

Report of the Director of Children and Families

Report to Executive Board

Date: 24th July 2019

Subject: Review of Leeds child safeguarding partnerships



Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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

1. Main issues

1.1 The national ‘Wood Review’ was commissioned by government due to concerns about the suitability and effectiveness of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. The review made a number of recommendations which were quickly accepted by government. The main changes proposed included:

- A new requirement on the three main safeguarding agencies – the Local Authority, Police and NHS to make arrangements for working together in a local area. Where there was not agreement, the Secretary of State was given a new power to intervene.
- Clear expectations on wider partners such as schools to cooperate with the new local multi-agency arrangements.
- The creation of a National Panel to undertake Serious Case Reviews, with local partnerships undertaking local reviews to support local learning.
- The transfer of responsibility for national oversight of Child Death Overview Panels from the Department for Education to the Department of Health.

All local authorities are required to submit the outline of their new safeguarding arrangements by the end of June; with detailed proposals being implemented by September.

The Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership, senior representatives of the three main agencies and the Children and Families Trust Board have been working on the development of the new arrangements over the past 12 months. Outline proposals have now been developed. These are:

- The Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership will be a new strategic body in Leeds and have equal status with the other similar partnership bodies in the city. The Partnership will have revised partnership arrangements:
 - The partnership will continue to have an Independent Chair;
 - The Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive will constitute senior leaders from the three statutory partners (LCC Director of Children and Families, Chief Executive Officer of the CCG, Chief Superintendent of West Yorkshire Police). The Executive will be responsible for agreeing the vision for safeguarding in the city, identifying priorities, commissioning safeguarding practice reviews.
 - The Leeds Safeguarding Partnership Meeting: meeting of wider partners including schools, hospital trusts, third sector etc. to support the executive with implementation, sharing learning.
 - Business Unit: continuing the successful work of the current LSCB Business Unit, supporting the work of the new partnership and existing standing groups as well as audits, training etc.
- Local partners are continuing to discuss options to further strengthen and streamline partnership arrangements. It has been agreed in principle to consolidate the Safeguarding Partnership Meeting with the Children's Trust Board as this offers a clearer, unified partnership lead for all children's issues whilst saving considerable time and resources from the leaders and staff who attend and support both meetings.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- a. As made clear in the report and set out in Appendix 1, the new partnership arrangements make a clear commitment to the Best Council Plan and Leeds' ambition to be a Child Friendly City and the best city for children and young people.

3. Resource Implications

- a. There are no direct financial arrangements to this report. All proposals will be met from existing funding.

