

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on
Wednesday, 9th October, 2024 at 10.00 am
(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board at 9.45 a.m.)

MEMBERSHIP

- J Bowden - Roundhay;
- D Cohen (Chair) - Alwoodley;
- R Downes - Otley and Yeadon;
- O Edwards - Guiseley and Rawdon;
- E Flint - Weetwood;
- T Goodall - Headingley and Hyde Park;
- J Heselwood - Weetwood;
- D Jenkins - Killingbeck and Seacroft;
- R Jones - Horsforth;
- N Manaka - Burmantofts and Richmond Hill;
- L Martin - Roundhay;
- K Renshaw - Ardsley and Robin Hood;
- R. Stephenson - Harewood;

Co-opted Members (Voting)

- Mr E A Britten - Church Representative (Catholic)
- Mr A Graham - Church Representative (Church of England)
- Mr A Khitou - Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
- Vacancy - Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

- Mr N Tones - School Staff Representative
- Ms H Bellamy - School Staff Representative
- Ms S Gul - Young Lives Leeds
- Mrs K Blacker - Leeds Parent Carer Forum
- Ms Maria Adams - Leeds Parent Carer Forum

Principal Scrutiny Adviser:
Rob Clayton
Tel: (0113) 37 88790

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To remotely observe this meeting, please click on the 'View the Meeting Recording' link which will feature on the meeting's webpage (linked below) ahead of the meeting.

[Council and democracy \(leeds.gov.uk\)](http://leeds.gov.uk/council-and-democracy)

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A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25* of the Access to Information Procedure Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded).</p> <p>(* In accordance with Procedure Rule 25, notice of an appeal must be received in writing by the Head of Governance Services at least 24 hours before the meeting).</p>	
2			<p>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report. 2. To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information. 3. If so, to formally pass the following resolution:- <p>RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:</p> <p>No exempt items have been identified.</p>	

3

LATE ITEMS

To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.

(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)

4

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To disclose or draw attention to any interests in accordance with Leeds City Council's 'Councillor Code of Conduct'.

5

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.

6

MINUTES - 4 SEPTEMBER & 9 JULY 2024

7 - 28

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 4 September and the Call In meeting held on 9 July 2024.

7

LEEDS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP - ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

29 - 80

To consider the report of the Director of Children and Families presenting the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023/24. The report outlines the activity that has taken place across the year in relation to the Safeguarding Partners' statutory duties to work together in exercising their functions of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including developments in practice, progress with priorities, learning, scrutiny, inspections and statutory responsibilities.

8		<p>SCHOOL ATTENDANCE UPDATE</p> <p>To consider a report of the Director of Children and Families on school attendance providing an overview of the national school attendance picture an overview of the Leeds school attendance data and the actions the local authority has taken and will continue to take to support schools in their work to improve attendance.</p>	81 - 100
9		<p>THE CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY FOR LEEDS</p> <p>To consider the report of the Director of Children and Families which provides an overview of, and a further update on the Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds and the work that sits underneath the strategy. This includes the range of work that has been done to address ongoing post pandemic and cost of living priorities. This item follows an update received in the 2023/24 municipal year and continuing interest from the Board in the impact of poverty on children and families in the city.</p>	101 - 158
10		<p>WORKING GROUP SUMMARY - CHILDREN'S TRANSPORT POLICY: PROPOSED CHANGES TO TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE FOR POST-16 LEARNERS WITH SEND</p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of Democratic Services that provides a summary and conclusions from the Children's Transport Policy Working Group held on 24 September 2024.</p> <p>Appendix 1 to follow as supplementary information.</p>	159 - 162
11		<p>WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>To consider the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2024/25 municipal year.</p>	163 - 186
12		<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) will be on Monday 11th November 2024 at 1.30pm. (There will be a pre-meet for all Board Members at 1:15pm).</p>	

THIRD PARTY RECORDING

Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts on the front of this agenda.

Use of Recordings by Third Parties – code of practice

- a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.
- b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

TUESDAY, 9TH JULY, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor D Cohen in the Chair

Councillors O Edwards, S Firth, E Flint,
Graham, D Jenkins, R Jones, N Manaka,
L Martin, K Renshaw, E Thomson and
I Wilson

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A Graham, H Bellamy, M Adams

14 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

15 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information.

16 Late Items

There were no late items.

17 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

18 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R.
Stephenson, J. Heselwood, J. Bowden, T. Goodall, R. Downes.

Councillors S. Firth, E. Thomson, and I Wilson were in attendance as
substitutes.

Apologies from co-opted members Shanaz Gul and Anas Khitou were noted.

19 Call In Briefing Paper

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report advising the Scrutiny
Board on the procedural aspects of Calling In the decision made by Executive
Board dated 19th June 2024 on the Little Owls Nurseries Review.

Members were advised that the Call In was specific to the key decision in
question, and issues outside of the decision, including other related decisions,
were not to be considered as part of the Board's decision regarding the
outcome of the Call In.

Members were also advised that options were available to the Scrutiny Board
in respect of this particular call-in decision were as follows:

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Option 1 – Release the decision for implementation.

- Having reviewed this decision, the Scrutiny Board may decide to release it for implementation. If the Scrutiny Board chooses this option, the decision will be immediately released for implementation and the decision may not be called in again.

Option 2 – Recommend that the decision be reconsidered.

- The Scrutiny Board may decide to recommend to the decision maker that the decision be reconsidered. If the Scrutiny Board chooses this option a report will be submitted to the decision maker.
- In the case of an Executive Board decision, the report of the Scrutiny Board will be prepared within three working days of the Scrutiny Board meeting and submitted to the Executive Board. Any report of the Scrutiny Board will be referred to the next Executive Board meeting for consideration.
- In reconsidering the decision and associated Scrutiny Board report, the Executive Board may vary the decision or confirm its original decision. In either case, this will form the basis of the final decision and will not be subject to any further call-in.

Failure to agree one of the above options.

- If the Scrutiny Board, for any reason, does not agree one of the above courses of action at this meeting, then Option 1 will be adopted by default, i.e. the decision will be released for implementation with no further recourse to Call In.

It was noted that the decision of the Executive Board was subject to two valid Call Ins. The first from Cllr Stephenson as the lead signatory and with the agreement of the Chair four witnesses would be allowed to make representations.

The second Call In was from Cllr Ali as lead signatory and with the agreement of the Chair one witness would be allowed to make representation.

The procedure would be repeated for both Call Ins, with the outcome being voted on after all representations had been made.

RESOLVED – That the report outlining the Call-In procedures be noted.

20 Call In - Little Owls Nurseries Review - Lead Signatory Cllr Stephenson

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented background papers to a key decision made by Executive Board, which had been Called In in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The decision had been called in for review by Councillors R Stephenson, B Anderson, C Anderson, N Buckley, N Harrington, M Dobson, O Newton, R Finnigan, W Dixon, W Kidger, S Golton.

The Scrutiny Board considered the following written information:

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- Copy of the completed Call In request form
- Copy of the report of the Director of Children and Families to Executive Board on the Review of the Little Owls Nurseries which included:
 - Appendix 1 – Engagement Sessions, Compendium of Comments/Queries/Questions
 - Appendix 2 – Comments, Queries into the Little Owls Review Mailbox
 - Appendix 3 ECDI Impact Assessment
 - Minutes Extract of Executive Board – 19th June 2024

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Ryan Stephenson – Lead Signatory
- Councillor Helen Hayden – Executive Member for Children and Families
- Julie Longworth – Director of Children and Families
- Phil Evans – Chief Officer Transformation and Partnerships
- Vicky Fuggles – Head of Early Help Services
- Amanda Ashe – Children’s Centres and Early Help Lead
- Rachael Davison – Change Manager
- Kevin Shillito – Legal Officer
- Nicole Walker – Head of Service – Legal

Witnesses

- Hattie Hodgson-Crome, child at Hawksworth Wood
- Kath Owen, child at Meanwood
- Rosie Taylor, Child at Meanwood
- Hannah Minks, child at Bramley

Councillor Stephenson addressed the Board as lead signatory to the Call In. He set out his grounds for requesting a call in, citing the nature of the consultation process, and the clarity of aims and desired outcomes and the lack of explanation of the options considered and details of the reasons for the decision.

Councillor Stephenson invited his witnesses to introduce themselves and provide the Scrutiny Board with brief details of their personal circumstances and their reasons for attending the Call-In meeting.

Councillor Stephenson raised the following concerns:

- There was no obvious consultation, with no communication plan, and it was the opinion that the consultation had been rushed and not meaningful.
- It was noted that some sessions had been provided via Teams’, however, this had not been accessible for all families and was at a time when parents would be multi-tasking with family issues such as teatime and bedtime.
- It was recognised that Councillor Hayden had only been in her executive role for four weeks and had not had time to meet with parents.

- The Executive Board had not been presented with all the evidence and facts.
- Future decisions on the review of further 12 Little Owls sites would be delegated to the Director of Children and Families without being brought back to Executive Board.

Witnesses addressed the Scrutiny Board highlighting the following concerns:

- The consultation had not been meaningful.
- Letters had been sent to parents via the nursery, but these had been in English, however, many of the families and children using the Little Owls Nurseries, English is not their first language.
- At the time of the consultation a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) had not been available on the website, as it is now.
- Parents on waiting lists for Little Owls Nurseries were not involved in the consultation process.
- The staff at the Little Owls Nurseries are welcoming, well trained and supportive to both children and families and the nurseries have provision for children and parents who have special needs.
- They had been unaware of the proposals to close 3 of the sites and were now concerned about a further review of another 12 sites.
- It was acknowledged that the Council was facing financial challenges and if this was due to fees for the service parents would be willing to increase fees to save the service provision given by the Little Owls Nurseries.

Councillor Stephenson followed on from the witness's address, highlighting the following points:

- This Council has the ambition for a Child Friendly City, however, it is stilling looking to close its early years provision and was not looking at the future of those who are currently on the waiting lists and of those not born in the city.
- The closure of the sites would impact on the private provision for early years education with parents being pushed into using private nurseries.
- It was the view that the EDCI impact assessment had a flawed scoring mechanism as there are a number of children in the location of the Little Owls Nurseries who have special educational needs or disabilities, and their first language is not English.
- The newly elected Government has set out in its Manifesto to pledge 100,000 new nursery places, and this Council may be shutting nurseries only to open more in the future. It was suggested that the review of a further 12 sites be delayed until the Government's proposal is known.
- It was suggested that Little Owls provision could be sited into the primary school settings where there are currently spare classrooms. This would free up sites for disposal and assist in utilising the spare classrooms of the council run primary schools and perhaps assist parents when choosing a primary school for their children. It was noted that where there is currently nursery provision in primary schools this

is only for children over 3 years old and only during term time. Little Owls provides care for children under 2 years old and the care and support is there during school holidays.

- The Little Owls Nurseries provide a high standard of care and support to some of the most vulnerable families in the city. The standards of these nurseries are high, and the support and expertise of the staff was a valuable asset for the city.

The witnesses in summing up provided the following points:

- The provision supplied by Little Owls is local to an area, not all families have cars.
- There is a childcare crisis in this country at present and this is a Council which has the ambition to be a Child Friendly City.
- Parents should be consulted in a timely and meaningful way.
- Little Owls provide safeguarding support for those families who are vulnerable or in crisis.
- It was recognised that there was an affordability consideration for Little Owls Nurseries and parents would be willing to increase fees to continue using the service of the Little Owls Nurseries.
- Staff in the Little Owls Nurseries provide support to children and families who may need additional support and provision as they go forward in their education. This was not something that was provided within a private nursery setting.
- The staff at Little Owls had not been involved in the decision-making process and were upset and felt undervalued.

It was Suggested that since the decision had been taken there had been no meaningful discussions, but freedom of information requests had been responded to. The campaign for Little Owls Nurseries has 400 followers on Facebook and 2,000 people have signed a petition.

Cllr Hayden was invited to address the Scrutiny Board and provided the following information:

- Councillor Venner the previous Executive Member for Children and Families and the Director of Children and Families had offered to meet parents.
- Throughout 14 years of austerity the Council has continued to keep the Little Owls Nurseries open which was rare for local authorities with not all the core cities providing this service.
- The city is proud of the provision provided by our well-trained staff who are paid a real living wage.
- The economy of the city is thriving, but the council is struggling to retain staff in the nurseries, as whilst the job is rewarding, it is stressful.
- The Council has 24 nurseries which is more other Councils in the country. It was regretful and sad that the council has had to close 3 and is reviewing 12 others. However, the Council is facing dire financial challenges and the issue cannot wait until the new Labour Government gets going with its plans to address the issue, as the Council is losing money all the time.

- The nurseries are unable to take on more children, as there are not enough staff. The staff already employed at the nurseries will move to other settings, where they would hopefully be with the children who have also moved, where nurseries have merged.
- There are 12 nurseries currently being reviewed, there are no suggestions that these will be closed or privatised.
- There were 15 engagement and consultation sessions to attend, and all feedback was collated and presented to the Executive Board. There is also a Frequently Asked Questions page on the website.

The Director of Children and Families was invited to address the Scrutiny Board and provided the following:

- The parents who had attended the meeting were thanked for their attendance and it was noted that their comments were respected and valuable.
- It was explained that officers need to work to ensure that the service works to a balanced budget, and this often means taking difficult decisions. Officers are passionate about their work with children and achieving the Child Friendly City ambition. Officers have dedicated hours of time to provide the evidence required for the review.
- All the children affected by the closures were offered local authority settings. The Council does not have a responsibility or a duty to provide this service. The closure of the 3 settings was done with clear evidence.
- The Council is committed to retaining 9 local authority settings and to support those with educational needs, with the provision for this better than in other core cities.
- The review of the 12 settings will be clear and transparent and it was confirmed that there were no preconceived ideas about the outcome and due process would be followed.
- It was suggested that to maintain local authority nursery provision through all Little Owls and for them all to be sufficient and sustainable there would need to be an increase in fees of 30%.
- It was noted that over the summer period there was not enough staff to cover at the Little Owls nurseries and some may need to open later and close earlier.
- The Officers had taken on board that the timing of the consultation sessions had not been the best and lessons had been learnt.
- It was the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that they have a good, effective and sufficient service and provision for children, and they were working with partners to deliver this, and the Council was committed to a Child Friendly City.

Responses to questions and comments from the Scrutiny Board included:

- The Scrutiny Board noted that the report to Executive Board had presented a series of queries, these had been responded to at the Executive Board meeting prior the decision being made.

- Every family had been offered time with officers to discuss the proposals in the Little Owls settings, had a letter delivered to them either by Little Owls staff or by hand, and information was provided in different languages where requested.
- The Members were of the view that there was a need for wide participation on the review of the 12 Little Owl settings.
- Members thanked the parents for their experiences and for attending the meeting as it was important to get the feedback of staff and parents, and they acknowledged the strength of feeling on this issue.
- It was the view of the Members that the review should also include those families on waiting lists for Little Owls, and that as many parents as possible were consulted with during the process and that various ways of engagement were used.
- It was confirmed that there would be no compulsory redundancies.
- Little Owls fees per day are currently £54.30, with a proposal (subject to approval) that in September they would rise 7% to £58.10, the Scrutiny Board noted that unlike other providers the fees included all food and nappies. It was suggested that the fees could increase by more, however, it was noted that the increase in fees would not be sufficient to keep all the Little Owls nurseries open, as there would still not be enough staff to run them. Members noted that 1,800 children attended Little Owls.

The Chair informed the Scrutiny Board that the decision of the Board was several separate decisions, relating to the one issue. He had taken the advice of the Legal Officer present, and should the Members be so minded they could break down the components when making their decision on the options available to them.

Councillor Hayden's summary included:

- Thanking all in the meeting for the opportunity to speak on the Little Owls nurseries. The Council was committed and passionate about the service that is provided and was working hard to make sure Children in Leeds were given the best start in life.
- She thanked the staff for the work that they do and recognised the stress that they were under. The Council would always fight for and protect the most vulnerable, especially children.

The Director of Children and Families in her summary included:

- She recognised that this was an emotive subject, and it was about the children, but the unprecedented financial challenges do mean that the Council is having to make cuts to services, and some of those are for the most deprived children in our community. It was noted that this is not just in the Children and Families Directorate, but Council wide.
- The staff working in the Children and Families Directorate are committed to ensure that Leeds is a Child Friendly City and that the Little Owls nurseries are sustainable and can remain open for holidays and have staff in them to provide sufficient childcare.

- 9 Little Owls setting would be retained, and due process would be used for the 12 settings under review.

Councillor Stephenson in summing up thanked officers for their answers and highlighted the following points:

- Consultation on those 12 settings under review should be meaningful and include those on waiting lists and the information be brought back to Executive Board with all the evidence and feedback from parents.
- He suggested that a letter be written to Government to ask about the timescales for the delivery of the 100,000 nursery places and seek clarity on what the Manifesto means for the city.
- He suggested that the Board return the decision to Executive Board with all the evidence, and that any further decisions on the review of the 12 Little Owls settings be considered by Executive Board and not taken by the Director through delegated decision.

The meeting was adjourned for a comfort break at 15:55.

21 Call In - Lead Signatory Cllr Ali

The meeting recommenced at 16:00

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented background papers to a key decision made by the Executive Board, which had been Call-In in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The decision had been called in for review by Councillors M Ali, L Cunningham, T Goodall, E Carlisle and P Stables.

The Scrutiny Board considered the following written information:

- Copy of the completed Call-In request form
- Copy of the report of the Director of Children and Families to Executive Board on the Review of the Little Owls Nurseries which included:
 - Appendix 1 – Engagement Sessions, Compendium of Comments/Queries/Questions
 - Appendix 2 – Comments, Queries into the Little Owls Review Mailbox
 - Appendix 3 ECDI Impact Assessment
 - Minutes Extract of Executive Board – 19th June 2024

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Mothin Ali – Lead signatory
- Councillor Helen Hayden – Executive Member for Children and Families
- Julie Longworth – Director of Children and Families
- Phil Evans – Chief Officer Transformation and Partnerships
- Vicky Fuggles – Head of Early Help Services

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- Amanda Ashe – Children’s Centres and Early Help Lead
- Rachael Davison – Change Manager
- Nicole Walker – Head of Service – Legal
- Kevin Shillitto - Section Head – Legal

Witness

- Helen Fearn – Unison

Councillor Ali addressed the Scrutiny Board as the lead signatory to the call-in. He set out his reasons for requesting a call-in without reiterating those already discussed in relation to the first call-in, citing proportionality, Human Rights and key stakeholders not having been properly consulted. It was noted that the Chair had requested that information already received by the Board in relation to the consultation process was not discussed again. Therefore, Councillor Ali focused on the proportionality aspect of his call-in request.

Councillor Ali highlighted his concerns which included:

- This was a compassionate and people focused appeal to reconsider the decision as it impacted on those on the most deprived areas of the city.
- The report had highlighted a small reduction of 12.5% in nursery provision by the Council. However, with the closure of 3 Little Owls Nurseries, 2 in close proximity, Gipton North and Kentmere, this was a large reduction in provision, in an area of high deprivation.
- Reference was made in relation to Human Rights Article 28 of the UNCRC guarantees the right of every child to an education. However, it was noted that the Council has no responsibility to provide nursery provision, but to ensure that there is sufficient nursery provision. Councillor Ali said that in Kentmere the Little Owls was the main provider of this type of service.

Councillor Ali requested that his witness, a Unison Representative address the Board to set out the concerns of the staff, which included:

- The impact on the staff at the centres was of feeling vulnerable, unsettled and undervalued.
- The staff were concerned about the uncertainty of their contracts, the sites that they would be working at and whether they would remain as Council employees or become part of a private provider.
- The workforce in this area of work is predominantly female.
- It was noted that it had been confirmed that there would be no compulsory redundancies. However, the uncertainty of the proposals was leading staff to look for other work, therefore, making retention of the workforce worse.

Councillor Ali explained that Gipton North and Kentmere were areas where many families do not own cars and therefore, use public transport. The closure of the sites in Gipton North and Kentmere is meaning that families are having to travel further to use the service at the merged sites adding time to the working day and making it a long day for children.

Councillor Ali asked the following questions:

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- Do the proposals disproportionately impact already deprived families?
- Were interpreters used for those whose first language is not English?
- Was support available to the families?

Members questions and comments included:

- It was the view that the recruitment drive and the lack of staff was due to the previous Conservative Government and the financial pressure placed on local authorities. There was recognition of the stress on staff and the reasons for them leaving their roles.
- It was acknowledged that there was a bus service linking Gipton North and Seacroft. However, Councillor Ali has been advised by families that he had spoken to, the journey entailed a 13-minute walk to the nearest bus stop, or a bus into the town centre and back out again.
- It was acknowledged that all Councillors receive a briefing on finances and overspend, and it was the duty of Council to consider all matters of spending and to retain a balanced budget.
- Kentmere was the predominant provider of childcare in the area and the reduction in this provision in an area of deprivation would have a large impact on the community.

Councillor Hayden in her summing up included the following points:

- The Council has a recruitment and retention policy and provides an apprenticeship programme. However, it is difficult to recruit to and retain staff in this service due to the stressful nature of the job. Staff needed to be retained and for them to continue in this important role if the sites to be retained were to remain sustainable.
- Little Owls were set up to help the vulnerable in our community and 82 out of 94 children would be attending other nurseries located near to those which were due to close. Kentmere has other childcare provision close by and there was childcare provision within 1 mile of the Gipton North site.
- Officers had talked to staff and explained the proposals, and it was important for them to know that they are valued and do a brilliant job, with parents saying how warm and welcoming the staff at Little Owls are and that is why the service is reported as outstanding.
- Councillor Hayden clarified the duty of the Council in relation to United Nations Convention for Rights of Child Article 28.
- She praised all those who provided childcare provision in the city including carers, childminders and grandparents.

The Director of Children and Families in her summing up included:

- Although this was being driven by finance fundamentals, the Council still has a duty to provide sufficient childcare and needed due regard to do this. The Council would be retaining 9 Little Owls settings, and this would be around children with additional needs, looked after children and vulnerable children in deprived areas.
- It was understandable that the staff in these settings would feel unsettled, and a long decision-making process did not help. The Council has a duty of care for all its staff.

Councillor Ali was then invited to sum up and included:

- This has been a long and detailed discussion, however there were still 12 settings under review, and this means an uncertain future to 12 of the Little Owls centres.
- Parents are of the view that the decision making has been rushed and not properly considered. Parents are asking for full consultation to take place and there was a need to breakdown any language barriers.

It was clarified by the Legal Officer that the United Nations Convention for Rights of Child Article 28 did not apply to the decision as it does not include protection for early years provision and in any event does not have direct effect in the UK.

22 Outcome of Call In

Having considered both of the call-in documentation together with the representations made to them, the voting members of Scrutiny Board considered whether to release the decisions for implementation or recommend to the decision-maker that the decisions should be reconsidered.

The Board agreed to the suggestion of the Chair that decisions be made in respect of each sub section (b) – (g) of the Executive Board resolution of the minutes of 19th June 2024 and voted upon in turn.

Individual votes were then subsequently held on the components (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) as set out in the resolutions of Executive Board Minute No. 7, 19th June 2024 (as presented in full below), and it was

RESOLVED –

- (a) That resolutions (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of the Executive Board Minute No. 7, 19th June 2024 (as presented in full below) each be released for implementation;
- (b) That resolution (g) of the Executive Board Minute No. 7, 19th June 2024 (as presented in full below) be referred back to the Executive Board, as decision taker, for reconsideration on the basis of ensuring that appropriate democratic oversight is in place for any potential future decisions regarding those settings listed in resolution (e).

