our [local ICON launch](#), led by the Integrated Care Board, to be promoted nationally.

Impact: Measuring impact of ICON is a key deliverable for our 2023-25 business plan.

We have received positive feedback from one of the families affected by AHT who have been pivotal in supporting the design and roll out of ICON nationally.

Feedback has also been received from the ICON Founder and Chief Programme Advisor Dr Suzanne Smith highly praising Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland's approach:

“I AM ABSOLUTELY BLOWN AWAY BY THIS! YOU HAVE ALL DONE SUCH AN AMAZING JOB... THERE IS SO MUCH TO APPLAUD HERE... THE EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE ARE SO INNOVATIVE AND ALREADY EMBEDDED.”

ICON Founder and Chief Programme Advisor

Child Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing:

What we did: Assurance was sought by the SCPs and at the August 2022 meeting of the Planning and Delivery Group (PDG) a presentation was received regarding Children and Young People (CYP) Mental Health and Neuro Diverse (ND) Transformation from Leicestershire NHS Partnership Trust (LPT). It was agreed that a forum for discussions to take place about child mental health, emotional wellbeing, and safeguarding, in more in-depth manner would be useful.

Impact: Meetings have since taken place between the PDG Chair and the Chairs of the new Children and Young People (CYP) Mental Health Integrated Collaborative Delivery Group to build links between the collaborative and the Safeguarding Children Partnerships. The collaborative has been established to empower local partners to work collectively towards the betterment of Children and Young People Mental Health pathways within the region.

Our 2023-25 business plan will continue to seek assurance that children subject to safeguarding arrangements and Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) services are effectively safeguarded through effective multi-agency working.

Keeping Adolescents Safe / Supporting Safe Adolescents:

What we did: The SCPs received an update from the LLR Child Criminal Exploitation Operations group. The group continues to oversee the development of a Contextual Framework to provide Adolescent Safeguarding and promote awareness raising to prevent future harm. The group provided assurance that:

- The group continues to oversee the development of a Contextual Framework to provide Adolescent Safeguarding & promote awareness raising to prevent future harm.
- This includes the development of a Community Safety Plan, that is overseen independently by our Safeguarding Units. The development of a statutory document holding as much weight as a Child Protection Plan that responds to worries and harm outside the home, within the context of where the harm occurs and transitions with the child after eighteen. This intensive targeted support will offer an alternative child protection plan for children at risk of extra familial harm.
- Engagement with the DfE funded Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme
- Children's Social Care have worked in collaboration with Leicestershire police to develop a Protocol for Children in Custody. This will support a child's wellbeing, identify underlying vulnerabilities by information exchange and improve children's lived experience in being received into police custody. If a trusted adult is featured in the child's world, they may attend to support the interview process. NHS Liaison and Diversion workers aim to see as many children as possible in custody.
- Representation within the Contextual Safeguarding Network for strategic leads.

- Use of DfE Practice Principles to tackle exploitation and extra familial harm to support a collaborative partnership response to safeguard adolescents.
- The CCE Ops group has oversight of the progression of our partnership data set. This is supported by the Daily Risk Management Meeting (DRMM) and the Fortnightly Operational Review Meeting (FORM) The partnership is represented at these risk management meetings; and need to be satisfied that all resources and opportunities have been utilised to improve safety and a reduction in risk.
- Progression tracking of high-risk cases is debated by the partnership and professional challenge is welcomed.
- There is a planned scoping exercise to map the existing safeguarding response to Extra Familial Harm provided by the local hub. This will also consider the interlinked agency pathways across the partnership to services that protect and support Adolescent Safeguarding. This will offer a coordinated approach across statutory and support services to implement early intervention and prevention programmes.
- A new quality assurance framework has been developed to not only analyse the data sets and indicators to understand trends and themes, but to also monitor the quality of partnership risk management meetings. This will provide both reassurance and quality assurance, that best practice is demonstrated in both supporting victims and utilising harm reduction approaches to challenge harmful behaviours.
- In response to our Missing children, we continue to offer independent return interviews. This work is quality assured through dip sampling Return Interview documentation. Diagnostic work is being undertaken in relation to the analysis of nil returns and how we respond to the unmet need of those children that for whatever reason do not engage with interviews. We continue to capture their voice and circumstances of the missing episodes, by trusted adults advocating for them.
- Becoming a trauma informed partnership will assist in early identification of our vulnerable children, improve response time and overall outcomes for children.
- A legacy from the Harm outside the Home DfE Project is the <https://www.childexploitationeastmidlands.org.uk> website. The site aims to provide schools a one stop access point to raise awareness and encourage working together to prevent child exploitation and abuse. A trauma informed tool kit is available to education to assist in recognising the signs associated with childhood trauma and adverse childhood experience. The site also signposts to local services and multi-agency training.

Impact: Whilst work has been undertaken locally, there is ongoing work to be done, particularly around putting in place a strategic plan for the local approach to safeguarding children from extra-familial threat. The Safeguarding Children Partnerships will, throughout 2023-25 continue to seek assurance that local safeguarding partners are working together to effectively safeguard children from extra-familial threat. This will include supporting a new regime of multi-agency audit work.

Safeguarding Children from Diverse backgrounds:

What we did: A task and finish group was set up to take this work forward, chaired by an independent expert. The group focused on:

- Confirming a local agreement of the definition of “cultural competence”
- Leicester’s young people’s views were collated with the support of city rights and participation officers
- A survey of practitioners took place, including voluntary and community sectors
- Practitioner focus groups were held
- Learning from reviews and local data was collated
- An overview of workstreams, strategies, initiatives, and resources across the partnerships that relate to safeguarding children from black and minoritised communities was identified
- Quantitative data was provided by all three Local Authorities, Police, Integrated Care Board (ICB), and Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse (DSVA) services.

Impact: Consideration of race and cultural competence is now embedded in all audits and reviews across the Safeguarding Children Partnerships. Training that considers safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds was delivered to 520 delegates across the partnerships through 25 different training sessions, whilst a further 432 people watched relevant training videos. The partnerships recognise that Safeguarding Children from Diverse backgrounds needs to be an ongoing priority and that the task and finish group was just the start. The business plan priority for 2023-25 includes improved understanding of the role of immigration status, culture, faith, and parenting.

“PEOPLE SPEAK TO MY FATHER AND EXPECT HIM TO UNDERSTAND... HE CAN'T SPEAK ENGLISH VERY WELL... SOMETIMES HE'S ASKED FOR INTERPRETER BUT THERE HASN'T BEEN ONE”

Representative from Leicester’s Young Person’s Council

“I GOT UPSET BECAUSE I WANTED TO HAVE MY HERITAGE RECOGNISED... I SPOKE WITH MY SOCIAL WORKER AND SHE SORTED IT AND IT'S CARRIED ON SINCE THEN SO I'M HAPPIER.”

Representative from Leicester’s Young Person’s Council

Effective Safeguarding in independent and out of school settings: An independent schools forum was set up during 2022/23. The forum allows independent schools to consider topics specific to them such as safeguarding across borders, the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse on residential schools, and guardian arrangements.

A multi-agency task and finish group has been set up, chaired by Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs), to progress the other key deliverables in this objective focusing on out of school settings, small and community organisations. This work will continue into the 2023-25 business plan.

Impact: The independent schools forum is well attended with around 20 delegates per meeting. One outcome was a request that social care nationally allow more time for referrals to be completed before timing out. This request was raised at the National Safeguarding Children Partnership Manager Network and local areas agreed to consider making the required changes.

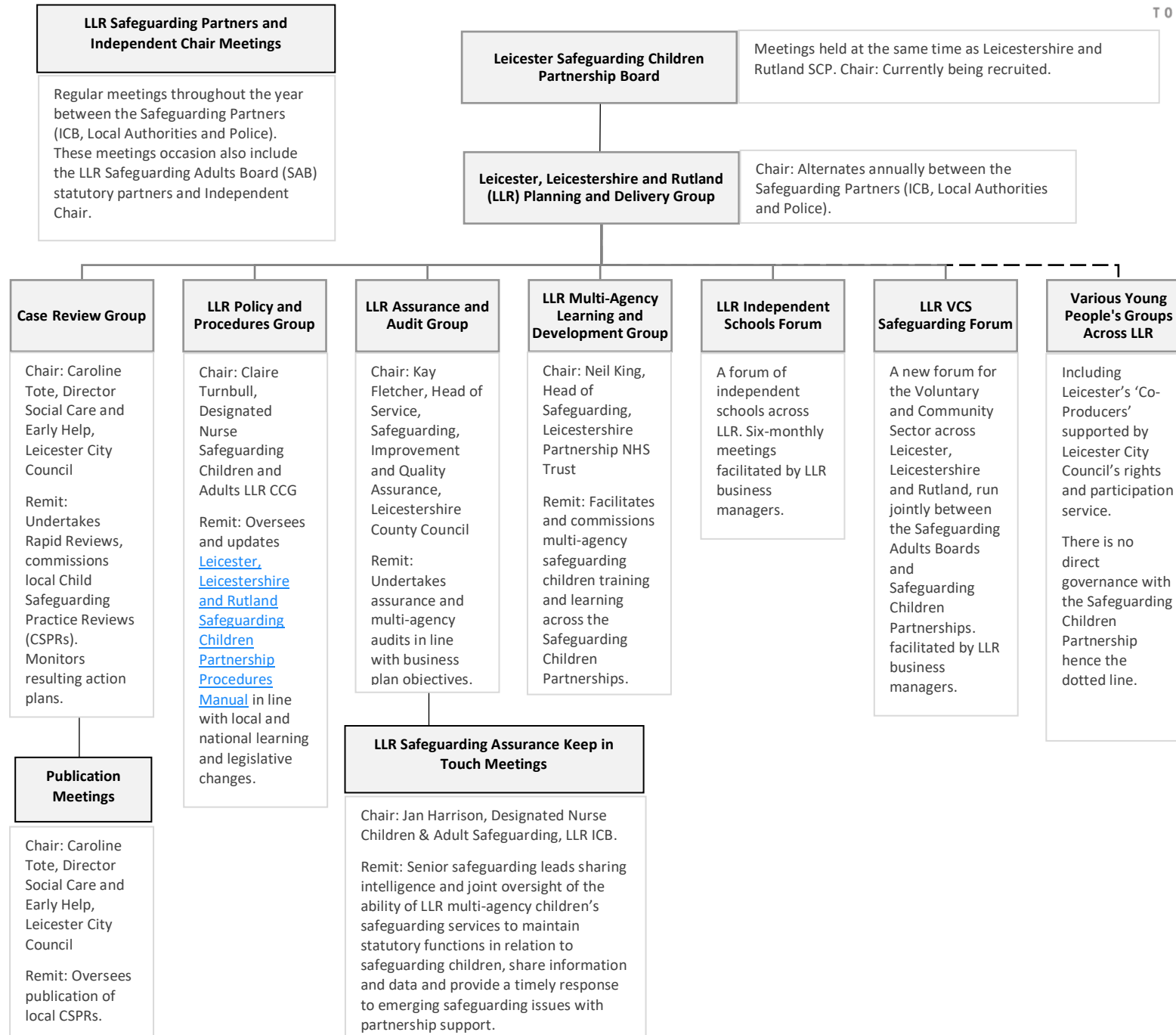
Priorities 2023-25

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](#).

Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPB) Structure Chart 2023/4



Appendix C

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission Report

Home to School Travel for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

Date: 19 December 2023

Lead Member: Cllr Vi Dempster

Lead Director: Sophie Maltby

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report authors: Tracie Rees
- Author contact details: 0116 454 0113
- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission with an update on the home to school and college travel provision, and costs for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

2. Summary

- 2.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to access education, including the provision of travel support if they meet the eligibility criteria.
- 2.2 The criteria are detailed in the City Councils Home to School & College Travel Policy (2022) (detailed at Appendix A). The key eligibility criteria includes:
- Home to school mileage. To be eligible for support the 'safe walking route' from home to the nearest suitable school must be:
 - Beyond 2 miles, if below the age of 8; or
 - Beyond 3 miles, if aged between 8 and 16.
 - For 'low-income families' there are broader eligibility criteria
 - For children aged between 8 and 11 the 'safe walking route' is reduced from 3 to 2 miles.
 - Secondary aged children (11 to 16) can receive free travel assistance to any of their three nearest suitable schools but only where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles but less than 6.
 - For secondary aged children, the Council will provide free travel assistance to the nearest suitable school preferred by reason of the parents religion or belief, if it is over 2 miles and under 15 miles from the home.
 - Only for school age children & young people between the ages of 4 to 16, unless exceptional circumstances

- 2.3 If a child or young person is eligible for transport support, the first consideration is for the parent / carer to take their child to and from school. If this is not possible, they will be offered of a Personal Transport Budget (as detailed at paragraph 4.5), if this is not acceptable, then a place on council operated school bus will be offered.
- 2.4 If a placement on a school bus is not available, then a taxi will be secured via the councils Dynamic Purchasing System (as detailed at paragraph 4.9). However, this would usually be agreed on the basis that the child moves to a school bus when and if a place becomes available.
- 2.5 In 2022 / 23 1443 children and young people, (projected to rise to 1502 in 2023 / 24) accessed transport funded by the council. The total cost was £13,675,000, which is funded from the councils General Fund.
- 2.6 Over the last 3 years costs have increased by 25% (from £9.2m in 2020/21 to £13.6m in 2022/23), due to a number of factors, such increasing number of children & young people with special educational needs and disabilities, increased taxi costs associated with fuel and operating costs. This is not unique to Leicester and the increasing costs for home to school transport is a national issue.
- 2.7 Work is currently in progress to look at options to reduce the reliance on the council buses and taxis, including the increased use of Personal Transport budgets and more opportunities for children & young people with special educational needs and disabilities, to be educated at their local mainstream school with support.

3. Recommendation

The Children, Young People & Education Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the report and to provide feedback / comment.

4. Background/Information

- 4.1 Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to have regard to the Education Act 1996 and Schedule 35B of the Act, which was inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to enable children and young people to access school. This includes those children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 4.2 To underpin the legal requirement, the City Council operates a Home to School & College Travel Policy (see Appendix A). This was last reviewed in 2022, which included a formal consultation exercise. The Policy is

available on the Council's website and parents / carers are directed to the policy as required.

- 4.3 The policy sets out the eligibility criteria and process parents / carers need to complete to access transport support for their child.
- 4.4 **Personal Transport Budget (PTB)** – If a parent / carer is in agreement with this option they will receive a fixed payment of £500 per annum, plus a mileage rate of 45p x 4 trips per day. The actual amount is determined by the number of days travelling per week and the distance from the child or young person's home address to their school. The PTB is paid, in advance, into a nominated bank account every calendar month.
- 4.5 Currently (2023 / 2024 Academic Year) there are 198 parents / carers in receipt of a PTB, at an average cost of £2,100 per pupil, per annum. This is a significant reduction, when compared to the average cost of a school bus or taxi per annum. However, it is not possible to insist that parents / carers agree to this option, as there are concerns that it would be unlawful (Leicestershire County Council were taken to a Judicial Review on this point).
- 4.6 **In-house buses** – The Council currently operates an in-house school bus fleet, which provides 556 places (average per month) on 71 buses¹. The annual cost is £3,561,000 (in 2022/23), equating to an average cost of £6,405 per pupil, per annum.
- 4.7 **Taxis** - Are only used if a placement cannot be secured on the councils in house bus fleet, or if the individual child or young person cannot travel with other children because of their complex health needs or behavioural issues.
- 4.8 If a taxi is required, the annual journey requirements for the child or young person are issued on the councils Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). This is an electronic bidding system, that allows for the 36 taxi companies registered on the system to tender for the work.
- 4.9 The DPS has been in place since 2021 and was subject to a full procurement process with an open tender exercise.
- 4.10 There are currently around 770 children and young people using a taxi at a forecast annual cost of £10.7m, which equates to an average of £13.9k per pupil, per annum. In 2022/23 719 children and young people used a taxi at an annual cost of £9,585,000 per annum, which equates to an average of £13,300 per pupil, per annum.
- 4.11 The cost of providing travel support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is funded from the council's

¹ There are 77 vehicles within Passenger Transport. One bus is used for the dial a ride service and four are for the community transport service. The remaining 72 buses and one car are for transporting children with SEND needs.

General budget, which is under severe pressures due to increasing needs and central government budget reductions.

4.12 Therefore, work is in progress to look at alternative ways to reduce the costs whilst ensuring that children and young people are able to access education. This includes:

- Increasing the use of Personal Transport Budgets
- Increasing the opportunity for Independent Travel Training for young people as part of preparing for adulthood.
- Increasing the availability of Designated Specialist Provisions (DSP's) to enable SEND pupils to be educated in their local community, and therefore not having to travel to a special school.
- To increase the inhouse bus fleet to reduce the need for taxis.
- Creating local pickup points for children to reduce the time they spend sitting on the bus and making the routes more efficient.
- Working with the schools to provide transport. A number of schools have their own transport and are able to manage behavioural issues that would increase the number of pupils able to travel in one vehicle.

5. Financials

As outlined in the report, SEN transport costs continue to increase significantly with a forecast increase of 65% in the three years since 2020/21. Over the same period there has been increasing demand but this only accounts for 14% of this increase. The main reason for the increase in costs is the near doubling in unit costs charged by taxi firms following their refusal in 2020 to accept a fixed rate per mile contract. In 2023/24 average taxi costs per person per annum is forecast at £13.9k with buses £7.1k and personal budgets £2.3k.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance, Ext 37

6. Legal

Given the recommendation sought in the report I don't have any legal implications to add.

Julia Slipper, Principal Lawyer, Ext 37 6855

7. Equalities

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.

The report provides an update on the increasing cost of providing home to school and college travel provision, and costs for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Home to school travel is an integral part of the school system. It ensures no child of compulsory school age is prevented from accessing education by a lack of transport or the cost of transport. Local authorities must ensure that the travel arrangements they make take account of the needs of the child concerned.

It is important that equalities considerations are taken into account when looking at alternative ways to reduce these costs whilst ensuring that children and young people are able to access education. We need to be clear about any equalities implications of moving this work forward.

In order to demonstrate that the consideration of equalities impacts is taken into account, as an integral part of the process of reviewing or amending existing services, it is recommended that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) be undertaken. The EIA process can support the Council to predict possible issues and take appropriate action such as removing or mitigating any negative impacts, where possible, and maximising any potential for positive impact. The EIA is an iterative process and should be revisited as part of the decision-making process.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148



Leicester
City Council

Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Home to School and College Travel Policy

April 2022

Contents page

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Travel principles and policy	4
3. Eligibility Criteria.....	5
4. Type of travel assistance available.....	10
5. How to apply.....	14
6. How Decisions are Made.....	14
7. How to appeal if you are unhappy with a decision.....	15
8. The Legal Framework.....	16

1. Introduction

It is parents and carers responsibility to ensure their child or young person attends the education provision identified for them. Within this policy we aim to promote and support parental duties further through offering different travel options (where eligible).

Local authorities have a responsibility to encourage, enable, support and assist young people with learning difficulties/ disabilities to participate in education and training. This policy looks to promote and encourage the independence and social inclusion for children and young people. It also promotes the council's commitment to support children and young people to develop their independence, enabling them to prepare for adulthood.

This policy sets out how Leicester City Council will meet its obligations to provide home to school and college travel to children and young people with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities, living in Leicester who are eligible to receive it. The policy also gives advice on the support available and the commitment to encourage independent travel to and from school or college.

When considering whether to provide home to school travel assistance, Local Authorities (LA's) are under a statutory duty to have regard to the Education Act 1996 and Schedule 35B of the Act which was inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Sections 508B and 508C of the Act makes provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. Leicester City Council has developed its travel policy in accordance with this legislation and equalities legislation to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duty.

It is important that families understand the eligibility criteria and whether their child is likely to meet this before taking the time to make an application. In most instances, children will not meet the statutory conditions for travel assistance.

It is strongly recommended that all parents read this guidance carefully along with the information on our website at [Travel to school and college \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://leicester.gov.uk/travel-to-school-and-college)

2. Travel principles and policy

Leicester City Council is committed to working together with young people, families, schools and colleges to ensure that:

- Children and young people are safe and supported to access education.
- Young people and families have confidence in the travel offer.

Parents and carers have a duty to:

- Ensure their child(ren) receive an education via ensuring they attend school or college.
- Make the necessary travel arrangements for their child(ren) to attend regularly.
- Ensure their child attends the educational establishment identified for them.

The council recognises that:

- The travel offer should respond to and be based on the needs of children and young people as they develop and progress and should promote and encourage their independence and social inclusion.
- Any travel assistance provided by the council is based on the needs of the child or young person and is provided to support young people and children to follow an appropriate educational course. The needs of the child and the travel provision will be periodically reviewed to ensure the child or young person is still accessing the most appropriate travel method.
- The council has a duty to support and enable young people to develop and achieve independence to enable them to prepare for adulthood.
- Encouraging young people's independence will develop their skills for better experience in adult life, their confidence and social skills, and increase their opportunities for continuing education, training and social inclusion.

The council also has a duty to:

- Manage public money responsibly.
- Provide value for money services.
- Promote the use of sustainable transport and travel.

If eligible for travel assistance, this will only be provided from the child's home to the school or college at which they are on roll at the beginning and end of the normal school day.

If the child attends another school or establishment that is arranged through their school as off-site provision, it will be the school/parent's responsibility to arrange travel to and from that school or establishment, for their off-site learning.

The child's address will normally be the one that they spend the most school nights at, and any travel arrangements to or from an alternative address will be the responsibility of the parent to arrange.

Parents regular work commitments or domestic arrangements will not normally be taken into account when deciding the eligibility of a child or young person or the type of assistance offered.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child is prepared and ready to travel, at their pickup points at the right time, and that any behavioural concerns whilst travelling are

positively managed. In very rare instances where there are serious safeguarding concerns travel will be denied.

Travel assistance will not be provided for any medical appointments or domestic arrangements, or for the child to go to or from a different address other than their main residence. Travel assistance is not provided for breakfast or after school clubs or activities.

3. Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Pre-school children with SEND

Travel assistance for children under the age of five is **discretionary** as council's have no legal duty to provide or arrange travel for children who have not yet reached the statutory school age. However, travel applications will be considered for children below statutory school age in exceptional circumstances.

In considering these circumstances, the council will need to be satisfied that, without such assistance, the child would be prevented from attending an appropriate nursery or early years' education setting.

In considering assistance for pre-school children, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The age of the child.
- The distance between home and nursery.
- The SEN and disabilities of the child.
- The reasons for the pre-school placement.

The parent/carers will be required to complete an online application form to demonstrate that the child has a special educational need, disability or mobility need. They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional (external to the school and parents/carers) to support the application.

