

Report of: Jane Held, Independent Chair, Leeds Safeguarding Children Board

Report to: Children and Families Scrutiny Board

Date: 14th March 2013

Subject: Response to Scrutiny Inquiry Report: Private Fostering

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) welcomes the Scrutiny Inquiry Report on Private Fostering published on 17th January 2013 and supports the recommendations made.

Recommendations

2. The LSCB accepts Recommendation (1) and will provide a report to the Scrutiny Board at its July 2013 meeting.
3. The LSCB suggests that children and young people are engaged in the development of Recommendation (3).

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide a response from the LSCB to the recommendations set out in the Scrutiny Inquiry Report on Private Fostering published on 17.01.13.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Working Together 2010 (DCSF) sets out the objectives of LSCBs. These include the co-ordination of local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and involves the development of policies and procedures across a number of functions; including privately fostered children and young people.
- 2.2 The LSCB receives an annual review of private fostering arrangements from Children's Services and includes a summary of its findings in its Annual Report, which focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Leeds. The Scrutiny Board drew on the LSCB Annual Report (July 2012) in undertaking its Inquiry.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The LSCB Executive Group, meeting on 15.02.13, accepts Recommendation (1):

'That the LSCB advises the Scrutiny Board in July 2013 of the progress made by Children's Services against the updated action plan.'

This will form part of the LSCB Annual Review process, a summary of which will be included in the Annual Report (July 2013). The LSCB will provide a separate report to the Scrutiny Board at its July meeting.

- 3.2 The LSCB Executive Group wishes to comment on Recommendation (3):

'That the Director of Children's Services investigates how the information regarding private fostering can be disseminated effectively to young people in Leeds. This information should also advise them who they can speak to if they need help and support.'

The LSCB Executive Group suggests that consideration should be given to engaging with children and young people in the development of this proposal, through the Children's Services Voice and Influence Strategy.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 This report is in response to the Scrutiny Report. It has been prepared by the LSCB Business Manager in consultation with the Independent Chair of the Board.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Private Fostering is an important component in family life for a range of minority ethnic groups in the City. It is important that those groups are involved in and contribute to the work of Children's Services in ensuring private fostering is high quality. Well regulated and safe.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The responsibility for regulating and supporting private fostering activity in the City is statutorily placed with the Director of Children's Services. Children's Safeguarding is a Council Priority.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 This report makes no comment on any financial matters

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. No decisions are required as a consequence of the report.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 This reports makes no comment on any risk issues

5 Conclusions

- 5.7 The LSCB supports the recommendations made within the Scrutiny Inquiry Report on Private Fostering published on 17.01.13.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The LSCB accepts Recommendation (1) and will provide a report to the Scrutiny Board at its July 2013 meeting.
- 6.2 The LSCB suggests that children and young people are engaged in the development of recommendation (3)

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 The LSCB Annual Report (July 2012) is published on the LSCB website (www.leedslscb.org.uk)

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.