Resolutions of Executive Board Minute No 7, 19th June 2024

- (a) That in general terms, the contents of the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That it be noted that the Council will continue to directly deliver day care at the following Little Owls settings:
 - Chapeltown • Harehills • Middleton Laurel Bank
 - New Bewerley • Swarcliffe • Two Willows
 - Little London • Seacroft • Armley Moor
- (c) That the consultation and engagement responses in relation to the proposal, as detailed within the submitted report and appendices, be noted; and having had regard to those, the withdrawal from and/or closure of Little Owls Gipton North, Little Owls Chapel Allerton and Little Owls Kentmere, be approved;

(d) That following resolution (c) above, where possible and noting ancillary use, those buildings be declared surplus to operational requirements following the closedown of Little Owls functions;

(e) That the initial consultation and engagement responses in relation to the proposal to explore the potential amalgamation of some Little Owls settings and to explore potential and viable interest from other providers, as detailed within the submitted report and appendices, be noted; and that agreement be given to the undertaking of a 'market sounding exercise' to deliver additional nursery places to replace specific Council run settings at the following locations:

- Shepherds Lane
- City & Holbeck
- Hunslet Rylestone
- Meanwood
- Parklands
- Osmondthorpe
- St Mary's Hunslet
- Quarry Mount
- Rothwell
- Hawksworth Wood
- Bramley
- Burley Park

(f) That the subsequent 'market sounding exercise' in relation to the settings set out in resolution (e) above, be agreed, and that it be noted that those 'market sounding exercises' will commence immediately;

(g) That it be noted that the Director of Children and Families may take further decisions in respect of the settings listed at resolution (e) above following the market sounding exercise for the twelve settings indicated, which would be as a direct consequence of this decision.

23 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) will be on Thursday 18th July 2024 at 2pm. (There will be a pre-meet for all Board Members at 1:45pm)

Meeting concluded at 16:55

Public Document Pack

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

WEDNESDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor D Cohen in the Chair

Councillors J Bowden, R Downes,
O Edwards, E Flint, T Goodall,
J Heselwood, D Jenkins, R Jones,
N Manaka, L Martin, K Renshaw and
R. Stephenson

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr A Khitou
Mr T Britten

Co-Opted Members (Non-Voting)

Ms H Bellamy
Ms M Adams

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

Before moving on to the formal business of the meeting the Chair, Cllr Cohen, wished all pupils, teachers, support staff and all involved in education the best of luck in the coming academic year.

He also congratulated those who have received exam results in recent weeks and hoped that they had achieved the grades that they hoped for and are able to move on in the next phase of their education or careers.

36 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

37 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information.

38 Late Items

There were no late items of business.

39 Declaration of Interests

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 9th October, 2024

There were no declarations of interest.

40 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies were received from the following:

Nick Tones, Non-Voting Co-opted Member
Kate Blacker, Non-Voting Co-opted Member
Andrew Graham, Voting Co-opted Member
Shanaz Gul, Non-Voting Co-opted Member
Julie Longworth, Director of Children and Families

41 Minutes - 18 July 2024

Resolved - That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 July 2024, be approved as an accurate record. Following a vote, moved by Cllr Edwards and Seconded by Cllr Renshaw, this was carried unanimously.

42 Impact of Asylum Changes on Children and Young People in Leeds

Before moving on to agenda item 7 the Chair noted that in the pre-meeting of the Board it was agreed that the report on the Impact of Asylum Changes on Children and Young People in Leeds would be considered as the first substantive item. So effectively a swap between items 7 and 8 as published in the agenda pack.

The Board considered a report from the Director of Children and Families setting out how recent changes to the asylum system have impacted children in Leeds, this is a follow up item to reports considered in the 2023/24 municipal year.

In attendance for this item were:

- Councillor Helen Hayden, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Farrah Khan, Deputy Director Social Care
- Jacinta Kane, Head of Service Corporate Parenting

The Executive Member for Children and Families introduced the report, highlighting concerns around recent far right extremist activity across the country. In addition, the complexity of needs and funding pressures of £1.2m were noted along with national changes that have led to the Rwanda Scheme now being scrapped and Government plans to process asylum schemes more efficiently.

Responding to comments and questions from board members the following points were covered:

- On funding the Chair sought clarity on the figures in the report around funding shortfalls and costs to the Council. In response the Board were informed that the figures in the report are projections not final figures and are based on the complexity of some of the cases which could lead to higher costs. By way of follow up, given the shortfall in funding from Government when compared to projected costs, the Chair asked where the funding will be sourced to make the shortfall up, in response the Board were informed that this would be met through the Children and Families directorate budget.
- The Board asked about the impact of recent far right activity on staff in terms of workloads and in terms of possible safety impacts on them and on any children living in adult accommodation due to incorrect age assessments. In response members were informed that staff are committed to corporate parenting and they have significant experience of carrying out age assessments, when a child or young person is assessed as being under 18 but living in adult hostel accommodation, the Board were assured that wrap around support is delivered as soon as any cases of that nature are determined.
- Members were also informed about impacts of far right activity on both staff and young people in terms of creating an environment of fear. This is being worked through with young people with an emphasis on safety and vigilance and also promoting diversity and Leeds as a welcoming and diverse city.
- The Board emphasised concerns about children and young people living in adult accommodation due to incorrect age assessment at Home Office level.
- The Board asked if the change in Government at national level had led to any developments in terms of a change in approach on asylum, in light of recent changes linked to asylum from Afghanistan. The Board were informed that engagement with Government is ongoing with the Home Secretary having recently visited Leeds during which discussion on community cohesion was a key focus. Leeds has a strong tradition of being a welcoming and compassionate city and the Team Leeds approach was emphasised. It was also noted that further engagement with the Home Office is planned on the issue of age assessments whilst also recognising that the Home Office has had a busy period in recent months.
- The Board asked for more details about the average age of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). In response the Board heard that the most common age for a UASC is 16-17 years old with a small number of younger children aged 13-14. Often the older age of UASC is linked to difficult decisions made by their families where age is a determinant on whether such a journey to seek asylum would be possible given the inherent danger and risk associated with those journeys. In addition, in terms of gender approximately 80% are male with approximately 20% being female which is again linked to family decision making. The Board were assured that no matter what laws exist in the country of origin in relation to adulthood the Children's Act in the UK means that any UASC under 18 is treated as a child.

- Board members asked about advice to staff and community hubs in relation to far right activity and security. Reassurance was given that across the Council and in schools work has been conducted on awareness and vigilance and increasing safety. A balanced and proportionate approach is taken on staff welfare and the welfare of children and young people. In respect of staff support the role of the Race Equality Staff Network was also noted. The commitment to diversity and being a welcoming city was again emphasised.
- The Executive Member for Children and Families summed up thanking the Board for their ongoing interest in this issue.

Resolved - Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) noted and endorsed the update report and asked that a further update on this issue is brought back to the Board in the 2024/25 municipal year.

(This was passed unanimously, proposed by Cllr Cohen and seconded by Cllr Martin)

43 SEND - Education, Health and Care Plans – Review Process – Update Report

The Board considered a report from the Director of Children and Families responding to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) through its inquiry report on the Provision of EHCP Support in Leeds in April 2024.

In attendance for this item were:

- Councillor Helen Hayden, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Dan Barton, Deputy Director – Learning
- Phil Evans, Chief Officer Resources, Transformation and Partnerships
- Sandra Pentelow, Projects and Programme Manager

The Executive Member for Children and Families introduced the report and highlighted the work done on service improvement since the scrutiny inquiry report in April 2024. It was acknowledged that there have been some delays to the timescales involved but work is now underway to reduce EHCP backlogs.

Responding to comments and questions from Board members the following discussion took place:

- In response to a question on how far the authority is behind in dealing with some EHCP cases the board heard that the main concern was around assessments that have not taken place and are out of timescale, it is expected that to catch up on this will take a minimum of 6 months with 100 extra assessments taking place per month following additional staffing resource coming online. It was noted that until the new operating model is in place demand pressures, which are being experienced

nationally as well as in Leeds, remain a problem and this is also linked to the review of FFI and transition of children and young people from that funding stream to EHCP assessment, which featured at the July meeting of the Board.

- On a similar theme the Board asked about how many new staff are in place and how the new staffing approach is being communicated to young people and their parents and carers. The Board were informed that there are approximately 20 to 25 educational psychologists (EPs) who have been procured through a private company with the assurance that the staffing resource can process 100 EHCP assessments per month. The staffing mix may vary and also includes plan writers.
- In terms of how this will look to families accessing the service this will look the same as it would in normal circumstances, with an officer conducting a piece of work through observation of a child in an education setting. The service does have a communication plan in place to set out timescales to families and explain that there are delays and the reasons for them.
- The Board were informed that the additional 20 to 25 staff are not solely utilised by Leeds but are procured through a private company and an individual staff member could be working for a number of different authorities. So, in effect the service has 'out-sourced' 100 EHCP plans per month with around 25 EPs working on this. A full time EP would be able to add wider value as well as doing more EHCP assessments per month. The Board acknowledged that the shortage of EPs nationally and the presence of private companies can make recruitment and retention of EPs a challenge for Leeds and all local authorities.
- The Board were keen to ensure that new digital approaches are accessible to all and that families who are less digitally skilled are still able to access EHCP services. The Board were assured that there will always be a way to request an assessment non-digitally – digital methods though will speed up processes and it was noted that system design is focussed on the routes used most commonly and digital submissions can be processed quicker. In terms of testing the new digital forms there has been engagement on the professional aspects of the form and feedback on it has been largely positive. The Board were informed that wider consultation with parents, carers and young people on the new form is being planned and will take place in the coming weeks.
- The Board were also informed, following questions, of how elected member casework and escalation routes for cases with elected member involvement will be dealt with. An existing email address will be used for this purpose with supporting training provided to members around EHCP cases. The Board were assured that the email address is monitored, and this will be the route for casework to be sent in by elected members. It was recognised that there are possible resource implications if the existing email address is used as there could be an increase in email volume to that address once communicated to councillors. The Board added that elected member contacts by residents can often be a measure of last resort so this email address will provide assurance that cases referred are being dealt with. The Board heard that the impact of the improvement work being done by the service, in time, will reduce the need for cases to be escalated down to an absolute minimum.

- The Board asked about recruitment of key roles within the service with two senior vacancies that need to be filled quickly. Whilst work is ongoing to improve the appeal of the roles it is possible that support may be needed to fill the roles, and this could involve a national search to find the right candidates if the vacancies persist.
- The Board noted the lack of training at national level for the education psychologist specialism with limited institutions that are accredited to train EPs and a limited number of bursaries available. In terms of psychology generally there is a sufficiency of graduates in that field and it is hoped that work at national level can facilitate more candidates coming forward and training as an EP.
- The Board asked if a work study or due diligence has been done to measure the cost effectiveness of the use of the private company, or agency, to do the 100 EHCPs per month. The aim would be to compare the costs associated with the use of the agency as compared to the cost of doing that internally. The Board heard that there is an awareness of time taken to do an EHCP and that EPs also do valuable early help work to reduce future demand on these services. The Board noted that it is more expensive to procure external support than it is to do the work internally which in part is explained by the availability of EPs to carry out this work through an agency whilst also having a lack of availability/candidates for full time roles working for a local authority, market forces play a part in this. It was agreed that more work will be done on costs of an EHCP internally to the Council to facilitate a comparison with the cost of procuring it externally. The point around wider added value brought by EPs working for Leeds was reiterated and accepted by Board members.
- The Board raised the need for better communication with parents and carers when there are delays in EHCP processes. It was acknowledged that more proactivity on communication needs to be developed and is a priority in the improvement work being done by the service.
- The Board discussed both successful application rates and re-application rates for EHCPs if an initial assessment had not secured one, particular given that needs of children and young people can change. The Board heard that around 75% of requests for assessment are accepted and at the end of assessment the rate is slightly lower for issuing of an EHCP. On re-applications it was agreed that this could be provided outside the meeting following some further analysis.
- Following discussion of budget pressure in the DSG Higher Needs Block it was agreed that the letter on the funding formula issued to the previous government will be re-issued to the new Government to set out the view of the Board on the funding formula and to call for this to be reviewed. The Board acknowledged the forthcoming budget announcement expected in October 2024.
- The Executive Member emphasised the importance and commitment to get services right for a range of stakeholders but most importantly the children and young people involved and ensuring that they get the support needed to access and succeed in their education setting.
- Board members discussed the health elements of the plans, education has been the focus but the health support elements do need to feature

more strongly, particularly mental health support. It was noted that this is an issue, and the mechanisms are in place to take this forward through a partnership approach.

- The Chair noted that Recommendations 5, 6 and 7 from the Board's inquiry are only dealt with briefly and that these will be the subject of an update in the future.

Resolved – The Children and Families Scrutiny Board noted the content of the report and:

- a) Asked for further details on the costs of EHCP processes to the Council when assessed using internal resource and;
- b) That a further update be brought back to the Board on this issue in the current (2024/25) municipal year.

(This was proposed by Cllr Cohen, seconded by Cllr Edwards and carried unanimously)

44 Joint Targeted Area Inspection on Serious Youth Violence - Action Plan

Following previous consideration of the Youth Justice Plan 2024-27 and the outcome from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) on Youth Violence in June 2024, the Board considered the Action Plan responding to the JTAI.

In attendance for this item were:

- Councillor Helen Hayden, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Farrah Khan, Deputy Director Social Care
- Gill Marchant, Leads Health and Care Partnership
- Hannah Beal, Deputy Director Leeds Community Healthcare
- Sara Clarke, Head of Service (CAMHS) Leeds Community Healthcare
- Mark Charlton, Head of Community Safeguarding

The Executive Member for Children and Families introduced the item focussing on the positive outcome from the JTAI that took place in March 2024 which emphasised the strength of the partnership that addresses youth violence and those affected by it in Leeds. The Executive Member noted the aim of the action plan to tackle the issues raised by the inspection and the multi-agency response to it, particularly aimed at the three areas for improvement.

In response to question and comments from members the following issues were discussed:

- The Board discussed CAMHS services in the city in more detail and heard that there is a priority service targeted at ADHD and autism referrals and this applies to the cohort in the youth justice system. The Board were informed about waiting times for CAMHS and also referrals and how they are dealt with. CAMHS will account for around 35-40% of referrals with

other referrals being dealt with through school clusters where funding is being used to provide full coverage across Leeds for Mental Health services for young people. Waiting times for CAMHS are challenging and the service is subject to service re-design with work ongoing to clarify the offer and to who the offer is made. The Board noted the service re-design plans and asked that an update is provided to scrutiny when the service re-design is complete.

- Members were informed that CAMHS is a relatively small, or focussed, element of mental health provision for young people in the city. School clusters, schools themselves and the third sector provide key services and work is ongoing to identify the services offered and communicate that clearly to families. CAMHS are not the only agency involved in these services.
- The Board acknowledged the national nature of the challenge on access and availability of mental health services for young people. Pastoral support in schools has reduced as funding has reduced and there has also been increase in demand linked to the impact of Covid. The Board also noted on demand issues that societal changes and the 'pathologising of growing up' are also issues to be considered with anxiety in some cases being part of adolescence that doesn't necessarily require service interventions.
- The Board noted that school counsellors are not statutorily required although some schools do have the budget to support that role. Wider budget reductions have meant that over time school counsellors have reduced, and pastoral support often passes to teachers and existing school support staff.
- The Board asked about police protection notifications and sharing of information across agencies with consistency and training being key areas of interest. The Board were assured that there is a consistent approach to this from the Police with a mechanism added to the process used to share information. It was also noted that the Police were aware of this and welcomed the feedback from the inspection team.
- The Board queried whether parents and carers are aware of multi-agency meetings, linked to Project Shield, in relation to youth crime and knife crime. In response the Board heard that daily safeguarding meetings take place at the front door to deal with incidents. These do not involve assigned social workers but there is social work representation at the meetings and assigned social workers are informed of discussions linked to Project Shield where appropriate. The Board acknowledged that in some cases parents can be the risk to their children so in some cases may not be informed of multi-agency meetings.
- The Board were keen to ensure that the ongoing knife amnesty is widely publicised, promoted and communicated within communities in Leeds to ensure that young people are aware that they can hand knives in and that it is an amnesty with no prosecution linked to it. It was agreed that this will be raised with the Police and any outcomes shared with the Board.

Resolved - Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) noted and endorsed the presented action plan.

(Proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Martin, carried unanimously)

45 Work Programme

The Board considered the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser introduced the report setting out the Work Programme at Appendix 1 and July Executive Board minutes at Appendix 2.

The following issues were raised under this item:

- Board Members wanted to look in more detail at Further Education provision in the city following media reports about pressure on places in the sector. The Board also asked that appropriate witnesses from the sector should be invited and clarity on which level the pressure is focused on should also feature. This suggestion was agreed to and will be built into the 2024/25 Work Programme subject to discussion on timescales.
- The Board noted that FE responsibility is shared, sufficiency sits with the Council, the DfE funds/commissions the places and the FE sector delivers the provision. The Board were assured that system meetings do take place regularly and that the Council has done work on sufficiency suggesting that there are problems with availability of places for young people.
- The Board also highlighted potential issues with recruitment and retention of staff as being an important factor in future work.
- As a further future work item potentially in 2025/26 work on the scrapping of single word Ofsted inspections was suggested. It was noted that this would be better when further details on the 'report card' are announced by Government. When this does come forward the aim of the scrutiny work should be focussed on trying to influence the new approach if possible.

Resolved - Members noted the Board's work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year, and an item on Further Education will be added to it.

(Proposed by Cllr Edwards and seconded by Cllr Cohen and agreed unanimously)

Meeting concluded at 12.50PM

46 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board is scheduled for Wednesday 9 October at 10.00AM with a pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.45am.

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Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023-2024

Date: 9th October 2024

Report of: The Director of Children & Families

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children & Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Annual Report 2023-2024 covers the period from 1st April 2023 to the 31st of March 2024, in line with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance 2023.

A statutory safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as:

- (a) the local authority
- (b) an integrated care board for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area
- (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area

Safeguarding partners must jointly report on the activity they have undertaken in a 12-month period with the focus of the report being progress with the multi-agency priorities, learning, impact, evidence, and improvement as well as the multiagency safeguarding arrangements.

The report includes the activity in relation to statutory functions, scrutiny, as well as the outcomes from reviews, audits and inspections.

To ensure effective partnership working to safeguard children, families and communities in Leeds, the LSCP arrangements are aligned and work closely with the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board and Safer Leeds. The nature of work undertaken in all three Partnership/ Boards, is such that there are several cross-cutting themes and appropriate working arrangements have been implemented to ensure the necessary leadership and coordination of work.

Recommendations

- a) For the Scrutiny Board to endorse the work undertaken to further strengthen the safeguarding children arrangements in Leeds.

What is this report about?

- 1 The report outlines the activity that has taken place across the year in relation to the Safeguarding Partners' statutory duties to work together in exercising their functions of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes developments in practice, progress with priorities, learning, scrutiny, inspections and statutory responsibilities.
- 2 The report provides assurance in relation to effectiveness of safeguarding practice and the multiagency safeguarding arrangements in Leeds.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 3 The report is intended to provide assurance and feedback to Scrutiny Board on the way in which the LSCP have carried out their statutory duties and the effectiveness of the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Leeds.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

- 4 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is paramount to their health and wellbeing and the longer term impact on their outcomes.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 5 This is a report produced through a process of engagement and consultation with partners that make up the LSCP.
- 6 Young people are also consulted through quality assurance work and the Leeds Voice and Influence Team provides a young person's perspective on the safeguarding system.
- 7 Consultation has taken place with Scrutiny Board (Children & Families)

What are the resource implications?

- 8 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, states that the LSCP should agree on the level of funding needed to deliver the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements with funding reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they can meet the financial needs of the arrangements.
- 9 The LSCP is not an operational body or one which delivers services to children, young people, and their families. Its role is co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what its member organisations do as well as contributing to broader planning, commissioning, and delivery of safeguarding services.
- 10 The Business unit manager has oversight of the LSCP budget and regular reports are given the LSCP Executive.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 11 The LSCP has a statutory responsibility under the Children Act 2004, underpinned by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 to hold partners to account to ensure all children at risk of, or experiencing harm are appropriately protected. The LSCP has a governance and accountability structure in place which includes seeking assurance regarding the current risks and oversees how these will be reduced.

- 12 There is a “Risk of harm, accident or death to a child linked to failure of the Council to act appropriately according to safeguarding arrangements”. The arrangements for managing the risk include regular reporting to Corporate Leadership Team (as part of the corporate risk register).
- 13 The development of services across Children’s and Families has been informed by challenge and scrutiny from external experts and leading practitioners and the extensive use of research to inform practice and service design. Leeds role as a Partner in Practice has strengthened cooperation with national government and other leading local authorities.

What are the legal implications?

- 14 The Children Act 2004, associated regulations and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, set out the requirements for all Safeguarding Children Partnership to produce, publish and submit to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel a yearly report.
- 15 The Board is not being asked to make any decision arising out of the contents of this report. The Board may request that the Director of Children and Families consider any implications for the work of Leeds City Council.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 16 The annual report is a statutory requirement of the LSCP, and it is required for assurance and governance purposes.

How will success be measured?

- 17 The safeguarding children arrangements include systems and governance to monitor the success and impact of the partnership and safeguarding practice, in keeping children safe.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 18 The full report was published on the LSCP website at the end of September 2024, in line with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Alongside this a video and child friendly version are in development to support accessibility.

Appendices

- Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023-24

Background papers

- None

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Leeds Safeguarding
Children Partnership



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



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FOREWORD

Welcome to the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for the period covering the 1st of April 2023 to 31st of March 2024, which is produced on behalf of the partnership by the Delegated Safeguarding Partners in Leeds.

We would like to start with taking the opportunity to thank all our front-line practitioners and managers, who work tirelessly to improve outcomes for children across the city. It is the commitment, dedication, and care that they give to children and families, on a daily basis, that keeps children safe.

Over the last year we have taken the time to review and refresh our safeguarding arrangements. This work will continue into 2024-25 and further information will be published on our website, in line with the requirements of Working Together 2023.

During the review of the safeguarding arrangements, several of the subgroups have not met on a regular basis in their usual format, to allow a review of functions and outcomes. However, the work has continued across the partnership, and this is evident within the report. We are particularly proud of the findings of the recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection and feel that this demonstrates the strong commitment in Leeds to safeguarding children at all levels. Strategic partnerships in Leeds were described as well embedded and mature and strategic leaders, across all agencies invested in the partnership and in reducing the risks to children to make Leeds a safer city.

This year has also seen the introduction of an Independent Scrutineer, David Derbyshire, who joined Leeds in September 2023. We want to take this opportunity to thank David for his work to date in supporting the partnership to strengthen our safeguarding arrangements and look forward to utilising his expertise further in the coming year.

Work has continued throughout the year in relation to our safeguarding priorities and this report demonstrates the developments that have taken place and the opportunities for further work in the coming year.

As a partnership, we are committed to continually improving safeguarding practice in the city, and in the coming year we want to strengthen the voice and influence of children and young people and be able to clearly evidence the impact of the work of the partnership on the outcomes for children and families.

This year we have made the decision that our annual report should be more accessible and have made a commitment to produce a video with key messages.

Director of Nursing & Quality, Leeds Office,
NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

Director, Children & Families,
Leeds City Council

Chief Superintendent, Leeds District
Commander, West Yorkshire Police

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER STATEMENT

It is right to say at the outset of these comments that multi-agency arrangements for the safeguarding of children in Leeds are strong. There is strong commitment to safeguarding children at senior levels in all agencies. There is an ability and willingness on the part of the statutory partners and other agencies to sort out any difficulties and grapple with some of the more testing issues facing Leeds and other locations in the country.