Further information and application forms are published on Leicester Local Offer webpages.

3.2 Compulsory school-aged children aged 5-16 with SEND

Compulsory school age begins at the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday and ends on the last Friday in June of the school year in which a child or young person turns 16.

There are four factors which may determine if children and young people aged 5-16 are eligible for travel assistance:

- Statutory walking distance eligibility.
- SEND or significant mobility problems eligibility.
- Unsafe route eligibility.
- Extended rights eligibility.

Eligibility Review

Eligibility will be reviewed each academic year and the type of travel will be reviewed annually. This review will determine whether a child or young person continues to be eligible for travel assistance, and where eligible, that the type and level of assistance is most appropriate to their needs as they develop independence and transition into adulthood.

Set out in law/legislation and with our Mainstream Travel Policy children are eligible for travel in the following circumstances.

Statutory Walking Distance

The council is required to provide free travel assistance options for all children and young people of compulsory school age (5-16). This will be assessed using the distance to the nearest qualifying school to their home when they are unable to walk the statutory distance to safely even when accompanied by an adult, if their nearest suitable school is:

- Beyond 2 miles, if below the age of 8; or
- Beyond 3 miles, if aged between 8 and 16.

The nearest suitable school is defined as the nearest school with places available and which the council deems to provide education appropriate to the age, aptitude and ability of the young person, and any special educational needs or disability they may have.

When establishing whether the nearest suitable school is within walking distance, the distance between home and school will be measured by the shortest available safe walking route, accompanied as necessary. The route may include footpaths and other pathways as long as it is safe to walk along them.

SEND or mobility difficulties

In circumstances where a child with a special educational need, disability or mobility need is able to use public travel, even when accompanied, they will be assessed using the same criteria as all other children.

The council is required to provide travel assistance for children and young people unable to walk to school by reason of their special educational needs, disability or significant mobility difficulty.

The parent/carers will be required to complete an online application form in order to demonstrate that the child has a special travel need. They will also be required to provide evidence from an appropriate professional (external to the school and parents/carers) to support the application.

Further information and application forms are published on Leicester Local Offer webpages.

Unsafe walking route

The council is required to make travel assistance arrangements for children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk even when accompanied by an adult.

Extended rights eligibility (for low-income families)

For low-income families i.e. for children entitled to free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, eligibility for free travel assistance is extended as follows:

- For children aged between 8 and 11, the walking distance is reduced from 3 to 2 miles.
- secondary age children (11 – 16) can receive free travel assistance to any of their three nearest suitable schools but only where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles but less than 6 (**Note:** schools below 2 miles are included when assessing which are the 3 nearest).
- for secondary age children (11 – 16), the council will provide free travel assistance to the nearest suitable school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief (including any single sex school in the city), if it is over 2 miles and under 15 miles from the home address. The council will normally seek documentary evidence of faith or belief e.g. a minister's letter.

The council will review travel assistance under the extended rights eligibility rules on an annual basis. Free travel may be withdrawn in subsequent years if a child ceases to qualify under low income extended rights.

Travel will not be provided where suitable arrangements have been made by the council to enable the child to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to the child's home.

In addition to the above, those children with Special Education Needs and/or disabilities

Annual Review

When a Personal Travel Budget or SEND travel is agreed for a child with a statement of special educational needs or an EHCP, travel arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis at the statement/plan review meeting. Parents / carers will be expected to sign a declaration agreeing to the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Preparing for Travel arrangements once your child reaches age 14

When your child reaches the age of 14, the council will write to parents and carers who have a child currently receiving a form of council travel assistance. We will reiterate the responsibility of the parent and carer to arrange travel from home to school, and provide the date that travel provided by the council will stop. The council **does not** have a statutory responsibility to provide travel assistance to young people aged 16-18.

This two-year transition period will give parents and carers the opportunity to make suitable arrangements for transporting their child to their chosen educational establishment once they reach age 16.

3.3 Post 16 (young people 16-19) with SEND

The council **does not** have a statutory responsibility to provide travel assistance to young people aged 16-18.

Schools with sixth form provision and colleges of further education have some funding known as bursary funding available to help students age 16-19 with expenses connected with their study, including travel costs.

As it is not a statutory requirement to provide Post 16-year-olds travel assistance, the council expect all eligible students to apply for a bursary fund.

Bursary funding is paid to schools and colleges who decide how they allocate their funds. Enquiries about support for school or college travel expenses should be made directly to the schools or colleges concerned.

Students who are in one or more of the groups below can apply for a vulnerable student bursary of up to £1,200 (if they are participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more - institutions should pay a pro-rata amount for students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks). This reflects that students in these groups may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- getting [Income Support \(IS\)](#), or [Universal Credit \(UC\)](#) in place of Income Support, in their own right
- getting [Employment and Support Allowance \(ESA\)](#) or Universal Credit (UC) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or [Personal Independence Payments](#) in their own right

Enquiries about applying for a vulnerable student bursary should be made directly to the schools or colleges concerned. For further details see: [Guidance: 16 to 19 education: financial support for students \(GOV.UK\)](#).

Many young people with SEND are able to travel independently using public travel, and the council encourages parents and carers to work with us to support young people to do so. As part of Preparing for Adulthood, as detailed on our [Local Offer Page](#), we also support Young People with Independent Travel Training.

However, The council may provide travel assistance for Post 16-year-old students who have complex SEND which affect their ability to travel or use public travel independently. To be considered for travel assistance, a young person needs to:

- be resident in Leicester City
- have started their current programme of education/training prior to their 19th birthday
- be attending the nearest appropriate education or training provider that is more than 3 miles walking distance from their home unless the young person's disability impacts on their ability to walk this distance or the walking route is deemed unsafe
- be attending a full-time, publicly funded course (a full-time course is a programme of at least 540 study hours per year)

Eligibility decisions will also take into account the following factors:

- Whether the student has additional needs or a disability that places them or others at a serious risk of danger during the journey to and from school;
- Whether the student has a mobility difficulty which requires specialised seating or a specialised vehicle, e.g. tail-lift access;
- Whether the student is likely to require medical intervention or personal care during the journey to and from school;
- The complexity of the journey.
- Travel must be an essential requirement to fulfil the learning outcomes identified in the EHCP.

3.4 Young people aged 19-25 with SEND

Travel arrangements made for a young person aged under 19 may continue to be provided up to the end of the academic year in which a young person turns 19 years of age. However, the council recognises that that a learner with significant special educational needs and disabilities may take longer to complete a programme of learning and training, therefore the council **may** extend the travel assistance arrangements until a learner has completed their programme, even if that is after they have reached the age of 19.

The council will consider providing travel assistance for young people aged 19 to 25 (who are subject to an EHC plan) in the following circumstances only:

- Where the council considers it necessary to facilitate the attendance of a learner receiving education at institutions which are maintained or assisted by a local authority and are providing further education, or other institutions within the further education sector.
- sector.

Or

- Where the council has secured the provision of education or training outside the further education sector **and** the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training, and the council considers that the provision of travel assistance is necessary to facilitate the learner's attendance.

Assessments

As part of the statutory assessment process, which may lead to an EHCP the council receives written reports from a range of professionals, such as a school, educational psychologist and medical or clinical professionals. When an application for travel support is received the local authority will consider the information contained in these reports to determine whether pupils meet the SEND Travel / Personal Travel Budget eligibility criteria.

4. Type of travel assistance available

Personal travel budget (PTB)

Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs) are designed to give families the freedom and to flexibility to make travel arrangements that best meet their family's needs. They enable parents to retain responsibility for ensuring their child attends school whilst providing the means to do so when the child is eligible.

For further information and to apply please see [Family Information | Personal Travel Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://leicester.gov.uk)

Independent travel training (ITT)

Independent travel training provides young people with tailored and practical assistance to travel safely by public travel, on foot or by bicycle to their school, college and placement. It also supports young people socially, to access other key services and connect with friends and family.

Independent travel is an essential life skill, and helps to better prepare young people for adulthood, and for accessing further education and employment by raising their confidence in their abilities.

The council's Independent Travel Trainer's will work with schools and colleges to be able to deliver travel training to their students.

If a young person is identified as potentially suitable for travel training, their parent/carer will be contacted by the council or their school to arrange a consultation with the nominated travel trainer.

Following the consultation, the young person and family (where appropriate) will then be supported to undertake the training programme. If they are not ready or suitable for training, a future review date will be set, and they will continue to be provided with travel assistance.

Further information about [Independent Travel Training can be found on our Local Offer page](#).

Public transport bus pass

Some 5–16-year-olds will qualify for free home to school travel assistance to their primary or secondary school. [View details of eligibility and how to apply \(leicester.gov.uk website\)](#).

Contracted minibus, private hire vehicle or taxi, including:

- Pick up and drop off from/to a collection point or central location locally
- Shared or individual, private hire vehicle or minibus for groups of young people
- Individual taxi, private hire vehicle or minibus for solo travellers (exceptional circumstances only)

4.1 Travel service provision

Leicester City Council aims to make travel arrangements that allow eligible pupils to travel in safety and reasonable comfort, without the journey being unreasonably long or complicated, and arrive at school without such stress, strain, or difficulty that they are prevented from benefitting from the education provided.

It is the council's policy to review travel assistance arrangements annually or at times of transition, in consultation with service providers, to minimise surplus places on vehicles and the total number of vehicles used. The council will endeavour to coordinate dedicated school travel journeys and local public bus services to ensure that best value for money and efficiency of service is achieved.

The council will determine the overall level of service, the number and type of vehicles, and the seating capacity requirements to meet the travel needs of pupils and students, taking the following into account:

- the regulations relating to the provision of passenger travel services.
- that a single journey to or from school should ideally not exceed 75 minutes including the time taken for a change of bus – though this is not always possible where services operate to more than one school or site.
- that pupils should not be expected to change buses more than once within a single journey to or from school.
- that it is desirable in the interests of safety and comfort to provide a seat for each pupil/student – though this is not always possible when local public travel services are used.
- that services coordinate with school or college session times (provided that the appropriate notice and procedures required by education legislation have been followed). Head Teachers, Principals and Governing Bodies are requested to consult with the council as soon as possible on proposed changes to session times, so that the effect of any change can be assessed.
- that Head Teachers, parents and other interested parties must be consulted regarding proposed changes to the SEND Home to School Travel policy.
- that service delivery must be monitored, and complaints dealt with as soon as possible to ensure quality, efficiency and reliability.
- the promotion of the use of sustainable travel and travel modes.
- the promotion of equal opportunities.

Passenger Assistants

The council will determine whether it is necessary to provide a passenger assistant, supervisor or other facilities (e.g., on-bus communication facilities) on any of the vehicles used based on individual needs.

Some pupils with special travel needs may require a passenger assistant for the home to school journey. The SEN Officer will decide if a passenger assistant is necessary, taking individual circumstances into consideration:

Under these circumstances, the parent/carer may be required to act as the escort for their child. If the journey is beyond the maximum walking distance, the parent would be driven home from the morning school drop and picked up in the afternoon for the return journey. If the journey is less than the maximum walking distance, the parent would be expected to walk home after the morning drop and walk back to the school for the afternoon pick-up.

Travel to and from pick-up / drop-off points

In most cases parents/carers will be expected to accompany their child to a pick-up point identified by the Passenger Travel Team. Pick-up points will be safe and appropriate places for vehicles to pull up and wait. Every effort will be made to minimise the distance to and from pick-up and drop off points but the nearest pick-up point may be up to half a mile away from home for primary age pupils and up to 1 mile away from home for secondary age pupils and Post-16 students.