Recommendations

- b. The Board is asked to note the new arrangements. A further report will be provided to Executive Board on the final arrangements in the autumn.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on progress on the review of child safeguarding partnerships in the city and to set out the direction of travel for the future.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Cooperation between professionals and organisations is vital for effective safeguarding, and as such multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children have been an important feature of national and local policy and practice for over forty years.
- 2.2 In the past changes to multi-agency working have been driven by high profile collective safeguarding failures. The death of Maria Colwell in 1974 led to the development of Area Child Protection Committees and in 2003 the death of Victoria Climbié led to Every Child Matters and the creation of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards.
- 2.3 In 2015 the DfE commissioned Alan Wood, an experienced ex-Director of Children's Services to review the effectiveness of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs). The 'Wood Review' was not driven by a single case but by growing concerns within the sector and from OfSTED inspections that whilst some LSCBs were effective, many were not and overall the Boards had not made sufficient impact.
- 2.4 The review was concluded in 2016, with a report making a number of recommendations which were quickly accepted by government. The main changes proposed included:
- A new requirement on the three main safeguarding agencies – the Local Authority, Police and NHS to make arrangements for working together in a local area. Where there was not agreement, the Secretary of State was given a new power to intervene.
 - Clear expectations on wider partners such as schools to cooperate with the new local multi-agency arrangements.
 - The creation of a National Panel to undertake Serious Case Reviews, with local partnerships undertaking local reviews to support local learning.
 - The transfer of responsibility for national oversight of Child Death Overview Panels from the Department for Education to the Department of Health.
- 2.5 To support the changes recommended in Wood Review the government has changed legislation and statutory guidance. The Children Act 2004 was amended to remove the statutory requirement for local authorities to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board and placed the responsibility for safeguarding equally with the Local Authority, Police and Health (through CCGs). Working Together 2018 placed a duty on these agencies to work together to define local arrangements and placed a duty on wider partners to co-operate with the new arrangements.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 All local areas are required to agree and publish their proposed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by June 2019 for implementation by September 2019. In Leeds the three statutory safeguarding partners – Local Authority, NHS and Police, have worked together and with wider local partners to agree the way forward.
- 3.2 The proposed ‘Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements’ for Leeds, agreed and produced by the local partners are summarised below:
- 3.3 The Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership will be a new strategic body in Leeds and have equal status with the other similar partnership bodies in the city. The Partnership will have revised partnership arrangements:
- Independent Chair: retaining the independent chair of the current LSCB.
 - The Leeds Partnership Executive: senior leaders from the three statutory partners (LCC Director of Children and Families, Chief Executive Officer of the CCG, Chief Superintendent of West Yorkshire Police). Responsible for agreeing the vision, identifying priorities, commissioning safeguarding practice reviews.
 - The Leeds Children’s Partnership: wider partners including schools, hospital trusts, third sector etc. to support the executive with implementation, sharing learning.
 - Business Unit: continuing the successful work of the current LSCB Business Unit, supporting the Executive with audits, training etc.
- 3.4 The partnership will remain focused on Leeds. The Wood Review proposed considering regional arrangements but local partners agree that the city has sufficient size and scope and is best aligned to local political and organisational boundaries.
- 3.5 The partnership has re-affirmed its commitment to Leeds’ shared vision, values and ambition. The safeguarding arrangements will support the Best Council Plan and the key approaches of children’s services including working with children and families, the ‘Leeds Practice Model’ and ‘Think Family.’
- 3.6 Whilst the statutory regulations place responsibility on the three statutory agencies Leeds is committed to maintaining a strong multi-agency partnership that includes representation from a wide range of agencies including schools and the third sector.
- 3.7 In developing the new arrangements opportunities were identified that would streamline current partnership arrangements. Currently there are two key multi-agency partnerships for children in Leeds; the Children and Families Trust Board and the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Children and Families Trust Board is responsible for agreeing, implementing and monitoring the impact of the Leeds Children and Young People’s Plan, whilst the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership has responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in the city.
- 3.8 However, there is considerable overlap in both the membership of these two groups and in their work. The first of the five outcomes for children and young people in the Children and Young People’s Plan is that ‘Children in Leeds are safe’. Consequently, the Children and Families Trust Board receives regular reports and updates on safeguarding in the city. At the same time the Children and Families Trust Board sets and drives the agenda for early help in the city but responsibility for monitoring early help, under the old safeguarding arrangements, sat with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

- 3.9 The development of the new arrangements provides an opportunity to address these issues. Following discussions at both the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Children and Families Trust Board it was agreed to establish a single Leeds Children's Partnership. The Leeds Children's Partnership will be responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan and will also advise the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership on priorities, support the implementation of safeguarding arrangements and support the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding in the city.
- 3.10 To ensure that the new Leeds Children's Partnership does not become overwhelmed by safeguarding and that sufficient time and at the same time attention is given to safeguarding issues it was agreed that the current Leeds Safeguarding Children Business Unit would be retained. In addition to supporting the work of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive and the Leeds Children's Partnership the Business Unit will support a number of standing groups that will be responsible to the Executive, for example in relation to learning the lessons review and facilitate quality assurance work across the partnership.
- 3.11 Work has commenced to develop the detail of the new arrangements and governance. However, it was felt important to inform the Executive Board on the proposals at this stage.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 A wide range of local partners have been consulted and involved in these changes through the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All key statutory agencies have been included in discussions and in agreeing these proposals.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues relating to this report, although future partnership arrangements will continue to ensure that membership is representative of Leeds' population and to work to promote equality of outcomes in its work.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 As made clear in the report the new partnership arrangements make a clear commitment to the Best Council Plan and Leeds' ambition to be a Child Friendly City and the best city for children and young people.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 There are no direct implications for climate in this report.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 There are no direct financial arrangements to this report. All proposals will be met from existing funding.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 These proposals set out how Leeds will meet the new requirements of Working Together 2018 and the revision to the Children Act 2004. The report is eligible for call in.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 This report relates to two significant corporate risks for the Council – firstly relating to the risk of safeguarding failure resulting in the serious harm or death of a child and secondly relating to safeguarding inspection failure for the Local Authority. The proposals described in this report seek to further strengthen multi-agency working to continue to mitigate these serious risks.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 These proposals for new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements should continue to strengthen and streamline the already strong and effective partnership working in Leeds. The new arrangements will bolster and clarify the shared leadership of the Council, NHS and Police whilst ensuring there are the right partnership arrangements in place to engage and support wider partners and the whole city in this vital work.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Board is asked to note the new arrangements. A further report will be provided to Executive Board on the final arrangements in the autumn.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

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.