In 2023, the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) took the decision to replace the role of Independent Chair of the partnership with the new role of Independent Scrutineer to further strengthen the LSCP's resilience in the future.

This new role commenced on 27 September 2023. Since that date, the Government's revised national guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 was published, which includes the continued requirement for independent scrutiny and requires full implementation by December 2024.

The new Government guidance built on research conducted by the University of Bedfordshire and others in 2022, about what makes for effective independent scrutiny. The functions of the Independent Scrutineer in Leeds are therefore to:

- provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multiagency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- ensure that the voice of children and families is considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

The Independent Scrutineer in Leeds commenced work on the above areas immediately and agreed with the LSCP a plan of scrutiny for 2024-25 based on this guidance.

The focus of attention in 2023-24 was to assist, support and advise the LSCP on its review of structures, considering local needs and the requirements of new Government guidance.

The Independent Scrutineer provided input to the establishment of a new Audit and Review sub-group whose purpose was to enhance the level of assurance about the quality of safeguarding activities in Leeds to inform the Executive group in future about areas requiring deeper dives, improvement or replication of excellent practice. This group agreed the first multi-agency review and audit to take place in 2024-25 and the need for a future annual plan of multi-agency review and audit.

The Independent Scrutineer also supported partner agencies in recruitment of a new LSCP Business Unit manager who assumed post in January 2024 and will provide the leadership and drive needed.

The Independent Scrutineer has also supported and challenged as required the discussions of the Review Advisory Group about cases where children have suffered serious harm because of child abuse or neglect. This group agreed measures to build on its successes in learning relevant lessons to focus on high quality reviews taking place as quickly as possible and the Independent Scrutineer was able to take part in high quality analytical discussions about these cases where managers from different agencies came together to discuss openly means by which to overcome challenges. The partnership in Leeds experiences very similar key practice challenges to those experienced by other local safeguarding partnerships, namely ensuring that practitioners are able to balance the need to support vulnerable parents and carers with an inquisitive approach which ensures safeguarding of children, the difficulties in working with frightened survivors of domestic abuse and those responsible for carrying out domestic abuse and the challenges and time needed to form effective working relationships with teenagers who are risk of exploitation and/or involvement in violent acts against others.

The Independent Scrutineer met with a range of managers and staff in different organisations working in Leeds. These meeting established common themes regardless of the role of the staff concerned. Resources are very tight and do not always permit practitioners to do as much as they know is needed and not as early as would be effective. The critical issues facing agencies were domestic abuse, serious youth violence and exploitation of teenagers and dealing effectively with cases of suspected neglect. The Independent Scrutineer was able to discuss these issues with lead managers in the LSCP and the LSCP agreed these areas as their priorities for 2024-25 with the issue of neglect being focused on ensuring that arrangements to offer early family help dealt effectively with concerns of neglect.

It is very positive that the LSCP has set itself some highly challenging questions to answer about seeking to take steps to resolve further a range of safeguarding issues which can all be intractable across the country. It is positive that agencies in Leeds can build on their strengths to focus on these questions while continuing to devote attention to ensuring the here-and-now is working effectively.

The Independent Scrutineer also reported that all staff in varied settings have a positive regard for working in Leeds and all are proud of how their individual employers in the local



authority, NHS or police service encourage them to achieve the highest standards possible. The Scrutineer also noted the high level of commitment among all agencies at managerial and frontline levels to the Leeds Approach, involving an understanding of the impact of life trauma on individuals and how they behave as a result to focus energy on support and assistance wherever possible.

There is also clear leadership and priority given to safeguarding in each of the statutory agencies (local authority, NHS and police) but also in schools and the voluntary and community sector groups working in the city. The senior leaders of the statutory agencies meet at least monthly and often more frequently and demonstrate both an ability to work well together but also to challenge one another and resolve disagreements with or without the need for the Independent Scrutineer's involvement.

There are and will continue to be challenges in a large city with several areas made up of people living in poverty. Furthermore, Leeds is also host to regional and national services such as paediatric services at Leeds General Infirmary, a secure children's home and a Young Offender's Institute (YOI) at HMP Wetherby.

The latter received an inspection report published in March 2024 which contained a number of areas for improvement. Some of these related to the continued detention at Wetherby of young female offenders in provision built and set up for young male offenders. The LSCP has rightly committed to work alongside the new Governor at the YOI to support the necessary improvements for all young people who are detained there.

Leeds was also host to a Joint Targeted Area Inspection undertaken by multiple inspectorates and led by Ofsted about arrangements to safeguard children at risk of

involvement in or affected by serious youth violence. The report of this inspection has since been published and confirms the high quality of practice based on trauma-informed principles in work with a challenging group of young people at substantial risk of harm in Leeds. The Independent Scrutineer met with the Lead Inspector and was able to share thoughts and respond to queries to assist this process.

The most significant work for the LSCP in 2024-25 will be to consolidate on the work undertaken to date to ensure the continuation of a strong response to safeguarding issues in Leeds:

- Ensuring that the revised structure of sub-groups and priorities agreed by the LSCP work to full effect at a time when each of the three statutory partners faces challenges over resources with each having also needed to reduce financial contribution to the LSCP for 2024-25.
- Improving the multi-agency assurance of safeguarding service quality through a range of different review and audit approaches. This will strengthen the LSCP's ability to direct attention and resources quickly.
- Ensuring implementation of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 in respect of learning and development activity, governance arrangements and a revised protocol relating to working with Children in Need as required by the guidance.
- Enhancing working relationships with other strategic and planning groups in Leeds working with issues affecting the safeguarding of children, especially the Safer Leeds Executive, the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership and the Family Help Board.
- Enhancing current arrangements to ensure that the voice of children and young people influence safeguarding arrangements so that there is direct input from children and young people and especially those with experience of safeguarding systems.
- Improving the linkages between frontline staff and those making decisions in the LSCP so that the visibility of the LSCP for frontline staff is enhanced. The Independent Scrutineer will continue meeting with frontline staff and managers in the city to support this aim and ensure that there is a shared understanding of needs and issues wherever possible.

In sum, the multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children in Leeds are strong and this strength will enhance ability to meet future challenges in terms of safeguarding children.

The welcoming of the new role of independent scrutiny, in place of the independent chair function, will further strengthen the LSCP's resilience in the future.

David Derbyshire



ABOUT LEEDS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

Leeds is the second largest city council in England in terms of both population and geographical area, and has the ambition to be the best city in the UK for children and young people to grow up in.

There are 174,133 children and young people aged under 18 in Leeds as estimated by the Office for National Statistics for 2023 (mid-year estimates published July 2024). This is of an overall population of 829,413. The under 25 population is 275,469, Leeds has a higher student population than the national average for local authorities.

The Leeds child population grew 10.9% in the last decade with around 10,000 children born each year in the decade up to 2018 (ONS), since then the birth rate has fallen 15%. The high birth years are now progressing through teenage years. 24% of Leeds communities (Index of Multiple Deprivation) are considered amongst the 10% most deprived nationally. 33% of the Leeds under-18 population live in those communities.

The January (2024) school census shows that 32.3% of children in reception to year 11 are from ethnically diverse backgrounds. 58.9% are from white British backgrounds and 3.5% from white European backgrounds. The younger the population the greater the diversity. 25.1% of children in primary school and 27.4 in secondary are eligible from free school meals (January 2024).

Safeguarding systems remain strong across the city, with feedback given at a recent JTAI inspection that, “strategic partnerships in Leeds are well embedded and mature, with leaders across all agencies being invested in the partnership and in reducing the risks to children to make Leeds a safer city.”

In December 2023 the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance set out the updated legislative safeguarding requirements that applies to individuals, organisations and agencies. It set out the framework for the three local safeguarding partners (the local authority, Integrated Care Board and local police force) to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. It also provided the framework for the two child death review partners (the local authority and ICB) to make arrangements for reviewing all deaths of children normally resident in the local area, and if they considered it appropriate, for those not normally resident in the area.

In preparation for the new guidance and as a response to its publication, the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) in Leeds have spent the year further developing the safeguarding arrangements for the city. A 7 point plan was initially developed, to ensure readiness for the publication of the updated guidance. This plan was then updated in January 2024, as a response to the publication, and was enhanced further by a development plan, which is overseen by the DSPs, collectively known as the LSCP Executive in Leeds. This plan will ensure the implementation of the new Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance and ensures that the partnership can monitor progress.

The new arrangements will be published on the [LSCP website](#), in line with the requirements of [Working Together 2023](#) and the current arrangements are described in this report.



LSCP Executive

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 sets out the responsibilities of the three safeguarding statutory partners, and within that those of the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs), who are named as the Chief Officer of Police, the Chief Executive of the Local Authority and the Chief Executive of the local Integrated Care Board (ICB)

The joint functions of the lead safeguarding partners are to:

- Set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.
- Lead their organisation's individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms to hold their delegates to account for the delivery of agency commitments.
- Review and sign off key partnership documents: published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget, yearly report, and local threshold document.
- Provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews, ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable impact on practice (as set out in the yearly report).
- Ensure multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data set providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.
- Ensure all relevant agencies, including education settings, are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Each LSP should appoint a delegated safeguarding partner (DSP) for its agency who should be named in the arrangements. The DSPs should be sufficiently senior to be able to speak with authority, take decisions on behalf of the LSP and hold their sectors to account. The DSPs should have the authority to carry out these functions, while ultimate accountability remains with the LSP as the individual responsible for the delivery of the statutory duties of the safeguarding partners.

In Leeds there is work ongoing in relation to the full implementation of Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 and the LSP roles, with the DSPs forming an Executive Group to ensure that their functions and accountability are addressed.

The LSCP Executive consists of the three statutory agencies that have equal and joint responsibilities for local safeguarding arrangements and ensuring that responsibilities under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 are discharged. They set and lead the strategic safeguarding vision, provide leadership across the city, and identify the LSCP priorities.

The three statutory agencies and representatives for the city are:

- Chief Superintendent - Leeds District Commander, West Yorkshire Police
- Director of Children and Families, Leeds City Council
- Director of Nursing and Quality, Leeds office of NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board.



Currently the Executive also includes:

- LSCP Independent Scrutineer
- LSCP Business Unit Manager
- LSCP Legal Advisor

The LSCP Executive have reviewed and agreed some improvements to the safeguarding arrangements this year, including the purpose, functions and chairing arrangements of all the subgroups and the Children and Young People's Partnership meeting, to ensure that they are aligned to the vision of the partnership, identified learning, and priorities.

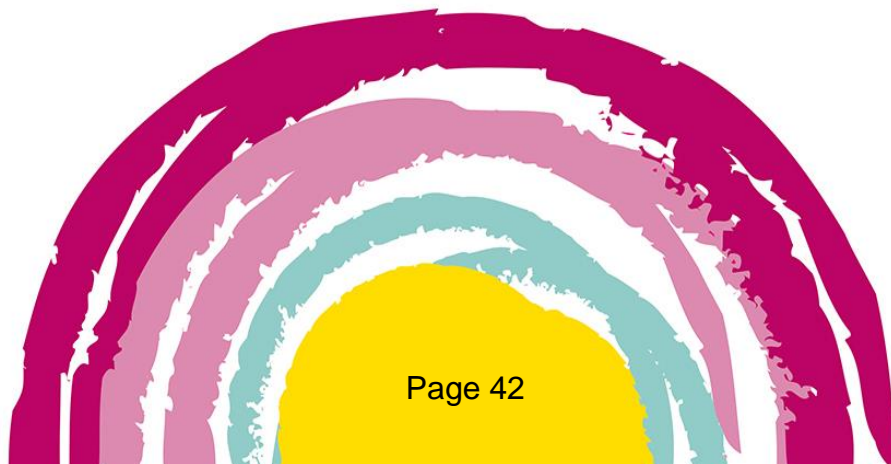
This year has seen the introduction of an Audit and Review group, in place of the previous Performance Management group.

The Policy and Procedures group has been revitalised as the Policy and Practice group, to strengthen the focus on improving safeguarding practice, learning and responding to the voice of children, young people and practitioners.

The previous Risk and Vulnerabilities group, which included the arrangements for Silver MACE has been repurposed to ensure a more focused remit on risks that children face outside the home environment.

The LSCP Executive made the decision this year to make the change from the employment of an independent chair to that of a [scrutineer](#).

The LSCP Executive have made a commitment in the coming year to consider how education can be a fourth partner within the Leeds Safeguarding Children arrangements, and this will be implemented within 2024.



SUBGROUPS

During the review of the safeguarding arrangements undertaken by the Executive, several of the subgroups have not met on a regular basis in their usual format, to allow a review of functions and outcomes.

Following the review all the LSCP, subgroups now report directly to the LSCP Executive to ensure appropriate oversight and assurance.

The chairing arrangements for each group have been reviewed to ensure that there is seniority from within partner agencies to deliver the desired outcomes.

The achievements throughout the year, and progress with the priorities are articulated throughout the report.

Review Advisory Group (RAG)

The LSCP RAG is made up of a senior representative from the three statutory partners, the independent scrutineer, a legal advisor and business unit member, with the chairing role rotating between the three statutory partners.

The group has overall responsibility for the serious child safeguarding review process in Leeds, identifying and reviewing cases which, in their opinion, raise issues of importance in relation to Leeds and where appropriate, the commissioning and oversight of the review of those cases in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 Chapter 5](#).

The serious child safeguarding review process in Leeds and relevant learning from this year is outlined in the section [LSCP Reviews 2023 – 2024](#).

The group has a key role in ensuring the identification of good practice and areas of learning with the objective of improving outcomes for children and young people and preventing future harm.

The RAG also considers the learning from national reviews to inform and improve practice in Leeds, and ensures that learning from reviews at all levels are communicated with the other LSCP groups for consideration, including Learning and Development and the Audit and Review groups.

Audit and Review Group

This new group was established this year, after consideration to how we understand and capture the impact of developments in practice. This group oversees the implementation of a multi-agency review and audit plan and receives summaries of key lessons (and fuller details where required) from single agency audits conducted across the LSCP partnership. The group is tasked to review relevant safeguarding data and advise the LSCP Executive of critical trends in respect of needs relevant to safeguarding children.

The group is chaired by the Deputy Director of Nursing and Quality, for NHS West Yorkshire ICB in Leeds, with membership from across the safeguarding partnership. The independent scrutineer is also a member of the group, to ensure that the lens of scrutiny is applied at the earliest opportunity.

The activity of the group has been limited to date as it was only introduced at the end of the year. The focus has been on establishing a representative group, with a clear focus and workplan to ensure that any activity informs practice and offers assurance on safeguarding activity to the LSCP Executive.

There is recognition that more needs to be done to develop an audit framework, however, audits have continued in relation to the JTAI themes.

In the second half of the year the JTAI theme moved to Serious Youth Violence, and an inspection was undertaken in Leeds, see the [External Inspection Section](#).

All learning identified within the JTAI audit process is shared across the partnership and will now form part of the work of the LSCP subgroups.

Audit activity has continued to take place across the partnership and within organisations, with this work identifying strengths and opportunities in safeguarding practice, as well as offering a level of assurance.

Within the Children and Families Service there is an established Quality Assurance Framework which was revised and implemented in early 2023. The Quality Assurance Framework includes the aim to undertake a schedule of auditing activity, which includes Interactive Learning Audits, Audit Participation Groups, and thematic audits.

The weekly referral review meeting forms part of Leeds Children's Services quality assurance framework. The meeting is attended by a representative from the 3 statutory safeguarding partners and is chaired by the Principal Social Worker. The meetings' purpose is to provide multi agency oversight of safeguarding decision making on contacts to Children's Social Work Service, where the primary factor for referral is abuse or neglect. The meeting is a safeguarding multi-agency check point, ensuring children are safeguarded with proportionate and appropriate responses to risk and need.

During 2023/ 2024 an internal audit of the child safeguarding arrangements within NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, provided significant assurance that the day-to-day operations of safeguarding children was appropriate and compliant with national guidelines and best practice.

The Annual Safeguarding Staff Audit within LTHT, identified that staff know where and how to find safeguarding advice and support, how to make a safeguarding referral, how to escalate serious safeguarding incidents and the location of safeguarding policies and procedures.

A health audit review meeting is held monthly, between health partners and the Duty and Advice manager. This allows agencies to work together to review the standard of referrals into services, offering feedback and identifying areas for improvement, in a timely manner.

Silver MACE

Leeds have developed strong multi-agency arrangements to respond to child exploitation through its Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) arrangements, with the silver MACE group forming part of these arrangements.

The previous risk and vulnerabilities group, this year has been redesigned to ensure a more focused approach to the safeguarding needs within the city, in particular in relation to exploitation, serious youth violence and knife crime. This group is now known as Silver

MACE and feeds any challenges and opportunities into the LSCP Executive, who are the Gold MACE.

The group is chaired by the Head of Crime and Safeguarding, Leeds District, West Yorkshire Police, with membership that includes health, education, third sector, CSWS, youth justice and representative from Safer Leeds.

The Silver Group will seek assurance that there is a focused approach and a robust multi-agency response towards prevention, early identification and intervention of children and young people, and the proactive targeting, disrupting and prosecuting of individuals or groups who seek to exploit, abuse and harm children.

In addition, the group seeks assurance that best practice is undertaken and also takes account of local and national research to continually improve safeguarding arrangements in this area of work.

Learning and Development Group

The Learning and Development Group has been redesigned this year to strengthen the focus on learning from reviews, findings of assurance activity and responding to the voice of children, young people and practitioners.

The group is now chaired by the Head of Quality & Practice Improvement and Principal Social Worker. The membership has been reviewed to ensure that there is representation from senior members of partner organisations.

Due to the review, the Learning and Development group has not met as frequently as in previous years, but the learning from reviews continues to have been progressed and is referred to in the [LSCP Reviews 2023 – 2024 section](#).

The multi-agency training offer has continued throughout the year and is referred to in the [Multiagency Training](#) section.

Learning and Development opportunities continue to be available for staff and can be accessed via the [LSCP website](#) and are promoted within the monthly Newsletter.

Policy and Practice Group

Previously this group was a Policy and Procedures group and met when required in line with the need to update or develop new or existing policies and/or procedures.

Following the review the group has been renamed as the Policy and Practice group, to ensure that a focus is maintained on practice improvement, incorporating policies and procedures. This group will now meet regularly and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Nurse of Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, with senior representation from across partners.

The initial focus of the group has been to identify all policies and procedures that require reviewing, to ensure that practitioners have access to the most up to date resources. This includes the implications to practice and policy of the new revised [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guidance](#).

In addition, the LSCP have arrangements in place with the other five LSCP's in West Yorkshire to ensure there is consistency of policies across this geographical footprint.

Education Safeguarding Group (ESG)

The LSCP Education Reference Group has been renamed this year to the LSCP Education Safeguarding Group, to recognise the vital role that education plays within the safeguarding arrangements in Leeds. The main purpose of the group's work is to support the wider strategic work of the LSCP, and the work of the group has been re-purposed this year to ensure it is able to fulfil its strategic responsibilities.

The group is now chaired by the Executive Principle of a Local Academy Trust with a deputy chair from further education, with membership from a wide range of education establishments and relevant partners.



This year to enable the Education Safeguarding Group to effectively fulfil the remit set out as part of the LSCP the ESG has redefined the membership of the group to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear and support the effective delivery of strategic work as summarised below:

- **The ESG Committee (ESGC):** The committee is a small group of leaders who will provide strategic leadership and oversight of the group's work. The leadership of the group will have representation from Leeds Safeguarding Children's Partnership, The Local Authority Safeguarding team and the Education sector with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- **ESG Core Membership Meetings.** This group has been constituted to ensure strong representation across the education sector to capture their voice and views and membership is drawn from key educational organisations from across the city.
- **Task and Delivery Groups (TDGs):** TDGs will be established to support the completion of key actions and membership will be relevant to the task and include appropriate expertise and knowledge.

A commitment has been made to recognise education as the fourth LSCP Statutory Executive partner in Leeds.

Third Sector Safeguarding Group

Representatives from the vast third sector in Leeds remain significant and active partners within the safeguarding arrangements. The LSCP structure includes a Third Sector Safeguarding Group, which is chaired by the CEO of Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service with the deputy chair from Homestart and support from Voluntary Action Leeds.

The purpose of this group is to ensure that our third sector partners have a strong voice, acting as a conduit to sharing learning from LSCP safeguarding reviews and audit work, highlighting challenges or opportunities, and supporting the development of safeguarding practice.

The group has met quarterly throughout the year with each meeting consisting of updates from both the LSCP and organisations from across the third sector. The meetings are themed to support discussion and sharing of views and ideas. Attendees then share this information with their colleagues and within their own organisations, gaining feedback as appropriate.

Themes this year have included areas of practice development, identified learning and changes in safeguarding practice, including suicide prevention, concerns resolution process, learning from reviews, illegal money leading and the role of the scrutineer.

A further development this year was the formation of a Care Collective (working title) to look at the support/services that are available to Care Experienced, Care Leavers and those at risk of entering the care system. In the current economic climate this is an opportunity to consider how statutory and third sector organisations can work together. This group is in its early stages of development. A Chair and Vice Chair are now in place, and an initial meeting taken place with the first task identified; to map what's happening across the city. Progress will then be reported back to the LSCP Executive.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Operational Group (MASOG)

The purpose of this group is to oversee and ensure the integration of the Specialist Child Protection Medical Service within the pathway of safeguarding assessments of children and young people in Leeds, including ensuring that there are relevant policies and procedures in place and any risks are escalated and addressed.

This group is chaired by the Head of Safeguarding in Leeds, for the West Yorkshire ICB, with Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust (LTHT) providing the deputy chair. The membership includes representatives from West Yorkshire Police, Children and Families Service, and the Child Protection Medical Service (CPMS), safeguarding leads from the ICB, LCH and LTHT and Mountain Health Care who are commissioned to provide sexual abuse medicals throughout West Yorkshire.

This year, due to the review of the subgroups that has taken place and operational issues effecting the membership the MASOG, the group has not met as regularly as it previously would have, however, there has remained in place a process of escalation via the usual process for any operational issues that have been identified.

The focus going forward is to review the purpose and functions of the group and a development session is planned to ensure that focus of the group is aligned with the needs and prioritises of the partnership.

Secure Estates Safeguarding Group

The Secure Estates group has only met once this year, due to the review that has taken place, although communication between the services and relevant agencies and escalation of concerns to the executive has been maintained.

The group is to be refreshed as of the start of 2024-25, with a reviewed TOR and a new chair from Leeds Community Healthcare Trust (LCH), membership will continue to include representatives from the secure settings within in Leeds, as well as children and family services, West Yorkshire Police and health services.

The group will continue to monitor the safeguarding arrangements in three secure settings in Leeds (Wetherby Young Offenders Institute, Adel Beck Secure Children's Home and the Police Custody Suite) providing oversight and challenge in relation to safeguarding.

Inspection findings and progress with relevant action plans will continue to be overseen and areas of concern highlighted to the LSCP Executive. The findings of any inspections undertaken this year are reported in External Inspections section.

Restraints

The LSCP has a duty to report on restraints within secure estates and this data is collated annually. A separate annual report from the Secure Settings group will be produced and presented to the LSCP Executive and to other relevant boards.

Wetherby YOI

In Wetherby YOI, 1181 restraints have taken place, including low to high level and planned and unplanned this year. Approximately 80% of the restraints involved young people identify as male and 20% female.