The pick-up points and times may change throughout the year, as routes will be regularly reviewed following changes to passenger lists. The council will endeavour to give reasonable notice (4 weeks) of any such changes.

Parents/carers must ensure that appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place for their child's walk between home and the pick-up point at the beginning and end of the school day.

Travel to and from home addresses

The duty placed on the council does not extend to the provision of a "door to door" service, however, for a very few applicants, exceptional circumstances may result in travel arrangements being made to and from the home address. If a pupil has more than one place that may be considered a home address, parents/carers must nominate a single address for travel purposes. Arrangements cannot be made for multiple addresses.

Review of Travel Arrangements

All travel arrangements will be reviewed annually or at times of transition to assess whether the basis for entitlement has changed or whether the mode of travel assistance provided remains appropriate. Travel assistance entitlement will be re-assessed if the home address, pupil needs, educational establishment or course details change.

Parents/carers and/or Post-16 students will be given reasonable notice (4 weeks) if it is decided to withdraw or significantly alter the means of travel assistance.

If parents/carers and/or Post-16 students request a variation to the current travel arrangements, the council will require reasonable notice (3 weeks) of the change and will apply the relevant assessment criteria. Parents/carers and/or Post-16 students may be required to make and pay for their own interim travel arrangements in the period between application and, if approved, the receipt of any travel assistance provided under this policy.

Post-16 students will be expected to maintain both satisfactory attendance and progress, and these factors will be taken into account when reviewing entitlement to travel assistance.

Any amendment to, or withdrawal of, travel assistance does not excuse a child of compulsory school age from attending school and it will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure their child's continued attendance at school.

Behaviour Whilst Travelling

The health and safety of drivers and passengers is dependent on good pupil behaviour, alongside positive management of behaviours from drivers and passenger assistants, in line with legislation and the council's safeguarding policies. The council takes a serious view of incidents of poor conduct.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 empowers head teachers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises. Persistent poor behaviour on the journey to and from school can be grounds for exclusion.

In some cases, if either the council or a travel operator refuses to allow a pupil to continue to access a particular vehicle due to the pupil's poor conduct, an alternative arrangement may be offered, but only after an assessment of the nature and seriousness of the case.

In the event of a serious incident of indiscipline, vandalism, or anti-social behaviour, or persistent offences of this nature, travel provision may be permanently withdrawn. In these cases the LA would not be implying that travel arrangements were not necessary and should not be provided, but rather that travel arrangements were necessary and had been made but the pupil's behaviour was such that they were unable to take advantage of them. If these circumstances arise, no alternative travel assistance arrangements will be made.

If travel is temporarily or permanently withdrawn parents would be responsible for getting their children to school and for any costs incurred.

Our commitment to promoting independence and choice

Alongside the existing schemes detailed in this policy, Leicester City Council will continue to explore and promote additional ways of promoting independence and choice for children in the City with home to school travel. We will work with families and schools to develop and promote new ideas and pilot schemes where appropriate.

5. How to apply

Applications for travel for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (excluding those attending a college of further education) should be made via the website:

[Family Information | Personal Travel Budget \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/family-information/personal-travel-budget)

Applications for travel assistance for students age 16 and above in colleges of further education to commence at the start of the Autumn Term should be made wherever possible by the last day of the summer term prior to the start of the new academic year. The LA cannot guarantee to provide travel assistance from the first day of the Autumn Term if applications are received after this date. Where late applications are submitted, parents/carers and/or sixth form students may have to make their own interim travel arrangements, the cost of which cannot normally be reimbursed.

Young people attending Further Education establishments will need to re-apply annually, providing evidence of both satisfactory attendance and progress.

6. How Decisions are Made

For all children and young people with SEN and disabilities, a travel eligibility assessment will be undertaken by the Special Educational Needs Service at the point of application, and reviewed yearly or when circumstances change, e.g. a change of educational establishment, change of home address.

The information used for the assessment is gathered from various sources including:

- School reports
- Parents
- The young person
- Medical reports (including CAMHs)
- Social care
- Education, health and care plans

The travel assistance eligibility assessment or review will consider the individual needs of the child or young person in 6 key areas:

- Mobility
- Medical needs
- Behavioural issues
- Vulnerability
- Practicality
- Independence and Independent Travel Training suitability

When the assessment is completed, the SEN Service will decide whether or not a child or young person is eligible as a result of their SEN and disability to travel assistance, the type of travel assistance to be offered, and whether or not it is appropriate to offer Independent Travel Training.

7. How to appeal if you are unhappy with a decision

Appeals Process for pupils with a special educational need or disability

Should parents/carers wish to appeal against the council's decision not to provide travel or against the mode of travel provided they should write to

Transport Appeals
Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service
Pindar Road
Leicester
LE3 9RN

The council has a 2-stage review and appeals process as recommended by the Department for Education. The timings for responses may be extended if additional time is required to gather supporting information or delayed by school/college holidays.

Please note that whilst the review and appeal process takes place the parent/carer will remain responsible for arranging and funding for any travel arrangements that a parent/carer may feel is necessary. Throughout the appeals process parents make wish to seek independent advocacy support and advice.

The appeals procedure is in two stages:

Stage 1: Review by a Senior Officer of the council.

- A parent/carer has 20 working days from the date of the travel decision letter, to make a formal written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parent/carer or young person believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances, including medical evidence, they believe should be considered when making the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of a written request, a Senior Officer will review the original decision and send a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, including information about how the parent/carer can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate)

Stage 2: Review by an Independent Appeal Panel:

- If a parent/carer are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their case, they have 20 working days from the receipt of their decision letter to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carer's written request an Independent Appeal Panel will be arranged to consider both written and (if the parent /carer wishes to attend the panel hearing) verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in their case.

The Independent Appeal Panel members will be independent of the original decision-making process (but not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced, to ensure a balance between meeting the needs of the parent/carers and the local authority.

If a parent/carer or student is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, there is no further right of appeal to the council. However, there is still the right to appeal to the Secretary of State or to take independent legal action.

If a parent/carer or young person feels that their appeal has not been treated fairly or in accordance with the LA's policy, the Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted for help and advice on 0300 061 0614 or via their website: lgo.org.uk.

8. The Legal Framework

S508B and 508C of the Education Act (the "Act") make provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. The provisions apply to home to school travel arrangements and vice versa.

Under s444 of the same Act, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

S508B of the Act deals with the duty on local authority to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children. Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligible children – those categories of children of compulsory school age (5 – 16) in an authority's area for whom free travel arrangements will be required.

The categories of eligible children include those who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special education needs or disability. Eligibility, for such children, should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular travel arrangements.

In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk the local authority will need to consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied, and if so, whether the child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child.

The council has a statutory duty under Section 10 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to exercise its functions so as to promote the effective participation in education or training of persons belonging to its area with a view to ensuring that those persons participate in appropriate full-time education or training, an apprenticeship, or are in full time occupation and participate in sufficient relevant training, all pursuant to section 2 of the 2008 Act.

The council also has a statutory duty to publish a Post 16 Travel Policy Statement every year. This statement should set out the arrangements for the provision of travel or otherwise that the authority considers it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age at:

- schools,
- institutions maintained or assisted by the authority which provides further education or higher education or both
- institutions within the further education sector, any 16-19 academy or any other establishment at which the authority secures the provision of education or training.

Post 16 travel to education and training statutory guidance dated February 2014 requires the council, in planning travel provision to take into account its duty to promote effective participation under the 2008 act and the duty under section 2 of that act on young people to participate in education or training up to age 18.

SEND Code of Practice 2015.

The Code of Practice (Special Educational Needs and Disability 2015) indicates that transport should be recorded in an Education, Health Care Plan only in exceptional cases where the child has very specific travel needs.

Equality Act 2010

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: Equality Act 2010 section 149(1).

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: section 149(7)

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low
- The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.
- Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

Executive Report

Children in Education Numbers on roll, attendance, and those missing education

Date of meeting: September 2023

Lead director/officer: Sophie Maltby

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Ellen Collier
- Author contacts details: ellen.collier@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- This report summarises a presentation of data on the known education provision for children in Leicester up to the end of 2022/23 academic year. It examines the trends of this data over time.
- It provides information about the number on roll of children in schools and the numbers of schools.
- Attendance and non-attendance and the issuing of penalty notices for persistent absence.
- Data is included about the number of children in independent schools and those who are electively home educated.
- An overview of exclusions and suspensions is also included.

2. Recommended actions/decision.

- To note the content of the report

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

- 4.1 The data presented shows that the number of children on roll in Leicester schools has grown by 33% between 2005 and 2023 to 59903. There are a further 2200 pupils currently on roll in independent schools. The number in independent schools has not changed significantly since the pupil registration act 2012 which required such schools to inform the local authority about children on roll.

Comparator data is not available for the period between 2005 and 2015. Between 2015 to 2023 Leicester's school population increased by 15% compared to a of 8% nationally and 9% for the East Midlands. Amongst our statistical neighbours Wolverhampton, Peterborough and Slough increased by 20%, 16% and 19% respectively. However, these local authorities remain significantly smaller than Leicester. Leicester has the highest pupil population of all our statistical neighbours. (Listed at Appendix 1)

4.2 The number of state-maintained schools (not independent) in the city has also increased between 2010 and 2023 by 4 to 113. The significant change has been in the funding arrangements with 54 of the schools now being either academies or free schools and operating outside local authority control.

4.3 Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is in receipt of a suitable education. Some parents choose to Electively Home Educate (EHE). The number of children whose parents have chosen to do this has increased significantly since 2010 from 110 to 682 (snapshot figure). The pandemic added to this increase. The local authority has a responsibility to ensure that the education being provided by the parents is suitable however parents do not need to inform the local authority that they have chosen to Electively Home Educate.

During the year some parents will take their children off school roll with the view that they will home educate. However, some then choose to return their child to school and seek admission to either the same or a different school.

4.4 Children's attendance at school is closely monitored and the reasons for their absence are recorded. In Leicester the overall absence rate increased significantly in 2021/22 (the last available year with comparable data). However, the increase in Leicester was less than that for the East Midlands and nationally. Primary school overall absence was slightly less than these comparators for the first time in many years.

4.5 Persistent Absence is a measure of the proportion of children on roll who have been absent more than 10% of their possible sessions. This is the equivalent of having a morning or afternoon session off every week throughout the school year. There is significant national evidence that children who are persistently absent have poorer outcomes.

Primary school persistent absence rates in Leicester are higher than the rates for the East Midlands and nationally although the gap has narrowed in the last few years.

4.6 A significant proportion of absence is due to children having holidays or trips away during term time. This is at a higher rate than either the East Midlands or nationally.

The majority of schools do not authorise this type of absence as they should only authorise such time off in exceptional circumstances. Schools will ask the Local Authority to issue penalty notices for such absence. A penalty notice is a fine of £60 for each parent for each child. If this is not paid within 21 days, the fine doubles to £120. If this remains unpaid parents, then face prosecution in the Magistrates' Court; a fine of up to £2,500 or a community penalty could be imposed together with a Parenting Order.

4.7 Leicester ranks 17 highest out of the 150 local authorities with a rate 6.37 per 100 enrolments for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised holiday absence. The approach taken has improved the overall attendance because it focusses on the need for children to be in school. The rate of 6.37 per 100 is similar to both Blackburn with Darwen and Peterborough. However, it is significantly higher than the East Midlands and the national figure.

4.8 Whilst most schools are consistent in their approach and ask the local authority to issue penalty notices there are a small handful who do not. Attendance and the following up of holiday absence is considered during a school's Ofsted inspection.

4.9 There are children who are absent for more than 20% of their possible sessions. These children may have gone abroad with the intention that they will return but this

return is delayed, or the child never returns and can be removed from roll. The school remains responsible for safeguarding for all children on roll including those not attending. They will work with the Education Welfare Service to try to establish the whereabouts and timescale for the return of the child to school. It is important that parents are encouraged to return their child to school and not just to hold on to a school place. There are places that have been held by parents for a many weeks whilst they decide their intentions. A revised enforcement policy will be issued shortly to support this activity.

- 4.10 The local authority has a penalty notice code of conduct which explains that penalty notices may also be issued in relation to ongoing unauthorised absence. Ongoing unauthorised absence is more frequently addressed through court action.
- 4.11 The Education Welfare Service, with the Schools Data team, actively work to understand the number of children who are not in education and support their return to education. During the last year 226 children were known, at some point, to be in the city and were supported by the service to return to education. At any point during the year there are between 60 and 100 children being supported. 455 children have been investigated by EWS to determine their whereabouts. The DfE are now looking to collect this information, and the number of EHE, through a voluntary collection. This collection will become statutory alongside the new attendance responsibilities.
- 4.12 The permanent exclusion rate, suspension rate and the percentage of enrolments with 1 or more suspensions remain lower in the city than nationally or compared to the East Midlands.
- 4.13 Local data for 2022/23, which will be published next year, shows that there is a variation in the numbers of permanent exclusions and suspensions across different types of school.
- 4.14 This data also shows that there have been permanent exclusions for children with SEND including those with EHCP whilst there have been no permanent exclusions from city schools for children who are looked after.

There is a difference in the rate of incidents of either suspension or permanent exclusion across different ethnic groups. These rates continue to be higher for those children who are of Traveller or Gypsy Roma heritage and for those of Black Caribbean or Mixed White & Black Caribbean heritage and White British. This is one of the areas of focus of the Racial Literacy training currently being delivered to all secondary schools in Leicester by the Stephen Lawrence Research Centre.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.
Martin Judson, Head of Finance

5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.
Julia Slipper, Principal Lawyer

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are no climate emergency implications arising from this report.

Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249.

5.4 Equalities Implications

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a general duty that applies to schools, and other public bodies. It requires schools to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct, improve equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between different groups of people: those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for any education provider, including a private or independent provider, to discriminate between pupils on grounds of disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, or sex.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

It is important that home education doesn't result in children dropping off the radar and becoming vulnerable to poor standards of education or risks to their safety and wellbeing. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Collecting data helps local authorities understand the numbers of the known education provision for children in the city. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. The school's attendance policy should be easily accessible to leaders, staff, pupils, and parents, including being published on the school's website.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

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:

7. Summary of appendices:

Children in Schools PowerPoint presentation

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

Yes/No

9. Is this a “key decision”? No

10. If a key decision please explain reason

Appendix 1

List of Statistical Neighbours

Leicester
Blackburn with
Darwen
Coventry
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Peterborough
Sandwell
Slough
Southampton
Walsall
Wolverhampton

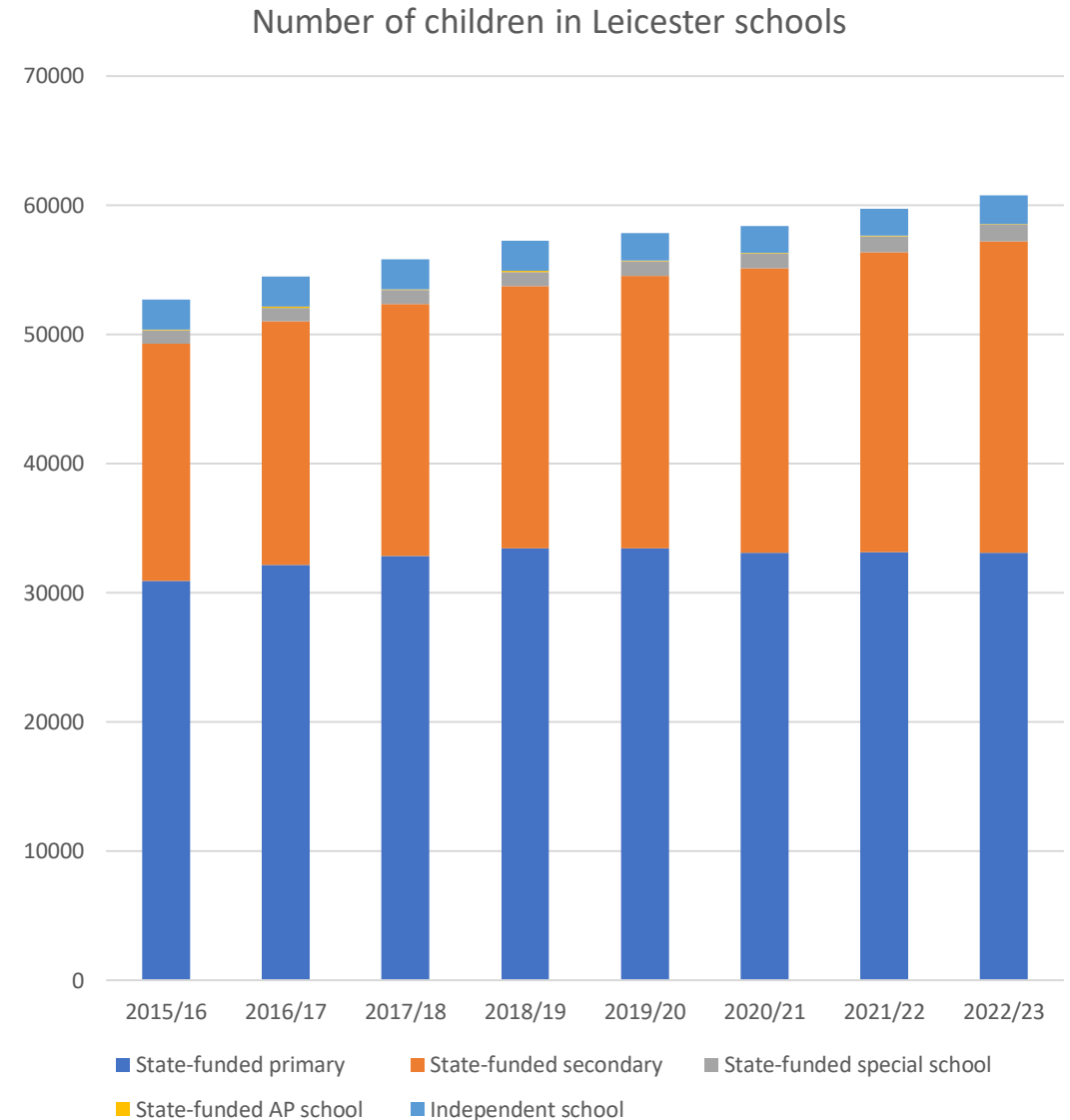
Children in Schools

Presentation providing an overview of the numbers of children, their attendance, penalty notices issued, children electively home educated and exclusions and suspensions

Numbers on roll

- In 2005 there were 44,809 children in Leicester City schools (no data for independent schools)
- In January 2023 there were 60,751 children of whom 2,202 are in independent schools. The number of children in primary schools has fallen slightly since 2018/19 but remains above 2017/18 figures
- The total number of pupils in state-maintained schools in Leicester at May 2023 census was 59,903
- The number of children in Leicester schools increases at each census point through the school year

74



Numbers of Schools

75

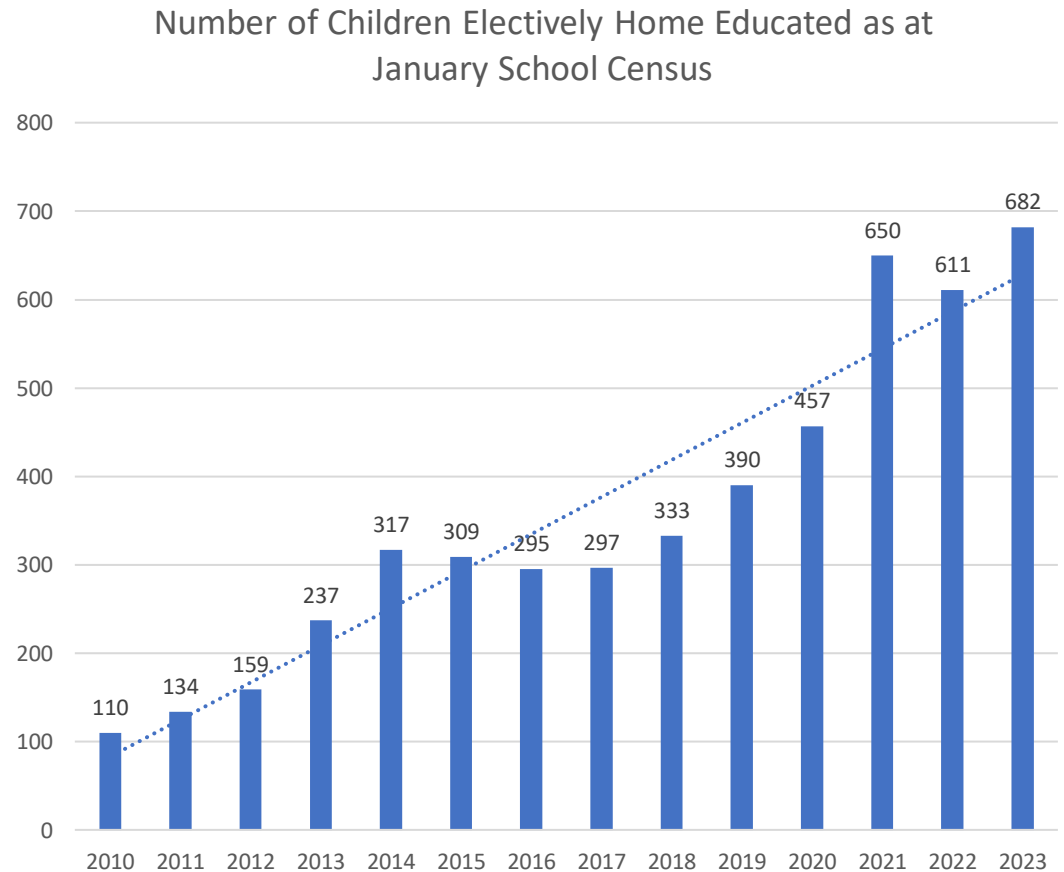
School type	Funding	2010	2015	2019	2023
Infant	LA Maintained	11	9	5	4
	Academy/ Free School			4	5
Junior	LA Maintained	10	8	5	5
	Academy/ Free School		1	4	4
Primary	LA maintained	60	57	42	36
	Academy/ Free School		7	22	28
Secondary	LA Maintained	17	17	9	7
	Academy/ Free School			8	12
All through	Academy/ Free School	1	1	1	2
Special inc CHS	LA Maintained	8	7	7	5
	Academy/ Free School		1	1	3
Alternative Provision(PRU)	LA Maintained	2	2	2	2
Total	LA Maintained	108	100	70	59
	Academy/Free school	1	10	40	54
Total number of schools	All State Maintained	109	110	110	113
	All Primary	81	82	82	82
	All Secondary	17	17	17	19
	All All-through	1	1	1	2
	All Special	8	8	8	8
Independent schools					13