An inspection that took place in Wetherby YOI this year (see [External Inspection section](#)). Following the outcome of the inspection that LSCP Executive wrote to the Governor, met with the leadership team, requested the YOI improvement plan and have agreed to monitor this, providing appropriate support and challenge.

West Yorkshire Police Custody Suite

West Yorkshire Police data indicate that this year, 1176 children and young people had force used on them pre - detention, with 1047 of these recorded as having soft physical force used, which can include restraint or the use of handcuffs.

Over the year, 207 of children and young people received physical force (163 recorded as soft physical force) post detention, within the custody area.

When the data was analysed by WYP it was noted that these numbers are reflective of the type of offence an individual was arrested for. This data will be analysed further and overseen by the secure settings group.

Adel Beck Secure Children's Home

Adel Beck is a secure children's home (SCH) operated by Leeds City Council and is approved by the Department for Education. It accommodates up to 24 children and young people of different genders aged between 10-17 years of age. It provides for up to 14 children and young people placed by the Youth Custody Service and up to 10 children and young people subject to section 25 (welfare) of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by Local Authorities. The admission of children under 13 years of age on welfare grounds under section 25 requires the approval of the Secretary of State for Education.

This year Adel Beck data demonstrates that there were 168 restraints carried out within the year, across the different units. Approximately 43% of these involved a young person who identified as male and 57% female.

More detailed data such as the age of the young people, ethnicity and type of restraint, are provided by the secure settings and analysed in the Secure Setting group and will be included within the Secure Settings annual report.

Children and Young People's Partnership

The Children and Young People's Partnership was developed to provide strategic leadership, vision, and drive delivery of the LSCP Annual Report priorities and the [Leeds Children and Young People's Plan \(CYPP\)](#).

The meeting is now chaired by an Executive member of the LSCP, currently the Director of Children and Families, reporting directly to the executive. Membership includes the chairs of the LSCP subgroups and wider safeguarding partnership, voice and influence, Executive Member for Children, Families & Adult Social Care, LCC, Third Sector, Education, as well as leads related to the CYPP.



This year, the purpose, functions and priorities of the meeting were part of the review of the governance structure carried out by the Executive. An engagement session has been held and views sought regarding the future arrangements for the meeting, wider partnership arrangements and oversight of the CYPP as well as an OBA to develop the safeguarding priorities for 2024-25. There has also been a continued focus on bringing the voice of children and young people into the partnership.

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Child death review partners are the local authority and the ICB. Statutory responsibilities are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. To ensure that these statutory responsibilities are met in Leeds both CDOP and Neonatal Death Overview Panels (NDOP) are held regularly with a standalone annual report published on the [LSCP website](#).

CDOP/NDOP are key to learning from deaths of all children and this year there has been a variety of learning identified and subsequent actions.

In brief the key changes made this year, as a result of the learning in CDOP and NDOP are:

- The Local Resilience Forum have taken forward national recommendations from the Manchester Arena Bombing.
- Bath time duck safety campaign was delivered by Health Visitors and an update was made in the written information given to parents in the "red book".

- Health visitor policy on warning about sleep pods reinforced. Posters about the dangers of sleep pods in wards.
- Health visitors in Leeds have embedded the 'every sleep a safe sleep' campaign into their advice to families with newborns.
- Health visitors in Leeds now share information about risk of suffocation (for example from nappy sacks) at an earlier stage.
- Links strengthened with third sector organisations supporting Gypsy Roma and Traveller families.
- Midwifery colleagues in Leeds have started to use the national Birmingham Symptom Obstetric Tool (BSOT) to help identify which women should be advised to come into the labour ward.
- There is improved liaison between HV service and hospital antenatal team to provide links for babies who are expected to be unwell after birth and require enhanced support.
- Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust have done work to improve advocacy for those young people aged 16 and 17 years old via training on the Mental Capacity Act
- Leeds Community Healthcare NHS trust have done work to prompt promotion of covid vaccination.
- Partners are developing a revised guidelines for SUDI which will include better signposting to senior police to help sensitively manage access to scenes of death.
- Enhanced training has been given to midwifery teams to aid the interpretation of monitoring of mothers and babies in labour.
- Adequate thermal management of very premature infants has been highlighted to maternity and neonatal services and remain under continuous review.
- Improvement in the collection of key demographic information for SUDIC cases has been trialled, to improve data capture.
- Vaping has been added as a section into the analysis proforma.



FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

Working Together 2023, states that the LSCP should agree on the level of funding needed to deliver the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This includes consideration of business and analytical support, independent scrutiny, infrastructure, and core functions including local children safeguarding practice reviews, multi-agency training and learning events. It is the responsibility of the LSP to ensure that adequate funding is allocated and spent in line with agreed priorities.

Funding contributions from the statutory safeguarding partners should be equitable and agreed by the LSP. Funding for the arrangements should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they can meet the financial needs of the arrangements.

The funding partners have continued their commitment to funding the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, as set out below.

Contributions 2023-24

Leeds City Council- Children and Families	£175,000
NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board	£135,135
West Yorkshire Police	£ 26,000
West Yorkshire Probation	£ 6,000
Leeds City Council- Housing	£51,645
Previous DofE funding	£10,000
Training charging	£17,600
Total	£379,422

This funding provides staffing and resources that are managed by the LSCP Business Unit manager as detailed below and regular oversight reports are presented to the Executive.

The majority of the budget, as expected is allocated to the staffing of the business unit, with professional services, including the undertaking of CSPRs which require an independent commissioned author, being the next largest area of spend.

Spending 2023-24

Staffing	£302,201
Professional Services	£35,197
Refreshments	£186
Room Hire	£3,579
Recruitment and Advertising	£484
Membership	£1988
Total	£343,635

This year has seen an underspend, which is mostly due to a reduction of staffing within the business unit. The underspend will go into a reserve budget, which the partnership will utilise in the coming year to address the identified gaps in response to learning from reviews, the LSCP priorities and the findings of the JTAI inspection.



WHAT DO WE KNOW- DATA

The new Audit and Review group has the responsibility for the monitoring, oversight and analysis of data. For the coming year, the audit plan will be responsive to the analysis of data, with a workplan that includes wider data analysis from across the partnership.

The local authority performance team provide a rich source of data for the Audit and Review group to consider and analyse. This reflects the openness of the local authority to have their data considered by agencies with a view to identify challenges and seek opportunities.

There are plans in place to review the data dashboard in line with the LSCP priorities and to include wider partners data.

Child Protection Systems

Child protection data is routinely examined by children's services and findings shared and analysed as required across the partnership, via subgroups.

As of March 2024, there were 690 children with a child protection plan (CPP) in Leeds equating to a rate of 39.6 children and young people with a CPP per 10,000 children aged 0-18. This is an increase from 601 the previous March 2023 a rate of 35.2. The England rate for 2023 was 43.2 per 10,000. At the end of July 2024 there were 670 Leeds children on a child protection plan

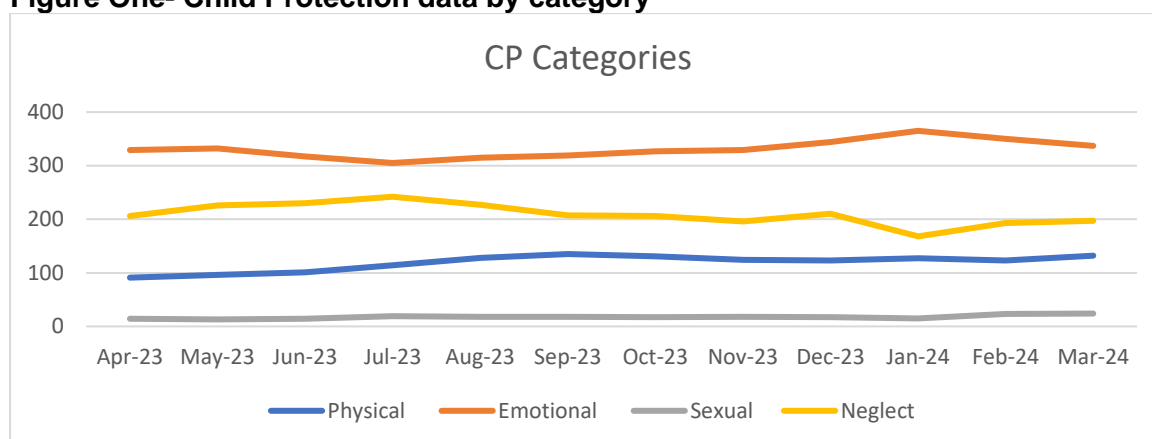
When official data is published later in the year, we anticipate the Leeds rate will remain below national, regional core city and statistical neighbour averages. The comparative rates for children on a child protection plan for March 2023 were:

- Leeds 35.2
- Core cities 47.7
- Statistical neighbours 51.3
- Yorkshire and The Humber 50.8
- England 43.2

July 2024 analysis of children on a child protection plan shows that children from a mixed ethnic background are over-represented when compared to the current reception to Year 11 school population (10.3% compared to 7.5%), children from an Asian background are under-represented (7.0% to 12.1%) with children from a black ethnic background on a child protection plan slightly above the school population (10.2% to 9.2%).



Figure One- Child Protection data by category



In line with previous years, the number of children experiencing emotional abuse remains the key reason of children being subject to a CPP in Leeds.

The age categories of children requiring a CPP have broadly remained the same over the four years of data in Figure Three, although this year has seen a 2% reduction in under 1s having a CPP and slight increases in the other age groups.

Those aged 10-15 years make up the largest category of children with a CPP, followed by those aged 5-9 years old, which has been the picture across the 4 years outlined and is in line with the national trend across England.

Figure Two- Child protection date by age

Age Categories CPP	2020/21	2021/22	22/23	23/24
Percentage of cohort under 1	6.9%	7.6%	8.5%	6.5%
Percentage of cohort 1-4	25.5%	25.5%	21.4%	23.0%
Percentage of cohort 5-9	29.9%	30.5%	31.3%	29.3%
Percentage of cohort 10-15	31.7%	31.5%	32.6%	34.3%
Percentage of cohort 16+	6.0%	4.8%	6.2%	6.8%

To ensure that the needs of children and families who require the support and safety of a child protection plan are addressed as quickly as possible, it is vital that these take place within an appropriate timescale. Last year concerns were highlighted regarding the low levels of initial child protection conferences being held on time. Assurance was provided, in relation to the cause of this low level and that safety and improvement plans were in place.

Throughout the year further developments and improvements have been made and sustained, by the end of the year there was significant improvements with 80.3% of conferences being held in time.

Timescales for review child protection conferences were not impacted in the same way, with 85.3% held in time as of March 2024.

The Audit and Review group will continue to monitor this performance measure.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The latest official statistics are from the **903 Children in Care data** for 2023. Consistent with authorities across England Leeds is seeing growth in the child in care population. While Leeds compares well in terms of long-term trends in recent years 2019-23 the Leeds rate of increase is marginally above comparators (7 children per 10,000 compared to 5 or 6 children for comparator groups). Leeds 2023 rate of children in care of 84 per 10,000 ranks 6th of 11



with statistical neighbours, rates range from 57 to 144. Leeds rate is 4th of 8 core cities with a range from 57 to 156 children in care per 10,000.

The age profile of the Leeds children in care population is similar to England. Children aged 10-17 make up 62% of our Looked After population from 44% of our child population. Ages 16 and 17 make up 22% of the Leeds care population and 10% of the child population.

Children from mixed ethnic backgrounds are over-represented in the care population and those from Asian backgrounds under-represented relative to the Leeds population. Nationally published (March 24 for 2022/23) data identifies that 60% of Leeds Children Looked After of statutory school age have an identified SEN similar to 58.1 percent in England.

Care starters by reason for care entry Abuse or Neglect is the main reason why a child starts care, consistently over 60% of cases. While the proportion is consistent the number of cases has grown by 32% or 88 children between 2019/20 to 2023/24. In 2019/20 there were 111 cases with starting care reasons of absent parenting, family dysfunction and family in distress, in 2023/24 there were 186 cases with one of these reasons.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Between 2018 and 2020, numbers fluctuated between 50 and 60. From 2021/22 to 2022/23, numbers rose to mid-70s. In 2023/24 the number rose to around 100 by December 2023 and was then stable to March 2024. Since March 2024, a further increase has been seen to 120. Under the National Transfer Scheme Leeds' current 'threshold' is 172. In 2023/24 these children represented 27 per cent of the overall CLA cohort growth.





LSCP REVIEWS 2023 – 2024

The LSCP Review Advisory Group (RAG) is responsible for identifying learning in relation to the most serious cases, including Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents (SCSIs), identifying good practice and areas of learning and improvement.

The fundamental purpose of reviewing incidents where children who have either died because of abuse or neglect, or where children have been seriously harmed, is to learn from those cases to help make improvements to systems that protect children and to prevent other children from being harmed.

A central role is to seek assurance related to actions taken following local learning activities, Rapid Reviews, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) or National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. The RAG requests support from other LSCP subgroups to disseminate learning, undertake quality assurance work to measure impact and to seek assurance that partner agencies use their own internal structures to implement recommendations.

The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the panel) and at a local level with the safeguarding partners.

Leeds has a robust review process in place which ensures that cases are considered in a timely manner in line with the requirements of the guidance, considers the views of the three safeguarding strategic partners and is overseen by a clear governance process, which is published on the website.

Notifications of SCSIs

The legislative framework of the Children Act 2004, places a duty on local authorities in England, to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the 'Panel'), of incidences of death or serious harm where it is known or suspected that a child has been abused or neglected. This includes those children that maybe temporarily outside the local authority's area in which they usually reside.

The revised Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 states that the local authority performs this duty on behalf of the safeguarding partners.

The local authority should notify the Panel of any incident that meets the above criteria via the Child Safeguarding Online Notification System. It should do so within five working days of becoming aware it has occurred.

In Leeds the LSCP has in place a process for discussing and agreeing those incidents which may meet the criteria for making a notification (the SCSi Notification Process). This process has oversight from its Executive and legal advice is provided, and in this reporting period all decisions have been unanimously agreed.

The local authority has a separate duty to notify the DfE and Ofsted when a looked after child dies, up to and including the age of 24 (in accordance with its leaving care duties). There is no automatic requirement for a local child safeguarding practice review, unless the criteria are met. However local partners may convene a local review if they think learning may be gained.

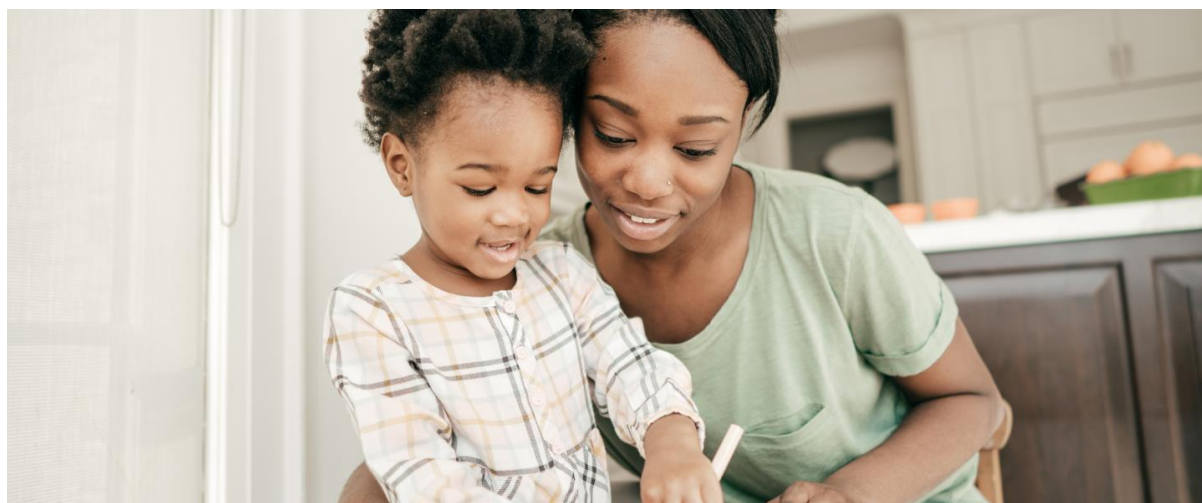
In Leeds the Review Process has been reviewed and updated in line with the requirements of Working Together 2023.

The LSCP RAG collectively considers whether an incident meets the criteria for a SCSi notification, with the relevant partner agencies providing information and professional opinions to support the decision making. Following the notification of a SCSi by the local authority to the National Safeguarding Panel the LSCP through the LSCP RAG will promptly undertake a Rapid Review.

Cases for consideration are raised to the RAG via partner agencies using the SCSi notification and discussion form.

When an agency other than the local authority becomes aware of an incident that appears to meet the criteria for notification, the relevant partners discuss this with their agency's safeguarding lead (or RAG member) and if appropriate refers this to the LSCP RAG for a discussion in relation to a potential notification.

In 2023-24 the RAG considered four cases for notifications where the decision was made that they did not meet the criteria for notification. In these cases, feedback was given to the partner agency who raised the concern and the rationale for the decision made.



Rapid Reviews

A Rapid Review is a multi-agency process which considers the circumstances of a SCSi. The purpose of the Rapid Review is to identify and act upon immediate learning and consider if there is additional learning which could be identified through a wider Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR).

The Rapid Review enables safeguarding partners to:

- Gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time
- Discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately
- Identify immediate learning and consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Decide what steps they should take next, including whether to undertake a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR).

Once the Rapid Review responses have been received, RAG members meet, alongside the Rapid Review individual report authors, to consider the information, key learning points and areas for further consideration. This allows authors to share their information in a responsive way and ensure that the process is not remote.

RAG members then meet separately to consider if the criteria to undertake a review is met.

Minutes of all meetings are produced alongside the Rapid Review form, capturing the rationale for any recommendations made and shared with the LSCP Executive, who make the final decision, prior to submission to the Panel.

In 2023-24, in Leeds there were four Rapid Review processes completed and sent to the Panel, which related to five children.

The first case followed the death of a child. A Rapid Review was undertaken with a recommendation not to proceed with a CSPR, the Panel agreed with this decision.

The second, was originally discussed in relation to the abuse of three children, and the decision made for a single agency review - this was agreed by Panel. However, they advised if any further children were identified through the police investigation, then a CSPR ought to be considered.

Two further children were identified to be linked, and a subsequent Rapid Review was completed which recommended a CSPR.

A fourth Rapid Review related to the death of a baby and recommended that a CSPR be completed.

CSPRs

In 2023-24, one CSPR was completed; this was considered to be an exceptional case with reasons not to publish, including the potential adverse impact that publication could have on the subjects; this decision was supported by the Panel.

There are three ongoing CSPRs which have progressed this year and are at varying points of completion. Two further new CSPRs were agreed this year, one being a joint review with a neighbouring authority.

Progress with all the CSPRs in Leeds is overseen by the RAG and regular reports received by the Executive.

Some CSPRs have been delayed due to the availability of suitable authors, with local and wider partnerships expressing similar difficulties.



LEARNING THEMES

The implementation of learning from all cases, either for individual agencies or the partnership, irrespective of the decision to proceed to a CSPR, is overseen by the RAG with regular updates given to the LSCP Executive and incorporated in training.

From the cases this year there have been several themes identified, which will be considered in the appropriate subgroups in terms of implementation of learning and evaluation of impact. This is ongoing work throughout the year and will continue into 2024-25.

Professional curiosity – This has been a reoccurring theme in reviews and an area where work has already taken place across the partnership, including joint work with the Leeds Safeguarding Adult Board and Safer Leeds, to develop and disseminate consistent resources.

Discussions have taken place as to why this remains a recurring theme from reviews and how we evidence the impact of any work on practice and outcomes. In 2024-25 alongside Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board and Safer Leeds, a video will be developed to support practitioner understanding of professional curiosity. A decision has been made that further work is required to embed the learning in practice and in the coming year a national lead will be commissioned to support Leeds with this work.

A multi-agency learning event was held in February 2023, which focused on themes that emerged from a Rapid Review and a CSPR including professional curiosity, alongside cumulative risk assessing, disguised compliance, public protection and guarding against 'normalisation' of abuse within generations of families.

Throughout the year, partners have actively developed resources to support practitioners in relation to professional curiosity. Several partners have developed briefings for staff and to further enhance the existing professional curiosity partnership work across the city, the ICB safeguarding team has coordinated and developed an additional resource and training package with collaboration from colleagues from the health economy. The training will be advertised in 2024/2025 on the Leeds health and care academy platform www.leedshealthandcareacademy.org as this will allow the training to be accessible to a wide range of colleagues in the health and care sector.

Resources developed by individual partners are shared where appropriate across the partnership.

Leeds Children and Families continue to provide training for front line practitioners on professional curiosity. In particular for those working in safeguarding roles. This is incorporated into the broader workforce development offer.

Domestic Abuse- This is again a reoccurring theme, either current or historic, with concerns regarding how the impact upon children is recognised, understood and responded to.

Domestic Abuse remains a priority of the LSCP and the developments this year are included in the Priority section below.

In view of the need to continue with practice developments in this area, the data related to occurrences and children and the significant and long terms impact upon the wellbeing of children and outcomes, domestic abuse will remain a priority for the coming year. The LSCP will work with the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership (DALP) to improve practice.

The impact of bereavement- Several reviews have noted that there has been a bereavement or significant loss within the family, and this is not always been recognised or understood in terms of the impact on the child/children, parenting and the wider family.

As a result, guidance for schools: Response following a suspected suicide has been developed and as bereavement and loss continues to be a learning theme, it has been agreed that further work is required to ensure that practitioners are able to ensure that any loss is considered within work with child, young people and families. The partnership has approached a nationally recognised bereavement charity to support this work.

Leeds is working towards being a Trauma Informed city, which is reflected in all our actions, activities and interactions. Our strategy, Compassionate Leeds: Trauma awareness, prevention and response strategy for children, young people and families, sets out how we plan to create that change by taking a public health approach to the problem. This will focus on preventing childhood trauma and reducing its impact for children and young people across Leeds. Bereavement and loss are significant traumatic experiences for a child or young person and the partnership will support the Trauma Informed work of the city.

Neglect- continues to be evident in some cases, whether this is persistent and pervasive or as a response to a situation or event.

Leeds has a neglect strategy and tools to support practitioners available on the LSCP website, which are regularly accessed. Since their development there have been significant changes in practice and socio-economic circumstances, which means that it is timely to review the strategy and the underpinning tools, which will be undertaken in the coming year.

National Reviews- all learning from national reviews have also been considered by the RAG and appropriate actions developed. The findings and the response in Leeds, for the national review of safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings is being overseen by the SEND Partnership with oversight and assurance sought by the LSCP Executive.

Taking Learning from Reviews Forward

Following the identification of learning and/or the completion of a review, an action plan is collated and agreed by all the relevant partners. Progress against this is monitored by and assurance sought by the LSCP RAG. The key messages and themes are also considered in the relevant subgroups to ensure that learning is incorporated into training opportunities, policies, procedures and embedded in practice.

The dissemination of learning is achieved through:

- The production of learning sheets which summarise the incident which has been reviewed and the key good practice and learning – this is also provided to partner agency training leads to support them in reflecting lessons within single agency training.
- Updating training to reflect learning, including a section in relation to learning from reviews within the LSCP Refresher Training
- Presentation to the CYPP meeting including requests for partners to disseminate and embed learning internally.
- Practitioner presentations based on the review and identified learning – consideration is also undertaken with regards to capacity in relation to the number of sessions required to reach the workforce within Leeds.
- Inclusion within LSCP communications via the newsletter and website.

This year, consideration has been given to how we can share learning themes from Safeguarding Adults Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews and this work will be strengthened in the coming year.

MULTI-AGENCY TRAINING

Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that all staff and volunteers have access to the appropriate level of safeguarding training to undertake their safeguarding responsibilities. Agencies in Leeds are expected to ensure that any training which they deliver meets the standards as set out in the LSCP Safeguarding Introductory Training, Minimum Content Requirements.

The DSPs have the responsibility to ensure the provision of appropriate multi-agency safeguarding professional development and training. This is achieved in Leeds by a blended approach, which consists of on-line self-directed learning opportunities, taught on-line training sessions and wider learning and development opportunities which can be accessed via the LSCP webpage.

The core safeguarding training, which includes Introduction to Working Together safeguarding training, Refresher training, Working Together training and Child Exploitation training, are provided by the partnership and/or an appropriate commissioned service. All LSCP training has been updated in line with Working Together 2023.

Alongside the core offer, subject experts from across the city are utilised to provide multi-agency topic specific training/briefings. Topics that have been offered this year include, County Lines, Modern Slavery, Harmful Sexual Behaviours, Child Protection, Managing Allegations and Prevent.

The LSCP works alongside the other safeguarding partnerships in Leeds to ensure that wider safeguarding learning and development opportunities are developed and promoted, in areas of joint responsibility, such as domestic abuse.

Evaluation is part of all training opportunities which are offered via the LSCP, with the feedback utilised to improve training delivery, content and opportunities, as well as offering a level of assurance regarding the effectiveness of the training.

Figure three- Training Evaluations

Title of Training	Training increased confidence	Met learning outcomes to a great or some extent	Increased knowledge, understanding and skills
Introductory	100%*	100%	98.5%
Refresher	99%*	99%	98%
Working Together	100%*	99.5%	96.4%
Child Exploitation	100%	100%	100%

*includes individuals who rated their confidence at the highest rating at the beginning of the training.

Overall multi-agency training across the year has evaluated positively as outlined in Figure Three, increasing knowledge and confidence, which is consistent with previous years.

In the coming year the Learning and Development group will consider how the impact on practice and outcomes of multiagency learning and development opportunities, which includes training, can be evidenced.

PRIORITIES 2023-24

The LSCP Executive in consultation with safeguarding partners set the priorities for the LSCP. The expectation is for sub-groups to drive the agreed priorities, explore opportunities for development and provide assurance of the effectiveness of the safeguarding system.

Following consideration and with the understanding of the improvements still required the decision was made to maintain the previous priorities into 2023-24.

- Domestic abuse and the impact on children
- Vulnerable learners
- Exploitation.

Extensive developments have taken place across the partnership and within organisations throughout the year and provide a level of assurance to the LSCP Executive regarding safeguarding practice. Some key areas are outlined within the report, but more extensive information has been received as part of our assurance model and will shape and influence future works, identification of opportunities and assurance regarding safeguarding practice.

Priority one - Children and Young People Experiencing Domestic Abuse

West Yorkshire Police (WYP) report that domestic abuse, and its impact on children, as one of their top priorities due to the significant numbers involved. In Leeds each 24 hours sees an average of 60 domestic incidents reported to WYP which equates to over 21,000 in the year, with 24.4% of these noted to involve a child or children.

Overall police data demonstrates that domestic incidents reported to the police are down 12% on the previous year but those involving children rose slightly by 0.6%. Stalking and harassment remains the largest crime category, which is consistent with the previous year.

The Front Door Safeguarding Hub continues to support victims-survivors and families through Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the Daily Risk Assessment Management Meeting (DRAMM). Over the past 12 months from April 2023 to March 2024 these arrangements have supported 4672 victims with safety plans.

In 2023-24, 18.8% of referrals accepted by CSWS were recorded as having a feature of domestic abuse, this is a reduction from 21.3% (2022-23) and 22.3% (2021-22).

The data demonstrates that although there are some reductions in the cases of DA recorded across police and CSWS in Leeds, domestic abuse remains a significant issue in the city.

As a response, during 2023/ 2024 there have been extensive developments in safeguarding practice across the partnerships in Leeds with a responsibility for domestic abuse and safeguarding children, with just some of these detailed within the report.

The [Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy for 2023-28](#), has been launched in Leeds this year, setting out the overall vision to end the harm caused by domestic abuse. The new strategy covers four main themes:

- Awareness, prevention, and early intervention

- Responding to risk and harm
- People causing harm (perpetrators)
- Children and young people.

The role of the Domestic Violence Co-ordinators (delivered by Behind Closed Doors) within the Early Help Hubs continues to support practitioners and families. This is an integral part of the wider response from children's services to support children affected by domestic violence and abuse and has been agreed to be delivered until 2025.

Leeds Women's Aid has continued to deliver the Elevate Project that provides support to children and young people in refuge and the community who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. Additional funding has been given to this project as part of the Voices Project so that those workers can also capture the views of children and young people to inform the work of the board.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) funding for an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) to work with young people (16–18-year-olds) at the Front Door is on-going with funding having been extended to 2025. This allows for the continuation of this resource to work with this group.

Operation Encompass is a process that allows for notifications to be made to schools where there has been an incident of domestic violence and abuse reported to the police where children are present in the previous 24 hours. This allows schools to provide a welfare or safeguarding response in the immediate aftermath of the incident. Alongside West Yorkshire Police an IT based solutions is being explored to improve the process of notifications, so they can be made directly to schools and further education establishments through a fully automated process.

NHS West Yorkshire ICB in Leeds have delivered a train the trainer programme aimed at practitioners working within primary care to support with undertaking Routine and Triggered Enquiry. Following this a Routine Enquiry Survey has been completed, to determine Primary Care practitioners use and knowledge of Routine Enquiry. The findings suggest that there is an increase in clinicians asking Routine and Triggered Enquiry questions and evidence of a more knowledgeable and responsive workforce in relation to recognising and responding to DVA, which is being embedded in practice.

Children at risk of domestic abuse are now flagged on GP records across Leeds, to ensure that practitioners are informed of any risk to the child.

Leeds and York Partnership NHS Trust (LYPFT) in November 2023 undertook an audit in relation to if practitioners are referring children at risk of domestic abuse to children social care services and documenting outcome. Learning was noted in terms of documentation and all safeguarding concerns are now recorded on a new Trust safeguarding contact form which is embedded within a service user electronic record. A further audit is planned to establish if there is evidence of sustained improvements.

This year West Yorkshire Police report that one significant key change in relation to the management of domestic abuse, is the greater utilisation of charge and remand of domestic abuse suspects, rather than bail, which can be subsequently breached by an offender committing further offences against the same victim. Remanding a suspect to court to await trial can vitally protect victims and children from harmful offenders, and this year WYP are on course to remand a third more suspects than two years ago.

The e-child and family assessment within Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust (LTHT) now includes a section on asking the child or young person if they feel safe at home, what makes them happy or sad, if they are ok and if there is anything we can help them with. Children, young people and babies who are identified at high risk of domestic abuse in MARAC are flagged on LTHT systems.

An electronic version of the Young Persons DASH has been developed within LTHT patient records, to support staff to assess risks and safety plan and Routine Enquiry is now firmly embedded in the Emergency Department assessment.

In response to recognised and persistence high rate of domestic abuse in the city CSWS have begun to review the training offered to practitioners, including updated Masterclasses being delivered by prominent leads in the area focusing on Domestic Violence and Abuse and legislative and learning updates.

HMYOI Wetherby have employed a full-time family therapist whose focus is to support families to repair damaged relationships to support stronger links for when the child is released. A Time Out for Dads course is also offered to children, this course promotes positive parenting and the impact of domestic violence on the child.

Promoted but not delivered by the LSCP as part of the training offer, practitioners have had access to appropriate training via the Safer Leeds offer. This is a modular approach to training and 2,107 places have been delivered to practitioners across Leeds, during the year.

The partnership also supported the 16 Days of Action Campaign, led by the Safer Stronger Communities, which included supporting a 16 day social media campaign, which reached over 38,000 people across Facebook and Instagram, promoting a variety of support services and safety initiatives such as Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS), Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL), Ask for Angela Leeds and WalkSafe Leeds.

The ambition in Leeds is that families experiencing parental conflict are supported at the right time, by the right practitioner to prevent any impact of this conflict on children. The aim is to increase awareness of parental conflict and the impact it can have on children and young people and their outcomes. Leeds is taking a practice approach through providing workforce development opportunities. Leeds is working with thirteen other local authorities within Yorkshire and Humberside to jointly commission a regional website and digital campaign for practitioners and members of the public to support this work.

Priority Two: Vulnerable Learners

Children's involvement in learning in addition to supporting lifelong outcomes aids safeguarding. One of the five outcomes within the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan is that all children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life.

Children and especially those in secondary schools continue to be less engaged in learning than they were pre-Covid, this is a national issue. There were challenges pre- Covid secondary unauthorised absence levels being an example, these have been amplified.

Published data for the 2022/23 school year highlights school attendance as 94.1% in primary schools and 90.3% in secondary schools. In that year 17% of children in primary schools and 27.2% in secondary schools were persistently absent, missing over 10% of their learning. Severe absence is missing more than 50% of learning, 4.8% of secondary pupils were severely absent in 2022/23. DFE collects regular in-year attendance data from schools. As of 24 June 2024, based on 267 of 280 schools, overall academic year attendance to date was 92.1% with 30,048 pupils recorded as persistently absent (22.8%)

and 3,705 pupils were recorded as severely absent, missing at least 50% of all possible sessions. This is unofficial in year information.

Suspensions have also increased post pandemic, accepting there are termly variations. Again, using unofficial but recent in-year data there were 5368 suspensions in the spring term of 2024 a rate 4.1 suspensions per 100 children. These suspensions involved 2861 children who on average experienced 8 sessions (half days) or 4 schools' days of suspension, 22944 sessions (half days) were lost. This level of suspensions is 2.4 times greater than spring 2018/19.

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. This could be for a range of reasons including children who are awaiting a school place and children in receipt of unsuitable education. The DfE started to collect information from LAs in England during 2022/23, these statistics are developmental with more to do on definitions and data capture to be assured of consistency. However, this does not diminish the importance of children in being in education, with 1510 children in Leeds recorded as missing education, a rate per population of 1.3 per 1000.

A growing number of children are being educated at home. The local authority is notified of a child or young person becoming Electively Home Educated (EHE) by either the parent or school. The number of notifications almost doubled in the academic year following the beginning of the COVID-19 and have remained high. In June 2024 1,420 children were being electively home educated, an increase from 1,080 in October 2023. Reasons for home education include philosophical reasons, health-based reasons and dissatisfaction with local schools. Local authorities have no formal duty to monitor the provision of education at home, however, under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, they do have a duty to make arrangements to identify children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. This duty applies to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll.

The number of pupils with special educational needs is growing faster than the pupil population. 25,199 pupils had a special educational need in 2023/24, 33 percent higher than 18, 944 pupils in 2018/19. Over the same period the pupil population grew by 6 percent from 129,591 to 136,799. 18.4 percent of the pupil population now has SEN, broadly in-line with DFE statistical neighbours and England and lower than the Core Cities average of 19.4 percent. This cohort comprises children with an Education Health and Care Plan and those identified by schools for SEND Support. The numbers here reference children in a Leeds school, the children in a Leeds school with an EHCP will include children who live in neighbouring authorities and is only part of the overall EHCP cohort in Leeds aged 0-24.

Leeds has had a Funding for Inclusion (FFI) model that has historically provided schools in Leeds with additional funding without the requirement of a pupil having an EHC Plan. This model is changing, potentially leading to more school age children with EHC Plans bringing Leeds more aligned with other authorities EHCP rates. In 2023/24, of all children and young people in Leeds schools with SEN:

- 3864 pupils in Leeds schools' have an education, health and care plan, 2.8 percent of all pupils in Leeds, lower than England (4.8 percent), Core Cities (4.3 percent) and DFE Statistical Neighbours (5 percent).
- 21,335 pupils in Leeds schools' have SEN support, 15.6 percent of all pupils in

Leeds, a similar proportion to the Core Cities average of 15.6 and higher than England and Statistical Neighbours (13.6 percent in England, 13.7 percent Statistical Neighbours).

SEND represents a range of needs that are grouped into categories called primary need. The most prevalent primary needs are speech, language and communication (SLCN), social

emotional and mental health (SEMH) and moderate learning difficulty (MLD). Notably, the primary need of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) has tripled since 2018, from 902 children in 2018 to 3299 in 2024. There are differences in the prevalence of need by phase of education, with SLCN the most prevalent in primary schools, SEMH in secondary schools and ASD in special schools.

This year has seen developments in relation to the identification of and support to vulnerable learners across the partnership and they have also been considered throughout the work related to the other two priorities.

The Dynamic Risk Register is a tool used by practitioners across agencies to dynamically assess the risk, of a child or young person with a learning disability and or Autism, at risk of admission to hospital or placement breakdown. Children and young people are risk assessed using a traffic light system. Where a child or young person is assessed at being at greatest risk (red) the lead practitioner will be asked to complete a CETR referral form which will trigger the CETR process within the complex needs business unit of the ICB. Where lower-level risks are identified practitioners work together to ensure the child or young person is able to access appropriate services across health, education and social care in a coordinated way. The DSR enables partners to work more effectively together to support this group of children and young people, meaning their needs are met in the community and the number of children admitted into tier four CAMHs inpatient provision is reduced.

In HMYOI Wetherby there are now two new function leads in positions as head of education, skills and work, this position is funded by YCS but is a qualified teacher to support the activities for children. With a Neurodiversity support manager to support the needs of those who need adjustments while in custody and the supporting of staff around understanding their needs.

The Leeds Deaf CAMHs team, as part of LYPFT, have worked to strengthen processes and support to ensure that any children identified with hearing impairment can access appropriate education and support.

In Leeds, all children who attend the Emergency Department are asked which school/college or nursery they attend to identify those who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), which is recorded, and appropriate sign posting can take place.

LTHT has a specialist LD and Autism Team who support staff to complete a Learning Disabilities Passport with the person and the Trust has a series of 'Easy Read' leaflets, posters etc to support both children and adults with additional needs.

Priority Three: Exploitation of Children and Young People

Significant work has taken place across the partnership to improve practice and the identification and reduction of risks.

The work that has been undertaken this year, has been to develop a more integrated approach to our citywide work to better respond to the violence and exploitation agenda. Work has been undertaken to better understand the cohort of young people involved; the size, the extent and the diversity of those affected. This ongoing work has informed the systems and services that have been developed.

A consistent approach to responding to serious youth violence and exploitation across the city has been embedded, including the streamlining of assessment and referral pathways. A whole family approach to issues of exploitation, assessments and plans continue to address

and respond to the needs and difficulties for all members of families as well as focusing on existing strengths.

There has been a real enthusiasm across the partnership to do things differently, with a focus on thinking about harm outside the home, thinking about the contexts that harm happens in, developing effective welfare responses and learning about what works, working with parents as 'protective partners' and building trusting relationships with third sector partners and non-traditional agencies.

Leeds continues to work as a partner with Durham University (Prof Carlene Firmin) to further develop the contextual approach to exploitation and the Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) ICPC (Initial Child Protection Conference) pathway, which is a pathway for young people who are felt to be at significant risk of harm beyond their families. The pathway has been developed to consider contextual approaches to safeguarding, the parents as protective partner agencies and bringing in non-traditional partner agencies.

An online safety campaign, 'start the conversation' (described in the [Campaigns section](#)) has been developed in response to concerns regarding the risk of on-line exploitation.

Exploitation has been key to learning and development opportunities across the partnership this year, with LYPFT having child exploitation as one of their themes for their Trust conference, WYP having a focused on upskilling their safeguarding officers with the provision of bespoke training, including the victims lived experience, bespoke training to education providers which is supported by the SAFE project, and LTHT developing and launching "Introduction to Child Exploitation" training.

WYP have carried out operations during the year, to test the responses in the city in relation to exploitation, including the responses from hotels and taxi companies.

LTHT have a risk assessment in place for young people aged 16-17 attending ED to ensure they could self-identify areas of concern and know staff would be able to support them to keep safe. This year this is being developed further to be a digital e-assessment for 12–18-year-olds.

A safeguarding nurse advisor has now joined the Navigator Service as part of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) plan to reduce violence and exploitation. A&E Navigator Service accepts referrals from any service within Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust. They aim to support young people between the ages of 11-25 who have been victim of serious youth violence, or who are vulnerable due to risk of CSE/CCE/NEET substance misuse or multiple ACE's.

LTHT has also produced of an educational learning video called 'Trauma call' which depicts the journey of a 16-year-old who victim of knife crime, including an assessment in Emergency Department Resus, breaking news to relatives and support provided by the MDT and A&E Navigators. It is designed to be used alongside a lesson plan in schools to educate young people and their families.

All under 18's who are booked for pregnancy have a mandatory child exploitation risk assessment completed.

The head of resettlement at HMYOI Wetherby, has developed a well-attended public protection meeting. This meeting discusses the work done by Wetherby, police, social workers, and community teams planning any relevant monitoring in custody and release. The social work team continue to support children in reporting historic abuse and support them if they need to attend police interviews around this.

MACE Arrangements

Leeds has developed strong multi-agency arrangements to respond to child exploitation through its Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) arrangements.

The MACE framework in Leeds has four interrelated steps: Partnership Intelligence Management (PIM); Bronze Group; Silver Group; and Gold Group.

The PIM is an information and intelligence sharing process between the Police and Children's Social Work Service (CSWS). All information, intelligence and concerns about children missing and at risk of exploitation are shared electronically with CSWS and the Youth Justice Service (YJS) by the Police. The information is reviewed by allocated workers and Team Managers who then coordinate timely and proportionate responses to vulnerable children and young people, including ensuring that referrals to the children's social work service are made where there is known or suspected significant harm. The PIM reports to the Bronze Group.

There are two distinct MACE meetings that take place and make up the Bronze MACE, these are the child-focused MACE meeting and the Contextual MACE meeting, both are embedded practice and are well attended and referred to from partner agencies.

Child-focused MACE meetings take place every two weeks and focus on children where there is either a low/ emerging risk of exploitation, or where there is a high risk because the vulnerability and risk management plan (VRMP) for the child is not having the desired effect. The purpose of the MACE meeting is to: analyse risk; share information; consider connectivity and push and pull factors; and to enable further actions in relation to each child or young person to be decided. The meeting also identifies themes, trends and suspected/ known perpetrators.

Through these meetings, recommendations are made to ensure that the needs of children at risk of exploitation are responded to. The meeting does not and replace statutory planning processes such as strategy meetings, child protection conferences or care planning reviews for children looked after.

Contextual MACE meetings are held every four weeks, focusing on themes, trends, places, spaces, peer groups and suspected/ known perpetrators linked to exploitation concerns. They take a contextual approach to identifying, responding to and disrupting child exploitation.

In the last 12 months issues which have been identified have included:

- Several derelict buildings where there have been concerns that children have been entering and at risk of exploitation
- Several specific 'issues' such as drill music and under representation of girls in our data – the latter resulting in a 'girls and gangs' task and finish group
- Focus on specific business premises where children were being exploited
- Work on some properties where young people were moving into independent living and being targeted and exploited.

Both meetings are chaired by a senior Children and Families manager, with membership including lead practitioners and managers from: Early Help; Children's Social Work; Police Child Exploitation Leads; Adults and Health; Youth Justice; Health; Education; CAMHS; Youth Offer, Safer Leeds; third sector partners, accommodation providers and others.

The Bronze MACE meetings report to the LSCP Silver Group, with the Gold Group being the three Statutory partners, who make up the LSCP Executive and reports from the Silver MACE are received by the Gold MACE on a quarterly basis as part of the Executive meetings.

The purpose of the group is to enable senior leaders to have a line of sight about the most vulnerable children and young people, in addition to a clear understanding of the scale of child exploitation in the city.

Additionally, and in response to the identified concerns of Serious Youth Violence, meetings have now been set up in all three areas, West, South and East area of the city of Leeds. These are attended by statutory, voluntary and third sector organisations. There is also a daily youth violence meeting – project shield that takes place each morning at the Front Door. This is attended by Police (Sgt at the Front Door), Early Help, Youth Justice Service, Liaison and Diversion and CSWS (The Safe Project).

Serious Youth Violence

Serious youth violence is a subset of the wider statutory duty to tackle Serious Violence. The definition of Serious Violence is broad but specific focus on knife crime and young people and violence.

The findings of the recent JTAI in Leeds, recognises the significant work that has taken place across the city in response to Serious Youth Violence, outlined in the External Inspections section, they is ongoing work taking place with both Safer Leeds and the Violence Reduction Partnership.

An action plan will now be developed as a response to the findings of the inspection and work will continue throughout the coming year to improve practice and evidence impact.



The Knife Angel came to Leeds in February 2024 at the Royal Armouries where Project Shield was launched by Cllr Coupar.

Project Shield is about enabling a more positive, hopeful conversation with young people and delivering a co-ordinated response to tackling serious youth violence and protecting young people in Leeds.

The aim is to reduce instances of Serious Youth Violence in Leeds, specifically:

- A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or a sharp object, especially amongst those victims under 25.
- A reduction in knife enabled serious violence, especially in those victims aged under 25.
- A reduction in all non- domestic homicides involving knives, especially among those victims aged under 25.

VOICE AND INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In Leeds, it is recognised as one of the five outcomes within the Children and Young People's Plan that all children and young people are active citizens who feel that they have a voice and influence.

The voice and influence strategy includes ensuring that children can participate, feel empowered, and actively engage to produce better outcomes and resilience. This is given at an individual, family, service, and strategic level, this assists to identify how best to support and engage children and young people and involve them at all levels.

The voice and influence of children and young people should not be a standalone entity but embedded within the culture, discussions, decisions, and actions. Hearing and responding to the voice of children and young people is paramount to the work of the safeguarding partnership in Leeds. Below are just some of the ways that the safeguarding partnership have endeavoured to include the voice and influence of children and young people during 2023-24.

The LSCP is keen to ensure that there is a culture of hearing and responding to the voice of young people across its work and therefore, this year set out 5 key commitments to ensure that the voice of young people influences the work of the partnership. These include undertaking a "Deep Dive" from the Organisational Self-Assessment in relation to the Voice of children, developing a common understanding of what is meant by meaningful voice and influence, embedding the voice of the child throughout the governance processes, the co-production of campaigns and analysis of the My Health My School data.

There is recognition that further work needs to take place to hear the voice of those children and young people who have experience of the safeguarding system through Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection and this will be explored further in the coming year.

The Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) requested that the Voice, Influence and Change (VIC) team facilitate an annual takeover for the opportunity to meet directly with young people from youth voice groups across the city and listen and respond to the issues they feel are the most important. The VIC team invited youth voice groups from their VIC network to participate in planning and running the takeover. Between May 2023 and January 2024, the VIC team facilitated meetings with lead staff representing 12 groups. In November 2023 they met with young people representing 5 of the groups so they could input into the event, with 32 young people from across 11 youth groups attending and facilitating the event.

The event was co-produced and held in January 2024 with the main aims being:

- To learn about and meet the different youth voice groups from across the city
- To share and learn about key issues for young people
- To discuss possible solutions surrounding key issues raised by young people

The attendees engaged in two discussion-based workshops surrounding four priority themes. The themes were identified by young people and are linked to the Child Friendly Leeds 12 wishes.

All decisions makers, senior leaders and Elected Members were asked to make a pledge detailing the support that they could provide to address the issues that were discussed in the workshops.



Young people were asked to provide feedback based on their experience of the event. They commented that *'it was perfect'*, they felt *'real change was made'* and that it was *'a valuable opportunity for young people to share their voice in Leeds'*. Requests were made to *'do this more'*, to have *'more time to talk about issues and experiences'* and have *'more time to speak with decision makers'*.