- The number of schools has risen since 2010.
- There was a significant increase in the number of academies between 2015 and 2019. This increase slowed during the pandemic. There have been 3 academy conversions in the last year and 1 sponsored academy

Children electively home educated (EHE)

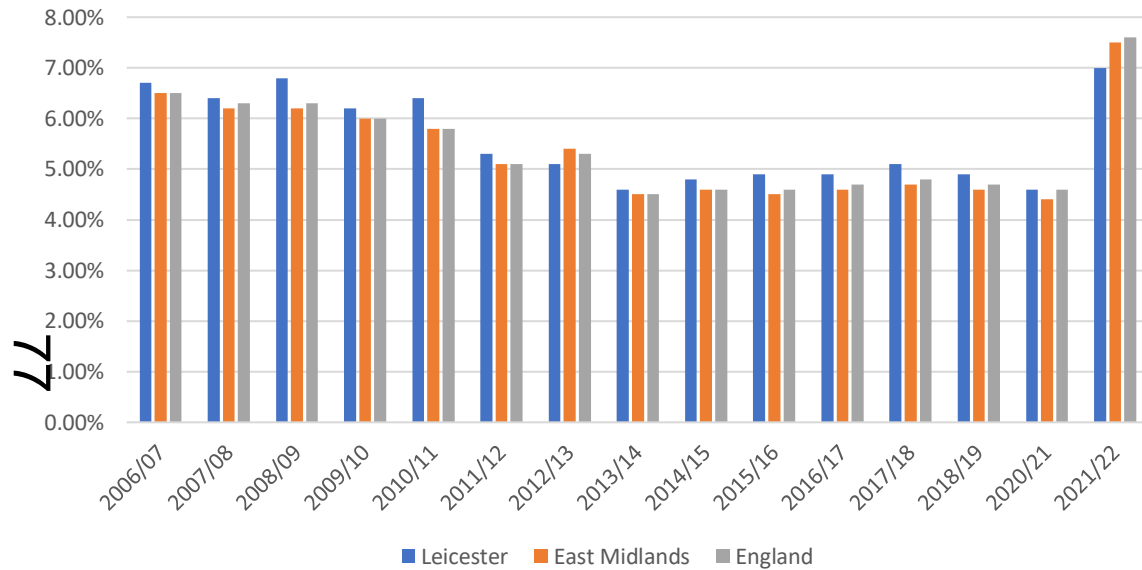
76

- Between 2010 and 2023 there has been a 520% increase in the number of children who are electively home educated.
- There is increased levels of awareness of EHE as an option and while the number of EHE children has increased, the level of turbulence has also increased. There are more children having periods of EHE and moving out of and/or into schools.
- 992 children were home educated at some point or other during the 2022/23 academic year,
 - 2021/22 = 917
 - 2020/21 = 949Each of these must be contacted by the Education Welfare Service
- The changing status of children who become Electively Home Educated and return to school has created significant additional demand on the Education Welfare Service.

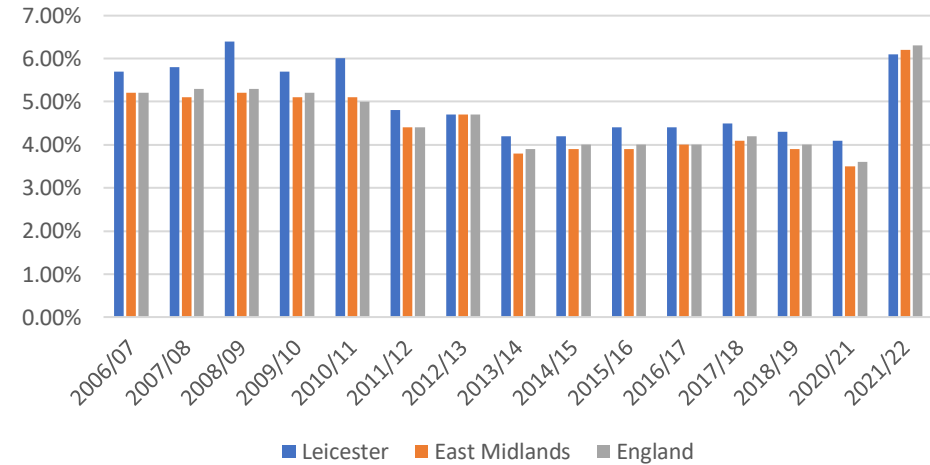


Absence rate – school sessions missed out of possible sessions

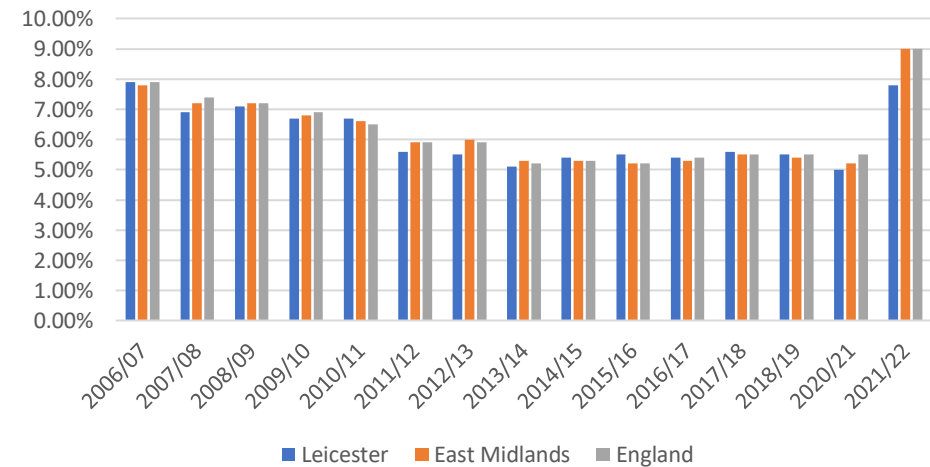
Overall Absence rate



Primary School overall absence rate



Secondary school overall absence rate



There was a significant increase in absence in 2021/22 following the pandemic

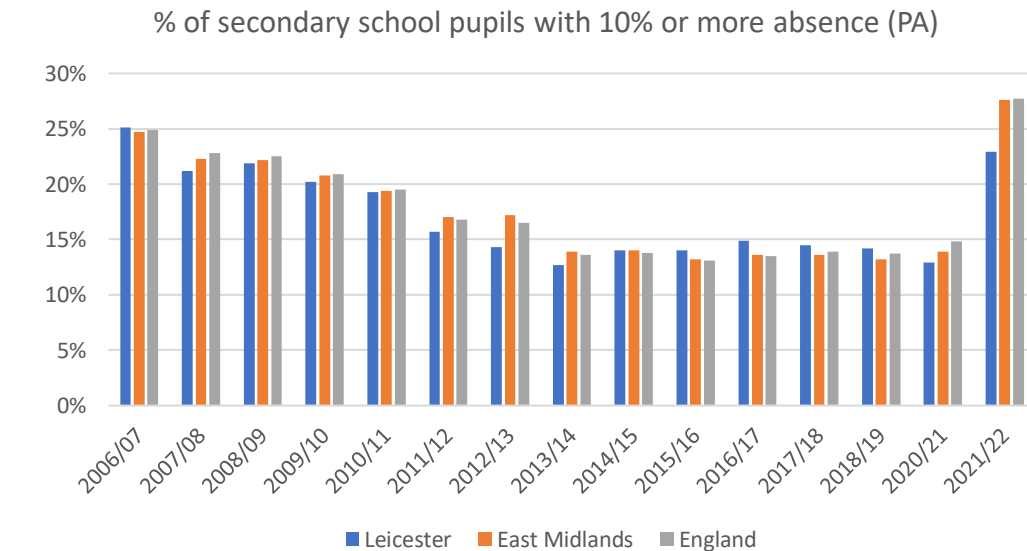
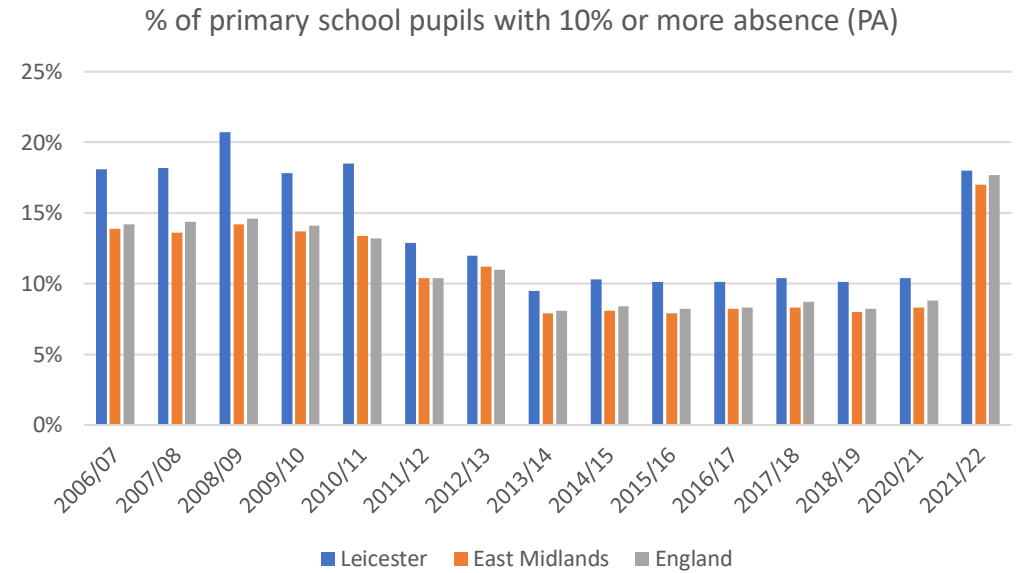
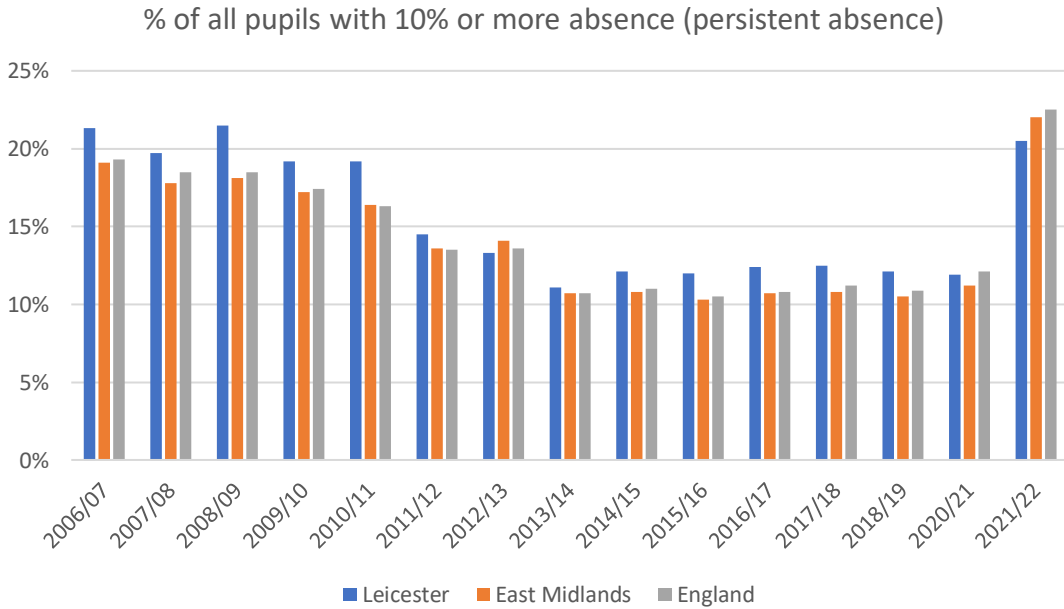
Overall absence in Leicester has, until 2021/22 been slightly higher than in the East Midlands and nationally. At 7% of all school sessions missed it is currently lower than national and East Midlands

In primary schools absence was higher than national and East Midlands in most years

Secondary school absence was in line or less than national and East Midlands

Persistent Absence – proportion of children who have missed at least 10% of their possible sessions

78

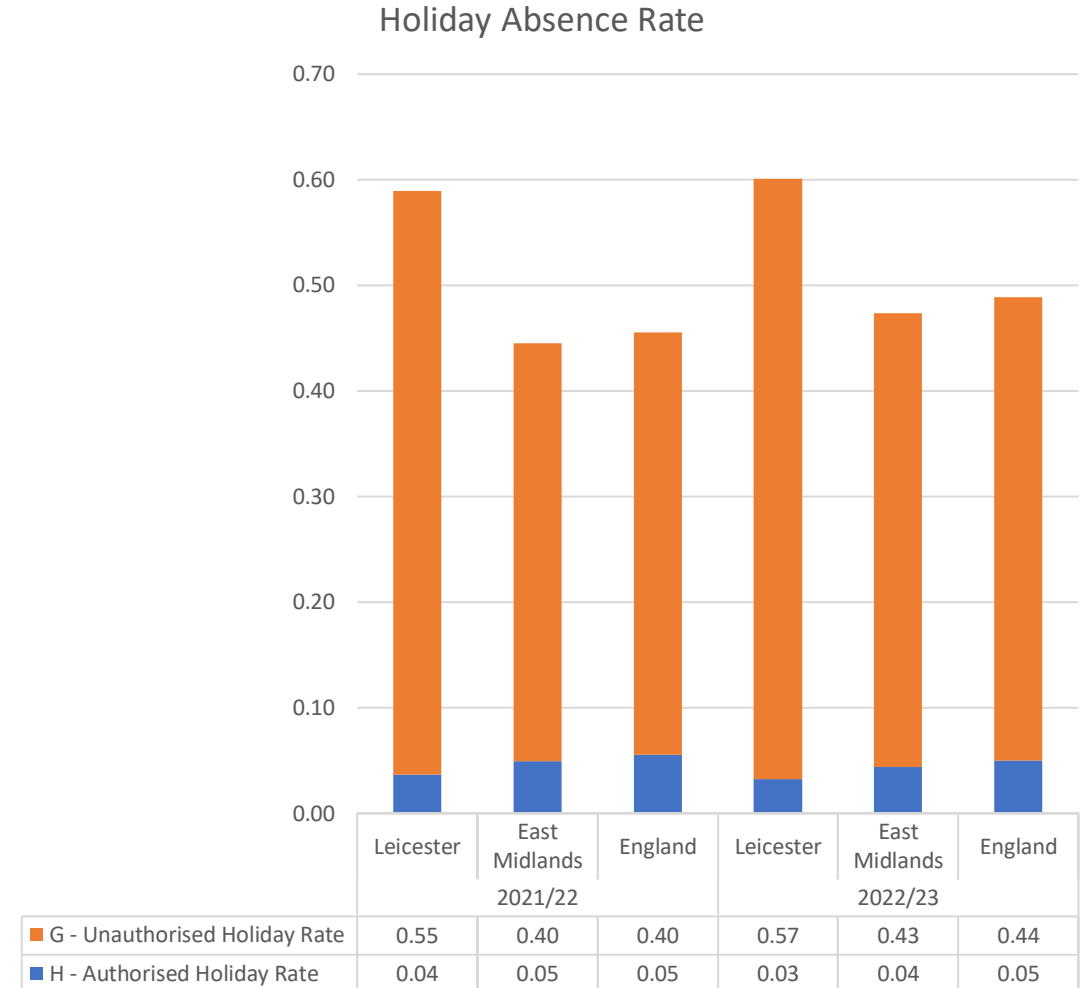


10% persistent absence is the equivalent of having a morning or afternoon off every week throughout the school year. In Leicester there were 10,974 children persistently absent in 2021/22. Of these just over 400 were in special schools, just over 5000 from both primary and secondary. Leicester’s persistent absence rate has been higher than East Midlands or national for all pupils and particularly for primary across the years. Secondary school persistent absence rate is higher than primary but lower than the secondary school rate for East Midlands and national.

Absence due to holidays

- Schools are open for 190 days (380 sessions) except if they need to close due to exceptional circumstances
- Children are expected to attend all sessions that the school is open when they are well enough to do so. This is the confirmed legal position.
- In exceptional circumstances the school may authorise holiday in term time. The school will code each session missed as H
- If a parent takes the child on holiday without permission the school will unauthorise the holiday absence. Each such session will be coded as G

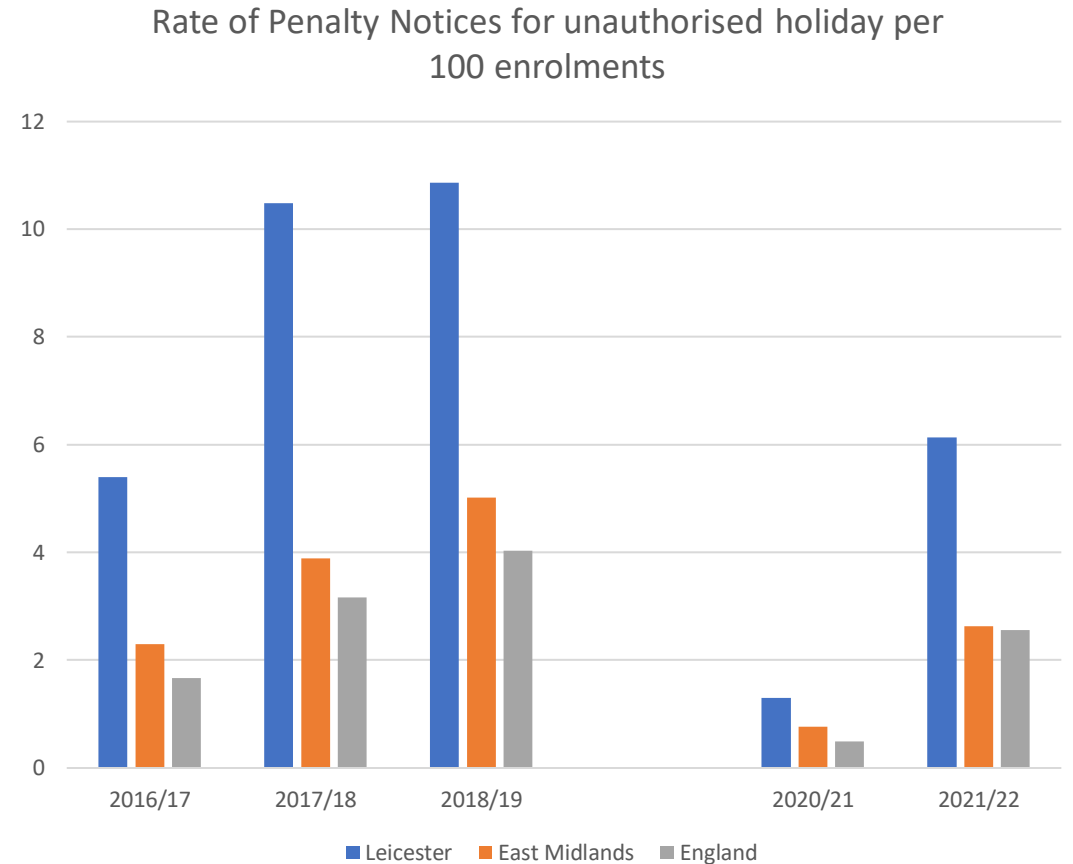
79



Holiday Penalty Notices

- The local authority issues these at the request of schools when the absence relates to an unauthorised holiday or trip away
- Penalty notices are issued to parents of children who have had 4 or more days of unauthorised absence or less than four where there is a concern or repeated pattern
- Leicester has a higher rate of penalty notices than other Local Authorities
- This has positively impacted on overall attendance

08



Unauthorised Absence and Holiday Penalty Notices

- Only 2 schools have not asked the LA to issue any holiday penalty notices in the last 2 years
- 11 schools did not request any holiday penalty notices during 2021/22
- In 2021/22 4,447 penalty notice requests were received and 2,842 penalty notices issued
- 31 schools did not authorise any holiday absence in either of the last 2 years
- Of the 10 schools that had the highest unauthorised holiday absence in 2021/22 only 1 did not request any penalty notices. The other 9 schools had an average penalty notice rate of over 10%
- In addition to unauthorised holiday children's unauthorised absence may be due to lateness, or other reasons

Unauthorised holiday absence – children affected

Detailed analysis of the last year's attendance information shows:

Primary

- There were 114 children who had more than 20% of their possible sessions coded as unauthorised holiday absence.
- 32 of these children missed more than 2 weeks of school due to holiday
- 48 of these remain on roll at the same school and a further 8 are on roll elsewhere in the city or the county.
- 11 of the children are missing education. The other 41 are no longer in the city and have been removed from roll

Secondary

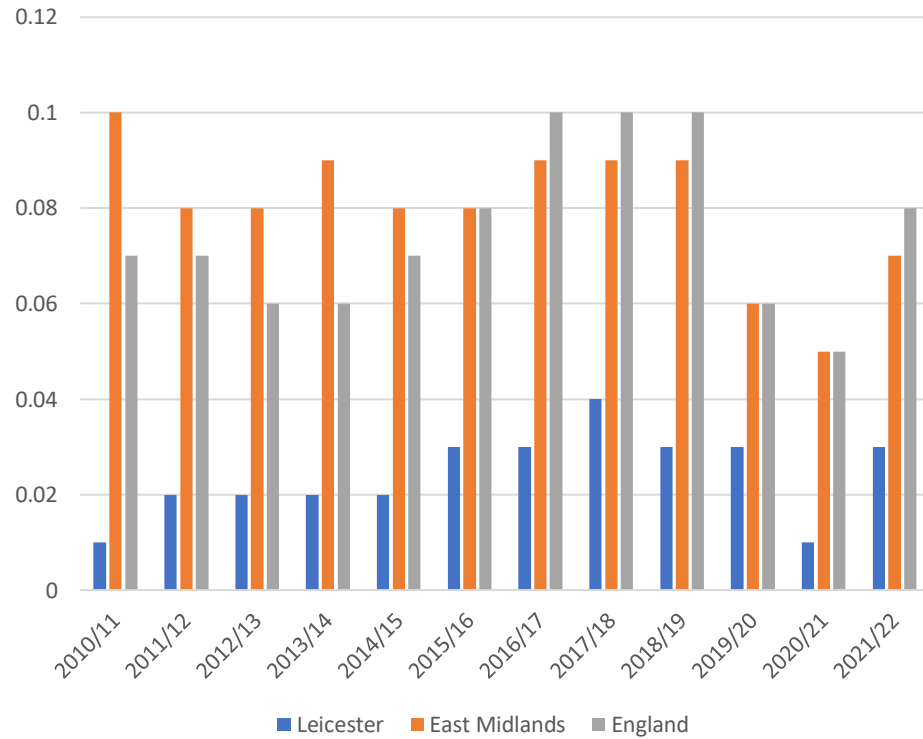
- There were 43 children who had more than 20% coded as unauthorised holiday
- 30 of these children missed more than 2 weeks of school due to holiday
- 24 remain on school rolls with 8 having been considered as Children Missing Education by the end of the school year. 11 are no longer in the city and have been removed from roll

The safeguarding responsibilities of schools for all children on roll become very challenging when these children remain away for a significant period of time.