Feedback from the event was given to the CYPP meeting and it was agreed that decisions makers who attended the event, provide an update summary in 6 months, detailing actions and progress. Work with the youth groups would continue and a further event will be planned.

Young people were consulted on various campaigns, including to provide insight to the development of the "start the conversation" campaign, the Leeds Youth Council were asked for their opinions on online safety. The group provided valuable feedback on their own experiences and in particular the terminology and phrases that they used when online. All of this information was used to ensure that the campaign was on message and relevant to young people's experiences.

The My Health, My School Annual School (MHMS) Survey, is a well-recognised method of hearing the views of children and young people from across the city. In the academic year 2022-23, a record-breaking number of responses were received, with a total of **25,648** pupil responses from **202** Leeds schools representing the largest ever number of responses since the survey began over 16 years ago!

This is a free on-line survey for pupils in Years 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11 as well as pupils attending any Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) and post-16 settings in Leeds. The survey gathers important pupil perception data and measures health behaviours and contributes to school improvement.

The survey includes various areas which related to safeguarding, such as feeling safe at home, gangs, knife crime, exploitation, on-line safety and where to go for support.

The safeguarding partnerships have analysed this year's data in-line with previous years in the areas related to safeguarding and those that reflect the LSCP priorities. The information is then shared with the relevant subgroups as well as the CYPP to inform decision making and the work of the safeguarding partnership.

Partners see the voice of young people as key to the procurement and review of services in Leeds, as an example they were involved in the procurement process for the new Social, Emotional and Mental Health Service. Young people from Mind Mate Ambassador team and YouthWatch formed a panel and interviewed provider organisations for the suitability to carry out the city wide contract. They took into account feedback from 6 youth groups (below) to inform their questioning

- Leeds GATE (Gypsy and Traveller exchange)
- Care Leavers council
- Out 2 18 group (LGBT+)
- PAFRAS (asylum seeker youth group)
- YouthWatch

Several partners also have Youth Forums or equivalents, which they actively consulted on to ensure the voice of the child is recognised and included in service development work. There is a dedicated sibling group within the Safe Project, which provides a rich opportunity to gather feedback directly from children who may not be directly experiencing harm but indirectly will have an impact within their families. Their views help establish themes that can then be fed into plans around service development to ensure that issues that are evolving

are continually understood and acted upon. The “clear approach” at HMOI Wetherby, allows discussions for looked after children to share their voice, and the youth council have recently recorded a podcast to share their personal thought and feelings.

These are just some of the Voice and Influence activities with children and young people that have taken place across the partnership within 2023-24. Although there is recognition that there is also a vast amount of work that takes place within the third sector and educational establishments that is not routinely received by the LSCP.

SAFEGUARDING IN FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS

Voluntary Action Leeds has been working in partnership with LCSP to deliver support around safeguarding in faith communities. This project follows on from a research project undertaken by VAL to explore perceptions of safeguarding and statutory services within culturally diverse communities, which showed a disparity between different cultural understandings of abuse and neglect, and a lack of trust between some communities and statutory partners. These findings are mirrored in VAL’s work to engage with smaller third sector organisations, which are often culturally specific, around concepts of safeguarding. Although faith is just one aspect of a person’s culture, this can have a considerable impact on a person’s understanding of keeping people safe.

This project involves working closely with faith-based organisations to co-produce versions of VAL’s popular Safeguarding BASICS training, to produce faith-specific versions of the training which reference relevant scripture and use culturally specific examples. The faith-based organisations are then supported through ‘Train the Trainer’ sessions to deliver this faith-specific training with smaller groups which they are associated with. For example, Leeds Grand Mosque have co-produced a package of Safeguarding training specific to Islam, completed ‘Train the Trainer’ and have now delivered this training to 37 volunteers across LGM Foodbank, Baraka Playgroup and LGM Qu’ran School. All faith-based organisations receive payment for their time developing the training packages, and for delivering the training.

Other organisations involved in this project include Strings of Life, a Chinese Gospel Church, Guru Nanak Sikh Temple (Tong Road) and Roscoe Methodist Church (which supports a number of other churches serving African diaspora communities).

A report detailing the learnings from this project will be shared in September 2024.

The Safeguarding in Faith project worker has developed successful partnerships to actively engage faith organisations in various faith focused initiatives, including Leeds City Council Public Health to promote key health messages and with the Violence Reduction Partnership, offering faith communities the opportunity to play a key role in preventing serious violence by being involved in a working group to develop a Faith and Belief Toolkit to tackle serious violence and broader safeguarding topics. This toolkit will be built upon a sustainable, multi-agency, community led network of faith communities aiming to maximise the powerful position faith communities occupy to prevent and reduce violence. From the work undertaken by the project worker in the last year, it is evident there is a lot of fantastic work being undertaken across the city by faith and organisations, however often organisations are working in isolation or within their own network or faith. It is hoped that these partnerships create opportunities and forge networks for faith organisations and representatives to connect with faith focused initiatives across the city and region, to avoid duplication and strengthen links.

The safeguarding project has promoted its work through various forums, including the Leeds Faith Forum, The Religion and Belief Hub and Concorde Interfaith Fellowship.

In addition, The LSCP in Leeds and Birmingham have linked up with 24 safeguarding adult and children partnerships across the country to develop a Faith Based Toolkit in partnership with Faith Associates. Faith Associates are experts and pioneers in the development of faith institutions for many years and have had an impact in many areas of governance and sustainability. The goal is to provide faith institutions with a customised, user-friendly safeguarding guide that reflects the cultural sensitivities of their respective faiths in West Yorkshire and the wider West Midlands regions. It will be written in six versions each tailored to specific faith traditions. This will be available online by autumn 2024.

SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT

It is widely recognised that taking part in sport is positive for the health and wellbeing of children and young people but is also an area until recently where the safeguarding system were not always robust. With Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 highlighting the importance of seeing sports as a partner when safeguarding children and young people, work has begun in Leeds to strengthen these links.

The LSCP Business Unit are working with the Leeds Sport Welfare Officer from Yorkshire Sport Foundation and Active Leeds, on strengthening the approach to safeguarding within sports across the city. Regular reports will be presented to the LSCP Executive and the group meet regularly and will work collaboratively on campaigns and projects to raise the profile of safeguarding, wellbeing and welfare within physical activity.

In the coming year this work will be progressed further, and consideration will be given to how the safeguarding reach can be broadened and sports organisations in the city be more active within the safeguarding partnership.



CAMPAIGNS

As a response to learning which has taken place in the city, several campaigns have been developed this year, highlighting key messages for families, parents, carers, children and professionals.

Bath Time Duck

Bath time can be a fun time for both babies and young children, and parents and carers alike. It's an opportunity for bonding, exploration, and play, however water can be dangerous, especially so for babies and young children who require constant and appropriate supervision during bath time.

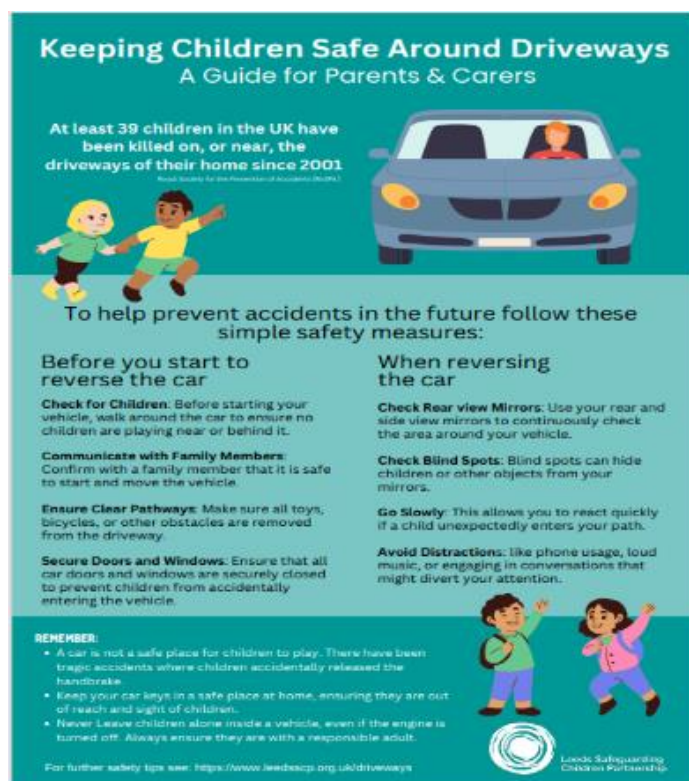
To support practitioners the LSCP developed the [Bath Time Duck](#) to help parents and carers remember the essential safety advice that they need to know to keep their baby or child safe at bath time.

Practitioners can use the Bath Time Duck as part of their usual interaction with parents and carers where safe bathing is discussed.



A [variety of resources](#) were created to support the campaign, as well as social media messages.

The Bath Time safety campaign ran from 1st- 30th June via social media advertising using Facebook and Instagram. In total the advert had a reach of reach of 15,969 profile pages.

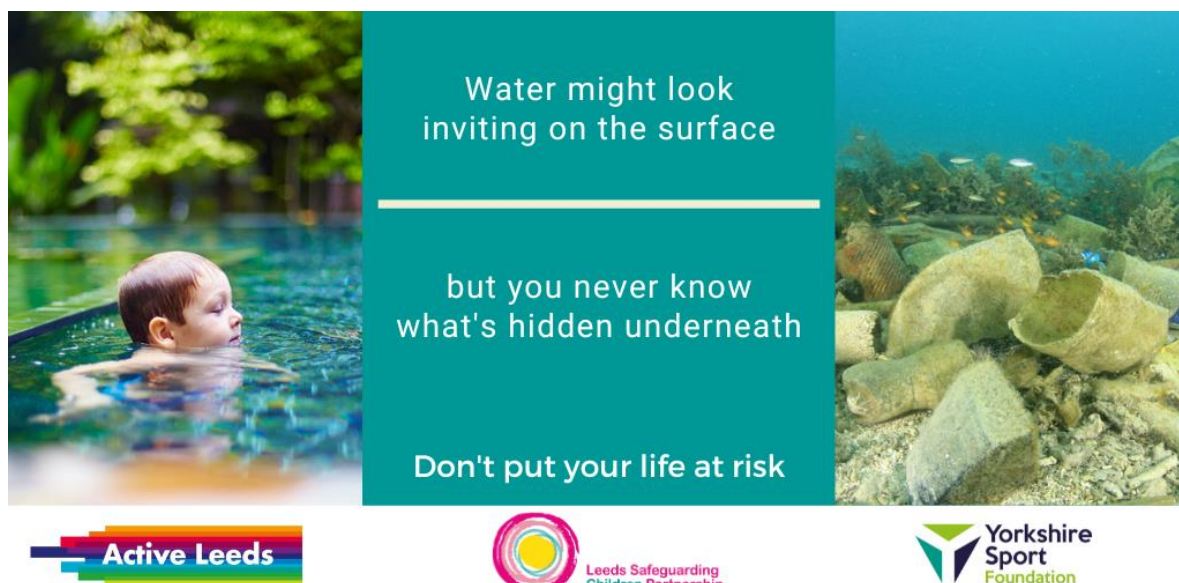


Driveway safety

As a response to the tragic death of a young child, a poster for children's centres was designed and distributed to all centres via the Leeds for Learning website.

A web page was also developed in the Families section of the LSCP website with helpful information on how to keep your child safe around driveways.

Drowning Prevention Week – 17th June 2023



Working in partnership with Active Leeds and the Yorkshire Sport Foundation, the LSCP posted water safety messages during Drowning Prevention Week via their social media channels. These messages continued during the summer holidays when the risk to young people, through accidental drowning increases significantly. Messages included; When the weather is hot young people can be tempted to go for a dip in the local river or reservoir, but swimming in open waters is extremely dangerous.

Online safety campaign – start the conversation

A campaign to inform parents about how to keep children safe online and prevent them becoming a victim of child exploitation was developed this year. The campaign equipped parents and carers with the knowledge and confidence to talk to young people about their online activity and the potential dangers.

The campaign was developed with the LSCP working in partnership with West Yorkshire Police, Basis Yorkshire, WYCA and the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP).

The campaign launched on Monday 30th October 2023 and materials were shared across the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Communications Group, which is made up of representatives from each of the five local authorities as well as NHS, charities, WYCA and VRP. Details of the campaign were also shared with West Yorkshire Police's Community Engagement and School Liaison Teams.

The overall intention was that the campaign would help parents become aware of potential risks earlier, so that they can prevent any inappropriate online activity escalating into cases of child sexual or criminal exploitation.

Focus group activity took place to gauge insight from young people across West Yorkshire.

The 'Start the conversation' campaign aimed to encourage parents and carers to have conversations with their children about their online activity. Creating an open dialogue means that a child will be more likely to tell a trusted adult if they have concerns. Parents are then in a better position to protect their child and help prevent any inappropriate online activity escalating into cases of child sexual or criminal exploitation.

The launch included:

- Dedicated web pages on the LSCP website and WY Police website
- A press release - [Parents Urged to 'Start the Conversation' as Part of New Campaign | West Yorkshire Police](#)
- Facebook adverts targeting adults in West Yorkshire which ran from 30th October to 31st December
- Adverts on Pulse radio
- Digital radio ads targeting adults across West Yorkshire
- Outdoor digital display ads.

Evaluation

The campaign continues to be shared regularly on the West Yorkshire Police and LSCP Facebook and X (Twitter) pages.

The paid for Facebook ads received 8,335 clicks and reached 280,380 people. The digital ads were played 300,000 times.



Legacy and future plans

A leaflet for parents is in development which will be circulated through the school network and via Leeds for Learning to education staff.

A series of short videos are also being developed which show adults and children having conversations about the games and apps that children use, with children explaining how they work to the adults.

Response following a suspected suicide: guidance for Leeds schools.

Following several cases in Leeds, discussions took place regarding the need for guidance for schools following a suspected suicide of a child or staff member within their settings. A task group took this work forward which included the LSCP, Public Health, Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service and The Samaritans, as well as input from the Educational Psychology team.

Consultation with school staff was completed via the LSCP Education Safeguarding group and the Healthy Schools Steering Group.

The guidance for Leeds schools is aimed to be used as a reference if a death does sadly occur and can also to be used to develop a critical incident plan.

The guidance is published on the Leeds for Learning website: [Response following a suspected suicide: guidance for Leeds schools | Leeds for Learning](#)

EXTERNAL INSPECTIONS

Inspections make sure our statutory services meet basic standards of quality and safety ensuring the best possible support for those that require the use of those services. All inspections operate under an inspection framework to ensure a consistent approach.

Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

This year a JTAI, evaluating the effectiveness of the multi-agency response to children aged 10 and over who are at risk of or affected by serious youth violence and/or criminal exploitation, took place in Leeds.

This onsite inspection took place from 4 to 8 March 2024. It was carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

Since the end of the financial year the report has been [published](#) and overall, the findings were very positive, demonstrating strong safeguarding practice and partnership working.

The inspection found that most children in Leeds who are affected by serious youth violence and/or criminal exploitation benefit from an effective and well-coordinated multi-agency response. Strategic partnerships in Leeds are well embedded and mature. Strategic leaders across all agencies are invested in the partnership and in reducing the risks to children to make Leeds a safer city. Leaders have driven a clear, tiered response to address serious youth violence at strategic, tactical and operational levels.

There is a strong and coherent culture, based on a relational approach, trauma-informed work and the Leeds model of practice, underpins the partnership. Strategic and operational partners share the same principles, vision and values. There is a clear and mutually agreed focus on locally based early intervention and prevention. This includes a high level of engagement and consultation with children and families. This helps develop tailored and effective services and interventions informed by the communities and children throughout Leeds.

Numerous interventions and projects have been developed to support children at risk of serious youth violence and/or criminal exploitation and their families. Practitioners are astute and committed and many work relentlessly and passionately with children and families to reduce risks and inspire and divert children away from serious youth violence. Children's diverse needs are considered, and services are designed to address the disproportionality of black and ethnic minority children involved in the criminal justice system, and additional vulnerability factors.

Areas of improvement are identified as part of any inspection. For Leeds, the JTAI reported only recognised three areas to improve. These were related to consistent and timely sharing of police protection notifications (PPNs) when police officers identify risks to children, waiting times for children to receive CAMHS assessments and therapeutic treatment, which is an issue at a national level and the frequency of multi-agency partnership auditing of children affected by serious youth violence, to inform a partnership learning and development.

The partnership is currently developing an action plan to address any the areas of learning, which will include the areas of improvement identified in the inspection report.

Inspection of Custody Facilities

In September 2023, an inspection of West Yorkshire Police custody facilities was undertaken jointly by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), as part of the programme of inspections covering every police custody suite in England and Wales. The inspection included all five areas of the force, of which Leeds is one.

The inspection assessed the effectiveness of custody services and outcomes for detained people throughout the different stages of detention. It examined the force's approach to custody provision in relation to detaining people safely and respectfully, with a particular focus on children and vulnerable adults.

The findings noted that the force has suitable arrangements in place to safeguard children and there are clear processes for frontline officers and custody personnel to make safeguarding referrals. If they have concerns about a child's welfare, they use their professional judgment to submit public protection notice referrals to children's social care.

There were some areas for improvement and recommendations, which related to Children and young people:

Custody officers should complete juvenile detention certificates when arranging local authority accommodation for children remanded in custody. In response A new joint protocol has been written and agreed between WYP, WYCA and the 5 Local Authorities. Audit work will be undertaken to measure compliance and any additional learning to support implementation.

The force should make sure children and vulnerable adults in custody receive prompt support from appropriate adults and record arrival times on custody records. This has been re-briefed to all custody inspectors and the central team will undertake audit work to ensure compliance.

The force should make sure it always completes public protection notice safeguarding referrals when required for children and vulnerable adults. As a response Leeds District are trialling a process where a PPN is submitted for every arrested child. This will be dip sampled and reviewed ahead of any full implementation across the police force.

PEEL Inspection (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy)

The findings of the Peel 2023 – 2024 inspection for West Yorkshire police as yet to be published.

On a National police level, there are several inspections that have taken place which impact upon the police practice of safeguarding children and young people, with areas for improvement and recommendations that all forces must achieve.

An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales recommended that by 31 December 2024, all chief constables should make sure that their forces have problem profiles for child sexual exploitation, each of which should include an assessment of the nature and extent of group-based child sexual exploitation. This should include relevant data from local partner agencies and should be updated frequently, at least annually.

In West Yorkshire it has been noted that there are good processes in place, however as work progresses opportunities for further improvements are identified, with progress continuing to be made in this area but the force and partnerships data is used to inform the quarterly threat assessment.

An inspection of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making recommended that by 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that information from the Youth Justice Board summary disproportionality toolkit relevant to the force area is included in their force's analysis of police criminal justice disparity. West Yorkshire police are engaged in embedding the race action plan, and work is ongoing to include the level of detail required.

An inspection of how well the police and National Crime Agency tackle the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children had several relevant recommendations.

By 31 October 2023, chief constables in England should satisfy themselves that their forces' work with schools is consistent with the national curriculum and National Crime Agency educational products on online child sexual abuse and exploitation. They should also make sure this work is targeted based on joint analysis with their safeguarding partners. Work as already taken place in West Yorkshire and the force is reviewing the NCA products to view if there are any gaps or additional details which would be beneficial to include.

By 31 October 2023, chief constables and police and crime commissioners should make sure their commissioned services for children, and the process for referring them for support or therapeutic services, are available for children affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation. In West Yorkshire the Mayor's office commission services to support those affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation.

By 31 July 2023, chief constables should satisfy themselves that they are correctly sharing information and making referrals to their statutory safeguarding partners in cases of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. This is to make sure they are fulfilling their statutory obligations, placing the protection of children at the centre of their approach, and agreeing joint plans to better protect children who are at risk. In Leeds there are robust information sharing processes in place with partners participating in strategy meetings to share information and support those affected. However, West Yorkshire police report that there is further work is ongoing in this area to further develop and safeguard those at risk.

Alternative provision in local areas in England: a thematic review

As part of a thematic review in England of alternative provision in local areas, an inspection in Leeds was undertaken in September 2023, under the framework devised jointly by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for use from 2023 and as part of a wider review.

The focus of the inspection was on alternative school provision and the working arrangements between the ICB and local authority, including the feedback of a survey of parents, young people and professionals.

The inspection was undertaken over a three week period, with inspectors onsite for 4 days, where they met with practitioners and groups of parents and undertook a deep dive on three cases.

The findings of the Leeds inspection were not published individually but an overall report was published in November 2023, based on the findings from all of the authorities who were part of the review. Overall, the findings were in line with Leeds self-assessment and the learning from the review is progressed through the SEND Partnership Board, with feedback to the LSCP Executive as required or requested.

[Alternative provision in local areas in England: a thematic review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review)

Inspection of HMYOI Wetherby

An unannounced inspection of HMYOI Wetherby by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons took place between November and 7 December 2023.

The report noted that Wetherby is a complex young offender institution, housing children with a range of needs, including a Unit which is a national resource for the most vulnerable children, as well as a provision for a small number of girls.

Nationally there is not a coherent plan for caring for these girls and the accommodation of girls at Wetherby was only planned to be temporary. The report noted that the result has been pressure on staff who, while doing their best, have not had the training or do not possess the expertise to care for these girls, most of whom require specialist provision.

In terms of safeguarding, the HMIP section was recorded as “good”, where the expected outcome is: *The establishment promotes the welfare of children, particularly those most at risk, and protects them from all kinds of harm and neglect.*

It was noted that there is a dedicated team of staff making sure that good child safeguarding processes were in place, with joint triage by the child protection coordinator and designated social worker, to ensure that appropriate referrals were sent to the local authority designated officer (DO) within 24 hours.

The head of safeguarding held weekly meetings with the social work manager, who was also a member of the senior management team, and other internal managers to allocate actions. With scrutiny of referrals noted to be good, including a weekly meeting with the governor and quality assurance every two months by the DO who checked that the triage system was working appropriately.

Although processes were noted to be good, children were reported to have little confidence in them. In the survey undertaken as part of the inspection, only 37% said they would report victimisation by other children and 57% said they would report victimisation by staff. Eleven per cent said that they had felt too scared to make a complaint.

It was noted that since the last inspection there had been progress on the majority of the recommendations, however, there were still improvements to be made and the report outlined a number of priority concerns that were in need of urgent attention. An action plan has been developed by the leadership to progress the improvements required.

In view of the number and significance of the concerns highlighted in the report the LSCP have requested a meeting with the leadership team at Wetherby to establish how assurance can be obtained and what support maybe required. Updates on progress with the action plan will be presented to the LSCP Executive for consideration and oversight in July 2024.



THE COMING YEAR 2024-25

Priorities for 2024-25

To establish the safeguarding children priorities of 2024-25 the Executive considered the progress with the current priorities, learning from reviews, inspection findings, the reviewed Working together guidance, alongside an OBA event with partners and Takeover event with young people.

It was agreed that the priorities for 2024-25 should be:

- Domestic Abuse- children as victims.
- Safeguarding through Family Help
- Safeguarding Teenagers- serious youth violence and exploitation

These priorities will allow the partnership to continue the work established in 2023-24 and address emerging themes. The Executive will seek assurance regarding the response of the current safeguarding system to these areas and identify opportunities to develop practice and improve the outcomes for children in Leeds.

The outcomes related to these priorities and the impact of any development work will be outlined in the 2024-25 annual report.

Planned work for 2024-25

To ensure continuous improvement in safeguarding practice and to ensure momentum is maintained, the partnership have already committed to some areas of identified work for 2024-25:

- Publish the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across Leeds and provide the Department of Education oversight of these arrangements by December 2024 in line with WTSC 23
- Oversee and monitor successful implementation of the JTAI multi agency action plan
- Undertaking a Partnership Health Check Self-Assessment
- Fully embedding of Working Together 2023
- Development of a robust and responsive audit and review programme
- Further develop systems to demonstrate impact and levels of assurance
- Further develop the voice and influence of children, young people, parents, carers and families, in particular those with experience of the safeguarding system.
- Embed Education as part of Executive and strengthening their voice at strategic level
- Further strengthen the voice of the third sector at all levels
- Revise the Neglect Strategy and further develop the tools that support best practice.
- Consideration of a multi-agency safeguarding supervision model
- Development of a practitioner group to enhance the linkage with and voice of front line staff.
- Development of a professional curiosity champions model
- Undertake a training needs analysis in relation to Serious Youth Violence
- Continue to develop opportunities for wider partnership work with Safer Leeds and Leeds Safeguarding Adult Board and other relevant Boards and Partnerships.
- Develop further the work with sports organisations
- Development a model to learn from what works well
- Establish a chairs and deputy chairs meeting to ensure joint working across subgroups.



School Attendance

Date: 9th October 2024

Report of: Children Missing out on Education and Exclusions monitoring lead

Report to: Children and Families Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

This report provides:

- **An overview of the national school attendance picture**
- **An overview of the Leeds school attendance data**
- **An overview of actions the LA has taken and will continue to take to support schools in their work to improve attendance**

Recommendations

- a) Children & Families Scrutiny to note the contents of the report.

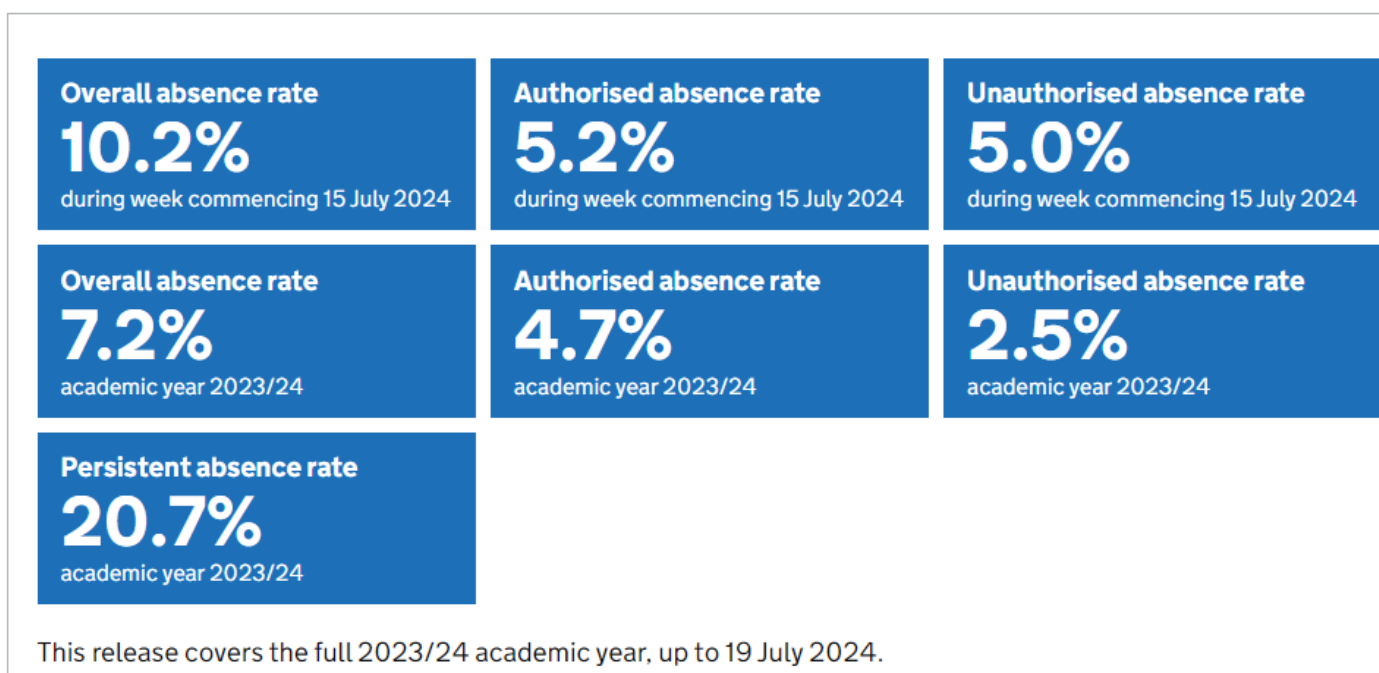
1. What is this report about?

Children and Families Scrutiny Board has set out a continued interest in looking at school attendance. This report provides an overview of the national context; school attendance in Leeds; a summary of the Leeds City Council support for schools to improve attendance; and the planned next steps for increasing attendance and reducing school absence in the city.

2 School attendance - nationally

2.1 The DfE first published [Working together to improve school attendance](#) in May 2022 following a period of consultation, in a bid to improve school attendance following the Covid-19 pandemic. This guidance has been revised and became statutory from 18 August 2024. The guidance sets out expectations on schools and LAs, along with the development of a national attendance data dashboard to support schools to target pupils most vulnerable to poor attendance.

2.2 National attendance data headlines:



Source: [Pupil attendance in schools, Week 29 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

2.3 This national data dashboard is informed by regular data automatically submitted to the DfE by **participating schools** (including state funded primary, secondary and special schools). This data is unverified and does not include all schools, but does align with local sources of data and therefore

By school type, the **national absence rates** across the academic year 2023/24 were:

- 5.5% in state-funded primary schools (3.9% authorised and 1.6% unauthorised)
- 9.1% in state-funded secondary schools (5.5% authorised and 3.6% unauthorised)

- 13% in state-funded special schools (9.7% authorised and 3.3% unauthorised)

2.4 The statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#) has laid out a number of approaches to addressing the national issue of persistent absence and unauthorised absence which includes working with families rather than against them, and taking a ‘support first’ approach through a model of:

- *Expect*: Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school;
- *Monitor*: Rigorously monitoring data to identify patterns of poor attendance early so that partners can work together to address them before they become entrenched;
- *Listen and understand*: When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them
- *Facilitate support*: Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
- *Formalise support*: Where voluntary support measures are not impacting on attendance, or are not being engaged with, collaboratively plan for how attendance barriers will be overcome, through attendance contracts and Early Help plans where appropriate;
- *Enforce*: finally, where all other avenues have been exhausted, to enforce attendance through statutory intervention.

3. School attendance in Leeds

3.1 All data regarding school attendance is collated from a multitude of sources and is used locally on an operational basis. The linked document below outlines these sources of data, yet all are incomplete and so we rely on published DfE statistics as the only verified data. [SPO-CFIPS - Sources of School Attendance Data - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

3.2 The latest **published / verified** attendance data for Leeds can be seen over the page (academic year 2022/23)

The Department for Education monitors pupil absence levels using two key measures; **overall absence rate** and **persistent absence (PA) rate**. These key measures are calculated for pupils who are of compulsory school age (between 5 and 15 as at the start of the academic year).

Overall absence is the aggregated total of all authorised and unauthorised absences.

Authorised absence is absence with permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences and arrivals after registration has closed.

Persistent absence -10% is when a pupil enrolment's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions.

Severe absence - 50% is when a pupil enrolment's overall absence equates to 50 per cent or more of their possible sessions ranking.

3.3 DfE published attendance data for academic year 2022/23 (latest available verified data)

Indicator	Academic Year					Trend	Change	Rank	National Quartile Position	Comparators 2023			
	2018	2019	2021 ²	2022	2023					National	Statistical Neighbour	Core Cities	Yorkshire & Humber
Attendance - Half Terms 1-6													
Primary													
Percentage attendance in primary schools	95.9	96.0	96.4	93.9	94.1		0.2	79/151	Band C	94.1	94.2	93.6	94.0
Percentage authorised absence in primary schools	2.7	2.6	2.4	4.1	3.7		-0.4	12/151	Band A	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.0
Percentage unauthorised absence in primary schools	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.9	2.2		0.3	128/151	Band D	1.6	1.8	2.4	2.0
Percentage of enrolments classified as persistently absent in primary schools	8.9	8.8	8.8	17.1	17.0		-0.1	93/151	Band C	16.2	16.3	19.3	16.9
Percentage of enrolments classified as severely absent in primary schools	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.7		0.1	85/151	Band C	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8
Secondary													
Percentage attendance in secondary schools	94.2	94.2	94.3	90.8	90.3		-0.5	113/151	Band D	91.0	91.0	90.0	90.3
Percentage authorised absence in secondary schools	3.3	3.1	3.2	5.2	4.5		-0.7	17/151	Band A	5.6	5.3	4.9	5.2
Percentage unauthorised absence in secondary schools	2.5	2.7	2.5	4.0	5.2		1.2	138/151	Band D	3.4	3.8	5.1	4.5
Percentage of enrolments classified as persistently absent in secondary schools	14.8	14.6	16.0	27.2	27.2		0.0	91/151	Band C	26.5	26.7	29.2	28.6
Percentage of enrolments classified as severely absent in secondary schools	1.5	1.7	1.9	3.6	4.8		1.2	140/151	Band D	3.4	3.4	4.5	4.3
Special Schools													
Percentage attendance in special schools	88.5	88.0	83.9	86.2	87.0		0.8	84/149	Band C	87.0	88.0	84.7	86.9
Percentage authorised absence in special schools	8.2	8.3	13.2	9.4	8.7		-0.7	34/149	Band A	9.9	8.9	10.2	9.8
Percentage unauthorised absence in special schools	3.3	3.8	2.8	4.4	4.3		-0.1	126/149	Band D	3.2	3.2	5.1	3.2
Percentage of enrolments classified as persistently absent in special schools	31.9	32.7	49.7	37.3	35.9		-1.4	44/149	Band B	38.3	35.2	42.6	37.6
Percentage of enrolments classified as severely absent in special schools	6.7	6.7	6.9	7.6	7.4		-0.2	111/149	Band C	6.2	6.1	8.8	7.1

The year denotes the year the academic year ended, eg Leeds 2018 is the academic year 2017/18

3.4 **All Schools**

- 3.4.1 There has been a reduction in authorised absence and an increase in unauthorised absence which has resulted in a small decrease in attendance overall. Persistent absence has remained static, but the severe absence figure has increased, driven overall by an increase across secondary schools.
- 3.4.2 Authorised absence has decreased to 4.1% and remains below national. Leeds ranks 10th out of 151 LAs and is in band A for quartile performance.
- 3.4.3 Since 2021/22, overall attendance rate across the ‘all schools’ figures has decreased slightly to 92.4% as well as being below the national figure of 92.6%, it is the lowest figure in Leeds in the 16-year period covered by the SFR. Out of 152 LAs, Leeds ranks 101st and is in quartile band C for performance.
- 3.4.4 Most absence was due to illness, which accounts for 3% of possible sessions in 2022/23, down from 3.6%.
- 3.4.5 There has been a notable increase in the last two years in the proportion of sessions missed due to ‘other unauthorised circumstances,’ which is a proxy for truancy. Between 2006/07 and 2020/21, the average was 1.1% and in 2023 this has increased to 2.6% with the increase predominantly driven by the secondary school phase. Leeds is above the national figure of 1.7%.
- 3.4.6 The unauthorised holiday rate has been steadily increasing over the last 16 years and remains slightly elevated when compared to pre-pandemic rates accounting for 0.7% of possible sessions which is above the national figure of 0.5%.
- 3.4.7 The persistent absence rate (a pupil missing 10% or more of their possible sessions) has remained static at 21.8% (24,775 pupil enrolments), equating to just over two out of every ten pupils. Leeds is just above national where 21.2% of pupil enrolments are recorded as being persistently absent, down from 22.5% in 2021/22. Leeds ranks 88th and is in band C for quartile performance.
- 3.4.8 The severe absence rate for pupil enrolments missing 50 per cent or more of their own possible sessions has however increased from 2% to 2.6% (2,992 pupil enrolments) mirroring the national trend where 2% of pupil enrolments are classed as being severely absent. The Leeds figure is above national where the increase has been smaller. Leeds ranks 142nd and is in band D for quartile performance.
- 3.4.9 Pupils with an EHCP and those who are FSM eligible have the lowest attendance rates, 87.1% and 87.9%, respectively. For pupils who are FSM eligible this is because of high absence mainly due to ‘other unauthorised circumstances’ which is a proxy for truancy. For pupils with an EHCP low attendance is due to absence mainly caused by illness. Both groups of pupils also have the highest persistent absence rates too.
- 3.4.1 The new guidance for schools and local authorities began being implemented in late 2022, and it is anticipated that the impact on the steps taken to respond to the guidance will begin to be seen in attendance data for the 2023/24 academic year and beyond.
- 3.5 **Secondary Pupil attendance** has decreased by 0.5% however the rate has slowed. Authorised absence has come down, but there has been an increase in unauthorised absence. Persistent absence (absence of 10% or more) has remained static, but severe absence (absence of 50%+) has increased. Leeds ranks 113th of 151 LAs and is in quartile D for performance.
- 3.5.1 Severe absence rates for pupil enrolments who have missed 50% or more of their own possible sessions has increased from 3.6% to 4.8% - equivalent of 2,421 pupils. This is above all

comparators with Leeds ranking 140th of 151 local authorities. 3 Core Cities have rates above Leeds, however Leeds is in quartile band D for performance.

3.6 **Primary Pupil attendance** has increased slightly due to a reduction in authorised absence, but unauthorised absence has increased. Persistent absence (absence of 10% or more) has reduced slightly, but the severe absence figure has increased slightly too. Out of 151 LAs, Leeds ranks 79th and is in quartile band C for performance.

3.6.1 Severe absence rates for pupil enrolments who have missed 50% or more of their own possible sessions has increased slightly to 0.7% in 2023, this equates to 443 pupils. Performance is in line with national but below other comparators. Leeds ranks 85th and is in band C for quartile performance.

3.7 Termly data – early indications of 2023/24 attendance figures

3.7.1 The termly statistical first release has been provided by the DfE for Autumn term of the 2023/24 academic year.

3.7.2 Overall, this data indicates that attendance improved in Autumn 2023 compared to Autumn 2022, but unauthorised absence has increased in both primary and secondary phases. Persistent absence has decreased, but severe absence has increased, with the largest increase seen across the secondary phase.

3.7.3 There has been a continued increase in attendance across all phases, albeit remaining lower than pre-pandemic years. There has also been a continued reduction in authorised absence in all phases of education, indicating the rising expectations for good school attendance. Overall, the statistical first release indicates that Leeds ranks 23rd of 153 LAs for authorised absence.

3.7.4

	Overall Attendance (%)	Authorised Absence (%)	Unauthorised Absence (%)	PA 10%	Severe Absence (50%)
Leeds	92.9	3.9	3.2	20.1	2.5
National	93.3	4.5	2.2	19.4	2.0
Stat Neighbours	93.1	4.5	2.5	20.5	2.0
Core Cities	92.8	4.1	3.2	21.2	2.6
Yorkshire and The Humber	92.9	4.3	2.8	20.9	2.3

Source: DfE SFR Autumn Term 2023

3.8 Cohort analysis

3.8.1 The lagged nature of the verified data from the DfE makes it challenging for the LA to analyse and respond to data in a timely way. In recent months, the LA has established more regular access to sessional attendance data via a live connection with school management information systems.

3.8.2 Although this data work is an ongoing development, early indications highlight that there are key cohorts of children and young people for whom a strategic and coordinated response is required in order to understand more about the reasons for absence and what support can be offered to improve it.

3.8.3 SEN status

In Autumn and Spring terms of 2023/24, 35.8% of pupils with an EHCP were persistently absent (attendance below 90%) and 9.1% of pupils with an EHCP were severely absent (attendance

below 50%). This is significantly above the persistent and severe absence rates for pupils without an EHCP.

In Autumn and Spring terms of 2023/24, 30.5% of pupils who were recorded as SEN Support were persistently absent, and 5.8% were severely absent. This is above the persistent and severe absence rates for pupils who are not in receipt of SEN Support.

Whilst nationally the attendance of pupils with SEND is below their peers, often due to health related needs leading to absence from school, further work needs to be undertaken to understand more about the underlying reasons for absence for Leeds pupils with SEND so that action can be taken to support children, families and schools to address this.

3.8.4 *Social Care status*

In Autumn and Spring terms of 2023/24, 27% of children looked after, 53% of children in need and 69% of children on a child protection plan were persistently absent from school. 8.6% of children looked after, 14.2% of children in need and 21% of children on a child protection plan were recorded as severely absent from school (attendance below 50%).

This data indicates a small improvement on attendance data for 2022/23 for this cohort, however our ambition and determination to improve the attendance of vulnerable children remains.

For children looked after, the regularly updated Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each child includes a focus on the most recent attendance information and what support is needed to improve this. The Virtual School continues to offer support to social workers, schools and partners around the approach to supporting and encouraging improved attendance for this cohort.

3.8.5 *Ethnicity*

Attendance by Ethnicity *(2023-24 includes Autumn + Spring Terms only)*

Ethnic Group ▲	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Overall ▼
Chinese	97.4%	96.7%	97.1%	96.9%	97.0%
Black - African	97.0%	96.6%	96.3%	96.9%	96.6%
Indian	96.2%	94.4%	94.7%	95.0%	95.0%
Any other Black background	95.6%	95.0%	94.5%	94.5%	94.9%
Any other Asian background	94.1%	93.6%	93.3%	94.6%	93.8%
Any other ethnic group	94.2%	93.6%	93.0%	94.5%	93.7%
White and Black African	94.2%	92.9%	93.0%	92.6%	93.1%
White and Asian	93.8%	92.4%	92.4%	92.9%	92.8%
Any other mixed background	93.9%	92.4%	92.2%	92.9%	92.8%
White - British	94.2%	92.1%	92.2%	92.3%	92.6%
Black Caribbean	93.5%	92.4%	91.9%	92.1%	92.4%
Any other white background	93.4%	91.9%	91.3%	92.0%	92.1%
Pakistani	92.0%	91.7%	91.2%	92.7%	91.8%
White - Irish	93.1%	91.0%	91.3%	90.7%	91.5%
Bangladeshi	91.5%	91.4%	89.7%	91.6%	91.0%
White and Black Caribbean	91.8%	90.0%	89.6%	89.4%	90.2%
	89.1%	88.9%	88.8%	90.6%	89.3%
Gypsy / Roma	78.0%	81.1%	79.2%	80.5%	79.8%
Traveller of Irish heritage	80.4%	78.1%	78.0%	80.8%	79.1%
All	94.0%	92.4%	92.3%	92.7%	92.8%

Source: School Census data

When reviewing attendance across different ethnicities, there is a clear gap between the ethnic groups with highest attendance rates and those with the lowest. This highlights a need to ensure that attendance improvement activities, including ensuring that aspirations for school attendance are appropriately high for pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, needs to be a priority for action within schools, clusters and communities and all partner agencies. The recent developments in data collation will support the LA in the coming months to explore whether attendance coding is being used appropriately across all schools – particularly for the traveller and Gypsy Roma communities – so that we have more understanding about the nature of absence at individual pupil level.

4. Legal Intervention

4.1 There are a range of legal interventions that schools and LAs can use as a last resort to improve a child's attendance at school. The DfE published the Parental Responsibility Measures 2022/23 Statistical First Release (SFR) in December 2023. It includes data on the use of:

- penalty notices
- attendance case management
- parenting orders and parenting contracts
- education supervision orders

4.2 Penalty notices are issued to parents for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The amount payable was previously £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt (now £80 and £160 under new legislation from August 2024). If the penalty is not paid within 28 days, the local authority must either prosecute for the original offence (of failing to ensure their child attends school) or withdraw the notice.

The information is based on data collected from local authorities in England through the parental responsibility measures attendance census. The analysis included in this paper only focuses on penalty notices and the reasons they have been issued.

The SFR can be accessed on the DfE's website using the following link: [Parental Responsibility Measures](#).

4.3 All schools are encouraged to take an approach of support first, followed by enforcement as necessary. Schools are supported to make use of the legislative enforcement actions available to them where early identification, informal support and formalised support have been unsuccessful in improving attendance.

4.4 **Key headlines from the Parental Responsibility Measures SFR include:**

- In 2022/23 the total number of penalty notices issued in Leeds was 7,046 (an increase from 5,192 in 2021/22). The vast majority (96.3%) of these penalty notices were issued due to unauthorised holidays in term time.
- This equates to 620 per 10,000 pupil enrolments; this is above the national and Core Cities rate, but below the Statistical Neighbour and Yorkshire and Humber rate of 480. This is the highest rate in the last 10 years since the current methodology has been used and is reflective of the higher unauthorised absence rates seen post-pandemic.
- Out of 152 local authorities, Leeds has a rank of equal 94 (down from equal 125) and is now in quartile band C for performance.

4.4.1 **Table 1: Number of penalty notices issued for unauthorised absences | rate per 100**

	2018/19		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	Number	Rate per 100	Number	Rate per 100	Number	Rate per 100	Number	Rate per 100
Leeds	4,349	4.1	1,062	1.0	5,192	4.7	7,046	6.2
National	333,388	4.7	45,809	0.6	218,235	3.0	398,796	5.4
Stat. Neighbours	2,614	6.4	438	1.2	1,938	4.8	3,250	8.0
Core Cities	3,939	5.5	294	0.4	2,870	3.4	5,349	6.7
Yorkshire & Humber	51,853	7.2	8,221	1.1	35,180	4.8	64,137	8.6

Data source: DfE SFR PRM 2022/23

Data notes: 2020/21 data is not directly comparable with other years as attendance was disrupted due to the pandemic, and for two months measures being disapplied when schools were not open to all pupils.

4.4.2 When reviewing the reasons given for penalty notices being issued, in line with the Leeds figures, 89.3% of penalty notices nationally were issued due unauthorised family holidays.

Table 2: Reasons for the penalty notices

	2021/22			2022/23		
	Holidays	Late	Other	Holidays	Late	Other

Leeds	4,974	0	218	6,782	0	264
National	186,281	1,269	30,685	356,181	985	41,630
Statistical Neighbours	1,676	63	200	3,025	6	218
Core Cities	2,608	77	185	4,806	4	539
Yorkshire & Humber	32,113	610	2,457	60,623	29	3,485

Data source: DfE SFR PRM 2022/23

- 4.4.3 Since 2013/14, there has been a year-on-year increase with the exception of 2017/18 and 2020/21 where the numbers were lower. In 2017/18 Leeds bucked the national trend with a 34% decrease in the number of penalty notices being issued despite unauthorised absence increasing in the same period for primary, secondary, and special schools. The large decreases seen in the data for 2020/21 covers the period of the pandemic when attendance at school was heavily disrupted, and for two months measures were disapplied when schools were not open to all pupils. Between 2021/22 and 2022/23 there has been a 36% increase in penalty notices being issued, however, nationally there has been an 83% increase which is perhaps reflective of the increase in unauthorised absence rates.

Table 3: Time series | number of penalty notices

Year	No. of penalty notices issued	
	Leeds	National
2013/14	1795	98259
2014/15	3322	151125
2015/16	4269	157879
2016/17	4401	149321
2017/18	2907	260877
2018/19	4349	333388
2020/21	1062	45809
2021/22	5192	218235
2022/23	7046	398,796

Data source: DfE SFR PRM 2022/23

4.4.4 *Penalty Notice Code of Conduct*

As part of the new statutory guidance, the Local Authority is required to review and update our Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. This will outline the Local Authority's approach to the use of Fixed Penalty Notices as one possible option for improving attendance.