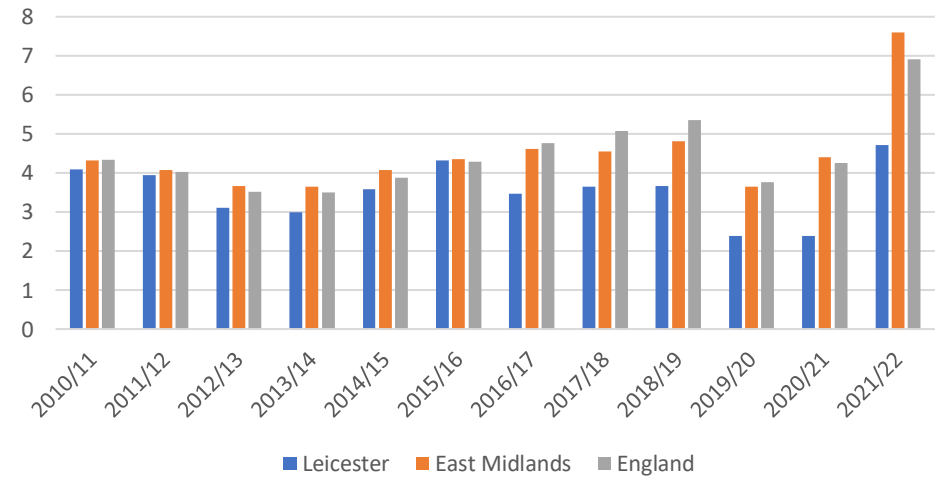
Exclusions and Suspensions

83

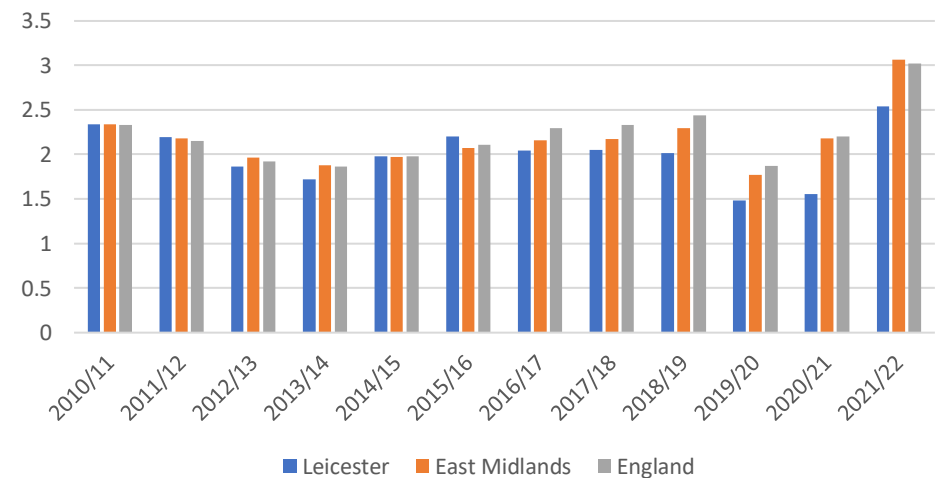
Permanent Exclusion Rate (all pupils)



Suspension rate (all pupils)



Percentage of enrolments with 1 or more suspensions



Exclusions and Suspensions in 2022/23

School type	Number on Roll ¹	Permanent	Permanent Pending	Suspension	All measures
Primary Academy inc Free	15024			149	149
Secondary Academy ²	13286	13	2	1332	1347
Special Academy	411	2		8	10
Secondary Free School	2245	1		291	292
Maintained Primary School	20736			147	147
Maintained Secondary School	7304	4	1	854	859
Maintained Special School	841			10	10
Pupil Referral Unit*	56		1	5	6
Grand Total	59903	20	4	2796	2820

Number of permanent exclusions and suspensions by school type during the last academic year

*where the PRU is the main or the sole base

¹ As at Summer 2023 census

² includes Soar Valley and City of Leicester

Exclusions and Suspensions 2022/23 - groups

- 1376 children had a total of 2820 suspensions and exclusions
- Some students had multiple suspensions and then a permanent exclusion
- 13 Children Looked After with 32 suspensions (no exclusions)
- 241 Suspensions and Exclusions for children with EHCP including 6 permanent exclusions
 - These were for 115 children
- 951 Suspensions and Exclusions for children with SEN Support at the time. 3 permanent and 2 permanent pending
 - These were for 413 children with SEN support

85

Ethnicity	Numbers on Roll	Permanent	Permanent Pending	Suspension	All Events	Number of students	% of enrolments
African Asian	303			7	7	1	0.3%
Bangladeshi	1579			23	23	20	1.3%
Indian	20187	1		168	169	135	0.7%
Pakistani	2591			75	75	49	1.9%
Other Asian	3423	2		67	69	47	1.4%
Black Caribbean	446	1		27	28	22	4.9%
Black Somali	1543		1	65	66	47	3.0%
Other Black African	3208		1	133	134	88	2.7%
Any Other Black Background	926			26	26	19	2.1%
White & Asian	1225	1		56	57	32	2.6%
White & Black African	817			48	48	32	3.9%
White & Black Caribbean	1233	3		173	176	69	5.6%
Any Other Mixed Background	1381			98	98	48	3.5%
Gypsy/Roma	248			40	40	19	7.7%
Irish	58			10	10	2	3.4%
Traveller of Irish Heritage	42			23	23	5	11.9%
White British	13253	8	1	1367	1376	564	4.3%
White European	2963	3		133	136	71	2.4%
White Other	1750	1		67	68	34	1.9%
Chinese	154			3	3	1	0.6%
Any Other Ethnic Group	1615			94	94	46	2.8%
Information Not Obtained	581		1	85	86	20	3.4%
Information Refused	304			8	8	5	1.6%
No information recorded	73				0		0.0%
Total	59903	20	4	2796	2820	1376	2.3%

Update on new children's residential homes

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny
Commission

Date of meeting: 19 December 2023

Lead director/officer: Damian Elcock

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Mike Evans
- Author contact details: mike.evans@leicester.gvo.uk
- Report version number: 0.1

1. Summary

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission will receive a presentation at the meeting on 19th December setting out an overview of progress in the development of two children's homes, Holly House and Hillview.

2. Recommended actions

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission are invited to note the progress made on the development of the two homes.

3. Detailed report

Consultations were carried out as part of our Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2020-23, which sets out how Leicester City Council will meet its duty to provide and secure sufficient accommodation for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. It considered a range of development activity, including the need to expand in-house residential and foster care provision.

In February 2022 approval was given to develop two new children's homes, Holly House and Hillview supported by both capital funding and a successful bid for match-funding to the Department for Education.

The Holly House development comprises two, previously unoccupied, semi-detached houses owned by the Local Authority. Planning approval was granted for their conversion into a children's home with the capacity for five looked after children and building works commenced in March 2023.

Hillview is owned by the City Council and had been unoccupied since 2014. The existing building was unsuitable and did not meet the standards required of a modern children's home, therefore planning consent for demolition was sought and approved. The building has been demolished and the site is clear in readiness for a new build. Hillview will provide six additional residential placements for young people with more complex emotional and behavioural support needs due to their experiences of abuse and neglect. It is envisaged that the home would act as a "hub", providing training and meeting facilities for social care staff, foster carers, and professionals.

The design of the new buildings has been produced in consultation with managers of the residential service. The new homes have incorporated the best features of the

existing children's homes to inform the design of these projects. When the buildings are operational the young people who will live in the homes will be consulted about internal design and aesthetics, including personalising their own bedrooms.

Scrutiny will have the opportunity to receive a presentation including visuals showing progress including before and after pictures of the works at Holly House and floor plans relating to the new build at Hillview as well as an overview of timelines for completion and the offer provided by each home.

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

4.1 Financial implications

The capital programme has allocated funding of up to £2.2m for the development of the homes.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance, 37 4101

4.2 Legal implications

All works must be procured in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Contract Procedure Rules and the relevant planning permissions sought for both physical conversation works and any change of use.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister, 37 1401

4.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities (including the local authority and schools), 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 and other conduct prohibited by the Act, 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.

A new children's home should lead to positive outcomes for young people from across a range of protected characteristics by ensuring they are placed within the city and close to family. It will also help the council to meet its Placement Sufficiency duty and as part of our Social Care Placement Sufficiency Strategy will expand our own city residential provision and increase the opportunity to provide appropriate local care for young people.

Any consultation carried out going forward needs to be accessible and meaningful to those being consulted with. Further advice and guidance can be sought from the Corporate Equalities Team

Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, Tel 454 4148

**Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission (CYPE)
Work Programme 2023 – 2024**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
11 July 2023	1) Ashfield Centre 2) Introduction to CYPE services	1) Lead Officers to revisit this issue with the view to explore further options and solutions with Ash Field Academy. The Council considers a city-wide review of provision related to the high needs block funding. 2) The key issues discussed be added to the work programme. The Family Hubs item to be added for the next commission meeting.	1) Formal decision called-in and brought back to the commission on 2 November 2) Family Hubs item taken to the meeting on 19 September.
19 September 2023	1) Family Hubs report 2) Children & Social Care – intro to new director and the services. 3) Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) 4) RAAC and Leicester City schools – update 5) Work Programme	1) Recommended to keep on work programme for a report back in 6 months. 2a) Members liked the initiative of a charter for Cllrs to be community champions for fostering within their communities, look forward to this being developed. 2b) A future meeting item suggested on children’s homes, a presentation would benefit scrutiny. 5) The following be added to the work programme and allocated to upcoming commission meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children residential homes - deficit recovery plan - Looked after children placements - Recruitment and social services - SEND and Taxi provision 	1) Added as a suggested item for 27 February 2024. 2a) Added to the work programme – date TBC 2b) Added to work programme – date TBC 5) To be confirmed in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair/officers

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
2 November 2023	1) Ashfield Call-in 2) High Needs Block – Verbal Update	1) Discussion to be had regarding ‘tapering’ of funding. 2a) Data to be provided on the level of overspend at different Councils in next report 2b) Informal Scrutiny to take place following the submission of the full report.	1) Meeting to take place week-commencing 18 December 2023.
19 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Annual report • SEND transport provision • School attendance and exclusions report • Update on new in-house children’s residential provision 		
16 January 2024	Council budget reports – general fund report and capital programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked After Children Placements • Youth Justice Plan 	LAC Placements to have a follow-up later in year.	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
27 February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Hubs Update (as requested in September 2023) • Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children – Update • Performance report for schools • Fostering Annual report and • Adoption Annual report (including Fostering Community Champions update) • DSG high-needs block recovery plan 		

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
SEN support and funding		
Pupil Place Planning (Primary and Secondary)		
Multi-Academy Trusts - Overview		
Children not in state-maintained schools e.g.: Academies, Independent, Faith schools.		
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.	