5. **Working together to improve attendance – in practice**

- 5.1 The context of schools within the city is important to note when considering the drive for improved school attendance. In Leeds, there are currently:

- 22 Primary Schools with a total capacity of 71,753 places (100 places in smallest primary, 700 places in the biggest primary school - often 420 places per school, 60 per year group)
- 40 Secondary Schools, with a total capacity of 49,971 places (100 places in smallest secondary, 2065 places in largest secondary, often 180 per year group)
- All Through Schools - total capacity 5984
- 9 Independent (fee paying) schools - 5104 places
- Alternative Provision Schools - 714 places, and
- 11 Special schools (including 2 Independent / non-maintained Specials) - 2303 places.

5.1.2 There are 135,289 places available throughout our city, with 1.7% of those places available in special schools, and a further 0.5% of all places being available in Alternative Provision.

98% of children receive their education in a 'mainstream' provision. All families are supported to engage with the mainstream offer, and the Local Authority One SEND support teams continue to support schools to ensure that their offer is adapted and responsive to the changing needs of pupils in the city.

5.1.3 There are currently 1394 electively home educated children in the city. Anecdotally, some parents share that they are choosing to home educate as they are disillusioned with the school system, however the majority of families who choose to home educate do not provide a reason for their decision.

5.2 The LCC Elective Home Education Team fulfils the LAs statutory duty to identify children who are not in receipt of full-time age and aptitude appropriate education and facilitates an EHE parent / carer forum to support home educating families. Where the LA is notified that a child will be home educated, safeguarding checks are carried out to ascertain whether there are any concerns about this decision, and whether the decision to home educate may impact on protective factors in place. A robust safeguarding pathway is in place to work in partnership with Children's Social Work Services where there are any concerns about the child being home educated, whilst recognising that home education is not, in and of itself, a safeguarding risk.

5.3 The Working Together to improve school attendance guidance became statutory in August 2024. The School Attendance Service has been working towards this guidance since its publication in 2022, therefore we have been in a good position to implement the operational elements of guidance and support schools with their responsibilities, despite no additional funding being provided for these functions. Progress towards the rigorous and strategic response to attendance is ongoing, and involves key partners from outside Learning Inclusion including health, social care and early help services.

5.4 The requirements of the 2024 Working Together guidance include the following responsibilities for the Local Authority:

- Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):
 - ❖ Communication and advice: regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
 - ❖ Targeting Support Meetings: hold regular conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
 - ❖ Multi-disciplinary support for families: provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.

- ❖ Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through the Virtual School

These responsibilities are in addition to the existing responsibilities to children missing out on education, where the local authority is required, as far as is reasonably possible, to identify any child who is not in receipt of full time, age and aptitude appropriate learning.

Alongside the new responsibilities within the 2024 guidance, the duty to identify children who are missing out on education sits with the Children Missing Out on Education (CMOOE) teams (38 officers) – which includes the CME team, School Attendance Service, Exclusions Monitoring Officer, Pupil Tuition Team and the Elective Home Education Team.

6.0 **Early Help**

Early Help is both a term which describes a service or a collection of services, and a description of a principle, or a way of working (supporting early in the life of a problem). Whilst the DfE guidance outlines the ways that schools and local authorities can use legal interventions as a means of improving attendance at school, it is clear that in the majority of cases, these should be used as a last resort, with an explicit expectation of “support first”, which aligns to the Leeds Practice Principles.

Good school attendance starts with ensuring children have a school place to attend, with any support needs in school being identified early and then ensuring that support is available, either from within school or in partnership with agencies outside the school, to address barriers to good attendance as early as possible.

Poor attendance at school is also recognised as a symptom of other needs being unmet. With education recognised as a protective factor, all services working to support children and families, in a vast range of contexts, have the potential to impact positively on school attendance, despite improved school attendance not always being the explicit goal. Examples include family and parenting support, parenting programmes, counselling and therapeutic support, holiday activities and encouraging a culture of positive regard for learning through the early years.

In Leeds, our Early Help approach to improving school attendance includes a range of activities delivered by the 3rd sector, the council, health services and schools, some of which are outlined below.

6.1 *School Admissions*

All families are supported to apply for their local schools through the annual cycle (normal round admissions) and the in-year application process. Since September 2024, the Leeds School Admissions Team have been coordinating applications for school places outside the normal round to ensure that parental requests are responded to as quickly as possible, and to ensure that where places are available, they are allocated in line with the school’s admissions policy. Since the start of September, over 1000 in-year school places have been allocated.

The Fair Access Protocol also ensures that vulnerable children, where they are facing challenges with securing a school place through the usual in-year process, are offered a school place as quickly as possible. The Area Inclusion Partnerships (AIPs) all support the re-inclusion of pupils through the fair access process, with AIPs receiving funding for the role of ‘re-inclusion officer’ to ensure that transitions into school for vulnerable pupils are supported and take place without delay.

6.1.1 *Training for school staff*

SAS – School briefing sessions

Throughout 2023/24 academic year a range of free briefing sessions and drop-in sessions have been offered by the CMOOE teams alongside a small amount of traded training. This offer to all schools was to support them in the implementation of the statutory guidance. This training offer continues in the academic year 2024/25 and will be continually reviewed. The training offer has seen 907 delegates from across schools and clusters where staff are working together to support school attendance.

Session title 2023/24	Number of delegates attending
Attendance Coding briefing session	128
e-learning: Parenting Contracts (traded)	4
Virtual workshops facilitated by DfE and LCC School Attendance Service	94
Virtual: CME and Attendance (traded)	36
Virtual: Attendance analysis and persistent absence (traded)	25
Virtual briefing: National Attendance Penalty Notice Framework	133
Virtual: casework (traded)	38
Virtual: Fast track and penalty notices (traded)	59
Drop-in sessions	27
Virtual: targeting support meetings for schools who are not part of a cluster	12
Virtual: Attendance Briefing – what the new statutory guidance means for schools and the LA	347
TOTAL:	907

6.1.2 *Educational Psychology Team – Extended school non-attendance (ESNA) training*

The Leeds One SEND service includes our Educational Psychology Team, who have developed a range of resources to support schools in understanding, identifying and addressing extended school non-attendance. The training focusses on school staff and partners developing a greater understanding of how anxiety can impact on school attendance and how extended non-attendance can be perpetuated. The training and resources provide ideas on how schools and partners can understand non-attendance, exploring challenges for children and families; how the graduated approach can seek to resolve non-attendance; and seeks to develop in-school awareness of the different ways that needs can be met.

6.2 *Targeting support meetings*

In line with the August 2024 Working Together to Improve Attendance statutory guidance, the Leeds School attendance Service has worked with 161 schools throughout 2023/24 delivering 22 targeting support meetings by making use of the existing cluster model.

These meetings provide opportunities to consider thematic barriers to attendance; problem solving case examples; analyse school attendance data and provide an opportunity to share key information between school, clusters and other locality based partners.

A standardised approach to these meetings across the city is in place, however there is also the opportunity to explore locality-based issues and barriers which may be impacting on attendance. These meetings include representatives from schools, clusters and the Family Hubs teams as they are established.

6.3 *Attendance Steering Group*

The Leeds Attendance Steering Group was established in Summer 2024 with support from the DfE. This steering group includes representatives from schools, health, clusters, Family Hubs, WY Police and the OneSEND service. As first actions, this group will be reviewing a proposed reduced timetables policy for the city, an updated Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, and will be contributing to strategic oversight of citywide attendance data and identifying the appropriate strategic response required.

6.4 *Breakfast Clubs*

One example of how the wider system menu supports children and families through Early Help is through Breakfast Clubs. The provision of breakfast at schools is recognised as having a significant potential benefit on school attendance, with many headteachers agreeing that breakfast has a link to improved attendance. Leeds City Council is working closely with the University of Leeds on an annual breakfast survey which is used to help target schools and communities where breakfast club provision may be of support. The government has also announced recent commitments in relation to breakfast club provision and is seeking the involvement of 750 schools nationally to be part of a test and learn pilot. In Leeds, many schools already offer a breakfast club, with some supported by organisations such as Greggs or Magic Breakfasts who subsidise the costs.

Family Action, through the National School Breakfast Programme also supports schools in areas of highest deprivation (defined as 40% or more of children living in IDACI bands A-F) by subsidising the costs of breakfast clubs at 75% of the cost. The programme is currently running until July 2025 and also provides good practice sharing opportunities, resources, and the opportunity to learn from a national network of schools.

6.5 *Local third sector support*

Leeds is fortunate to have a thriving 3rd sector which provides a varied menu of support for schools and families across the city. Through the cluster model, many schools have established relationships with 3rd sector providers who deliver a wide range of support services which impact on families. Whilst few of them purport to target school attendance directly, we understand that attendance at school is often a symptom of wider child and family wellbeing, and where there are support needs within the family, school attendance may be adversely affected. As such, all 3rd sector provision which supports children and families has the potential to impact positively on school attendance.

6.6 *Leeds Local Offer*

The Leeds Local Offer (LLO) provides information for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents or carers in a single place. It shows families what they can expect from a range of local agencies including education, health and social care. The LLO is increasingly used as a resource for support and signposting to other resources for families where a child or children have SEND. Given the known impacts on attendance of SEND (and in particular unmet need) the LLO, and the contents of the signposted resources are a further example of how the principle of a system of Early Help can impact on attendance.

6.7 *Gypsy Roma Traveller Team*

We know that at particular points in the year, children from the GRT community can sometimes have extended periods of absence from school. The Leeds GRT team works closely with families, children, schools, communities and other agencies to provide support in this complex space. Part of the outputs of this team's work is a drive towards improved attendance at school, including working alongside community leaders and families to ensure that support is available for educational continuity.

6.8 *Virtual School for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After*

The virtual school has been offering attendance education consultations targeted at children with a Social Worker (including Children Looked After, Previously Looked After, Child in Need, and those on a child protection plan). The consultation sessions provide an opportunity for discussions about individual case concerns and problem solving. 18 settings attended a consultation session during 2023-24, including Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, Alternative Provision settings and social workers.

Attendance continues to be an area of focus within child protection audits. 20 sets of conference minutes were audited in Summer term 2024. This audit demonstrated very good progress last academic year compared to the first audit carried out in 2022. Highlights include:

- School attendance included in the majority of child protection plans, with a specific target attendance % recorded
- Narrative and detail included in the minutes relating to school attendance. This included a comparison to previous attendance data, the impact of interventions used and reference to specific terminology found in legislation relating to pupil attendance.
- Some evidence of understanding of the barriers to attendance
- Strong evidence of the child's voice being included in the plans
- Clear narrative around other agencies involved to improve a child's attendance – indicating an improved multi-agency approach and understanding of roles within this
- Evidence of supportive and preventative rather than reactive approach to attendance
- Clear strong line of questioning from CP Chairs and Social Workers relating to the use of alternative provision and / or reduced timetables

The Head of the Leeds Virtual School, through her role on the National Association of Virtual School Heads, is continuing to raise challenge with the DfE to enable Virtual Schools to be able to access the national WONDE data to enable timely tracking of sessional attendance for children looked after who attend education provision in other Local Authority areas.

The Leeds Virtual School is exploring the possibility of procuring the eGov PEP (digital PEP portal). Nationally, other LAs who use the eGov PEP are working with WONDE to examine the possibility of live sessional attendance data feeding directly into PEPs, which will support Social Workers when reviewing PEPs, to ensure that attendance information is accurate and any concerns are swiftly acted upon.

6.9 *Life Coaching*

The Life Coaching Service is a skilled team of eight qualified youth workers who are Mental Health First Aid trained, as well as a Life Coach Co-ordinator. The team began delivery in October 2022 and due to its success, a second team has been established to meet the demands on the service.

The Life Coaches work with young people who are experiencing poor mental health, disengaged from education or NEET, and on the 'edge of care'. Young people do not have to meet all three areas to receive support from the team and they can work with young people on a one-to-one basis for a period of around six months. The support can take place in a setting that is most appropriate for the young person's needs such as at home, within the community or an education setting and the team have fully adopted the Leeds Practice Model in their day to day practice.

6.10 *Significant Absence Panel*

A multi-disciplinary significant absence panel has been established as a pilot project. This project aims to review cases where pupils have been absent from school for more than 15 days. The panel considers the individual circumstances of the case and formulates next steps –this may include advice and guidance to schools about the support they could offer; additional support being allocated from services in health, education or early help services; or a decision that the local authority will make arrangements for provision in line with the Section 19 duty within the Education Act 1996. This provision includes short-term 121 tuition, a place at the Medical Needs Teaching Service, or a place at an Alternative Provision.

6.11 *Risk Of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training at post 16) Pilot*

Work has begun to pilot a Risk Of NEET Indicator (RONI) tool, which aims to identify young people who are at risk of becoming NEET once they leave compulsory school age. Low attendance at school is recognised as an indicator that a young person is likely to become NEET at the end of Year 11, and following identification via the RONI, personalised packages of support, drawing on the skills and expertise of cluster, early help, Virtual School, school, Youth Justice and Pathways colleagues aims to improve school attendance in Years 10 and 11, to maximise the chances of the young person progressing into a sustained post 16 employment, education or training place.

6.12 *SAFE (Support, Attend, Fulfil, Exceed) Taskforce*

This project, funded by the DfE since 2023, has focussed on reducing children’s vulnerability to the harms of serious violence by supporting them to engage in education. The taskforce brings together secondary schools and partners to commission evidence based interventions ‘upstream’ to act as a preventative measure for young people at risk of engaging in violence and crime in the future.

In Leeds, the project has focused on three main evidence-based interventions:

- Education Inclusion Mentors employed in schools and across area inclusion partnerships to provide mentoring support to individuals in Years 7, 8 and 9 who are identified as at risk. Supporting them to engage in positive activities, to attend school more regularly and to raise their future aspirations.
- Whole school development opportunities re: pro-social skills via staff training and assemblies for all pupils
- Afterschool activities and summer activities for targeted cohorts of young people

Although the evidence of the impact of this project is still being collated and analysed, the focus on preventative and early intervention work makes demonstrating an immediate impact on this vulnerable cohort a challenge. Despite this, there are case study examples which demonstrate positive impacts on individual young people’s attendance, and the national research and local analysis will be available towards the end of the project (Spring 2025). This this will inform future plans for the continuation of any elements of the project, subject to available funding.

What impact will this proposal have?

No proposals included – this paper outlines the existing and planned interventions of the LA in relation to school attendance.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

- Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: All
Have ward members been consulted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

What are the resource implications?

The new statutory responsibilities placed on the LA, along with the high levels of pupil absence, have increased the workload for the School Attendance Service in all areas, including the legal work to progress cases to penalty notice, school attendance order or education supervision

order; support and advice to schools, the robust analysis of data and strategic response required. Some of this risk is being mitigated by taken a systems approach and ensuring collaboration of all partners to take some of this strategic work forward, primarily through the attendance steering group.

There is no increased funding provided to LAs by the DfE to support the additional school attendance burdens.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

As above, there is a risk that the existing resources available to support the functions of the Children Missing Out on Education are not sufficient to meet the requirements of the statutory guidance. Some of this risk is being mitigated by taking a systems approach and ensuring collaboration between all partners.

Further mitigation of this risk is through the support provided through the Leeds Early Help approach and ensuring that the workforce understands that school attendance is ‘everyone’s business’.

Income from fixed penalty notices can be used to support the delivery of the school attendance service, and as the standard fixed penalty notice rate has increased, this is likely to generate additional income. However we will also need to consider expanding the traded training offer to schools to ensure that there are sufficient resources available to provide the support, guidance and challenge to schools that is required in order to overcome barriers to school attendance for individual pupils.

As part of the 3As plan consultation exercise, school’s highlighted support that they would like from the LA in relation to improving attendance. This included:

- *A shared commitment to not permanently excluding young people.*
- *For Social Care to support schools when children are not attending and continue to be involved with the family.*
- *Making attendance a big priority for the city, for example, by having a very visible advertising campaign.*
- *Consistent policy on fines, clear steer from LA for one approach for all schools and HTs.*

Whilst support is ongoing in some of these areas – for example the LA is developing our Penalty Notices Code of Conduct and is working with Social Care to ensure that attendance is acknowledged as a protective factor; there is limited capacity available to develop a visible advertising campaign. In addition, the DfE have made clear that there are no grounds for the Local Authority or any individual school to commit to ‘no permanent exclusions’.

There are a range of activities carried out which have an impact on school attendance, however many of these are a consequence of time-limited funding being prioritised for this work. Although improving attendance is a cross-party priority, the uncertainty of ongoing funding creates sustainability challenges.

What are the legal implications?

From August 2024, the Working Together to Improve Attendance guidance is statutory. The LA must ensure that the expectations within this guidance are met.

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Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Date: 9 October 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Children and Families Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The Children and Families Scrutiny Board has regularly discussed the impact poverty is having on children and young people in Leeds and that it is a key determinant in some of the service demand challenges being faced by the Council.

Having last considered this issue in the previous 2023/24 municipal year a further update is now brought back to the Board which comprises of the 18 September 2024 Executive Board report and appendices. That report provided an overview of Leeds' Child Poverty Strategy and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has been done to address ongoing post pandemic and cost of living priorities and the refreshed Child Poverty Strategy 2024-27.

Appendix 1 gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps, detailing what is being done to mitigate the impact of poverty on children and young people in Leeds. Appendix 2 provides the Refreshed Strategy 2024-2027.

This report provides information on poverty, which is a key city, regional and national challenge and covers the strong links between experiencing poverty as a child and having worse mental and physical health, a shorter life, lower grades in education, poor financial health and lower paid, insecure work.

Recommendations

- a) That Scrutiny endorses the refreshed and ongoing strategic framework in place to mitigate the impact of child poverty, and the work being undertaken by the council and other partners in the key areas of activity.
- b) The Scrutiny Board acknowledges the need to promote the work of the Child Poverty strategy across the city and across council directorates and through our wider city partnerships in order to highlight the impact of poverty on children and their families.

What is this report about?

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds, and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has occurred post pandemic. This report gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps.
- 2 Recent consultation with young people and colleagues has led to the strategy being refreshed – and will be launched in autumn 2024. Further details on the refreshed strategy are provided in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3 It is also important to note that the child poverty strategy was co-created with children, young people, families with direct experience of poverty, third, private and public sector, schools, academics and other organisations.
- 4 The Board should note that some of the data presented in the report relates to earlier in 2024 which is linked to reporting deadlines and requirements for Executive Board, but the Board should be assured that data is captured and analysed on an ongoing basis as part of the regular work of the service.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 5 This is an ongoing strategy about mitigating the impact of child poverty for children and families in Leeds. Further detail is set out in the appendices to this report in terms of the outcomes and outputs of each project linked to the Strategy for the Scrutiny Board's information.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

5. This strategy directly relates to the Best City Ambition specifically:

Our mission to tackle poverty and inequality and improve quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home.

Health and wellbeing - In 2030 Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for everyone: where those who are most likely to experience poverty improve their mental and physical health the fastest, people are living healthy lives for longer, and are supported to thrive from early years to later life.

Inclusive growth - In 2030 Leeds will have an economy that works for everyone, where we work to tackle poverty and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are distributed fairly across the city, creating opportunities for all.

Zero carbon -In 2030 Leeds will have made rapid progress towards carbon neutrality, reducing our impact on the planet and doing so in a fair way which improves standards of living in all the city's communities.

- The work supports some of the best council objectives and priorities as defined in the Best City Plan 2020 and 2025. These include: - improving educational achievement gaps; providing skills programmes and employment support; improving school attendance and reducing the percentage of young people who are not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).
- The strategy aligns with local and city-wide strategies such as the Priority Neighbourhoods work, the Children and Young People's Plan, Child Friendly Leeds, Future in Mind Strategy, and the Best City for Learning.
- This strategy relates to the council priority around the climate emergency. As the climate continues to change, extreme weather patterns across the globe will become increasingly common. The knock-on effects of these changes will be profound; however, it is hard to determine what specifically they will look like. What is certain is that there will be scarcity of

various resources, such as food and energy, which could lead to price increases, which will have a disproportionate impact on people who live in poverty. We should seek to mitigate the impact of poverty and reduce insecurity and inequality around these basic needs to build strengthened communities for the future.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

6. Extensive consultation has been conducted with regards to this strategy, with private, public, third and education sectors, children, young people and parents, universities and community groups.

What are the resource implications?

7. There are no new proposals with resource implications presented in this paper.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

8. None

What are the legal implications?

9. There are no legal implications.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

10. This is an agreed corporate wide strategy which is ongoing.

How will success be measured?

11. This is an agreed corporate wide strategy which is ongoing.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

12. This is an ongoing strategy.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Update: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds
- Appendix 2 – Refreshed Strategy 2024-2027
- Appendix 3 – EDCI Screening Form Child Poverty Exec Board 2024

Background papers

- None

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Appendix One

Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

1. Main issues

This report provides an update on the Leeds Child Poverty Strategy and progress of the workstreams that sit underneath the strategy. It also details our responses to the post pandemic and cost of living crisis, in terms of ongoing work, impact and next steps.

A full and comprehensive “Cost of Living Update report”¹ on the cost-of-living crisis and actions being undertaken by the Council and partners from a welfare and financial inclusion perspective was presented by the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment to Executive Board in April 2024.

Child Poverty Statistics ²

The 2022/23 national and local statistics were published in March 2024. These should be viewed as an estimate for the number of children living in poverty in Leeds and the UK.³ It is important to note that due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the HBAI survey data, caution is advised in making recent year-on-year comparisons to data published in 2022 and 2023. This is due to the smaller sample sizes and differing collection methods carried out for surveys during the lockdown period.

The national picture ⁴

In the UK 22% of dependent children under 20 are living in poverty (relative poverty **before housing costs** (BHC), up from 20% in 2021/22

In the UK 30% of dependent children under 20 are living in poverty (relative poverty **after housing costs** (AHC) – this is 4.33 million children, up from 29% in 2021/22.

- 34% of children under 20 living in families where someone has a disability are in Poverty (Relative AHC)
- 44% of children under 20 in lone parent families in the UK live in Poverty (Relative AHC)
- 47% of children under 20 in Asian and British Asian families live in poverty (Relative AHC)
- 51% of children under 20 in Black / Caribbean and Black British families live in Poverty (Relative AHC)

A higher number and percentage of all dependent children under 20 in poverty in the UK are from households where at least one adult is in work (2.99m out of 4.33m children equating to 69% AHC)

The local picture ⁵

In Leeds, 33,482 children under 16 were living in relative poverty **before housing costs** (BHC), equal to 22% in 2022/23. This is compared to a national figure of 20% (3.25m).

Recent research published by the End Child Poverty Coalition⁶ found that Leeds had 53,911 dependent children under 20 living in relative poverty, **after housing costs**, representing 30% of children in 2022/23.

21% of Leeds’ population is living in relative poverty after housing costs are deducted from income. This equates to approximately 176,376 people

¹ [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Executive Board, 17/04/2024 13:00 \(leeds.gov.uk\) ITEM 7](#)

² Please note that national data provides Child Poverty levels for dependent children under 20 both before and after housing costs. Official Child Poverty Rates for local areas are only available for children under 16, and only available on the BHC measure.

³ Definitions of poverty can be found in the Poverty Fact book - [Leeds Observatory – Leeds Poverty Fact Book](#)

⁴ [Households below average income \(HBAI\) statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁵ [Children in low income families: local area statistics, financial year ending 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

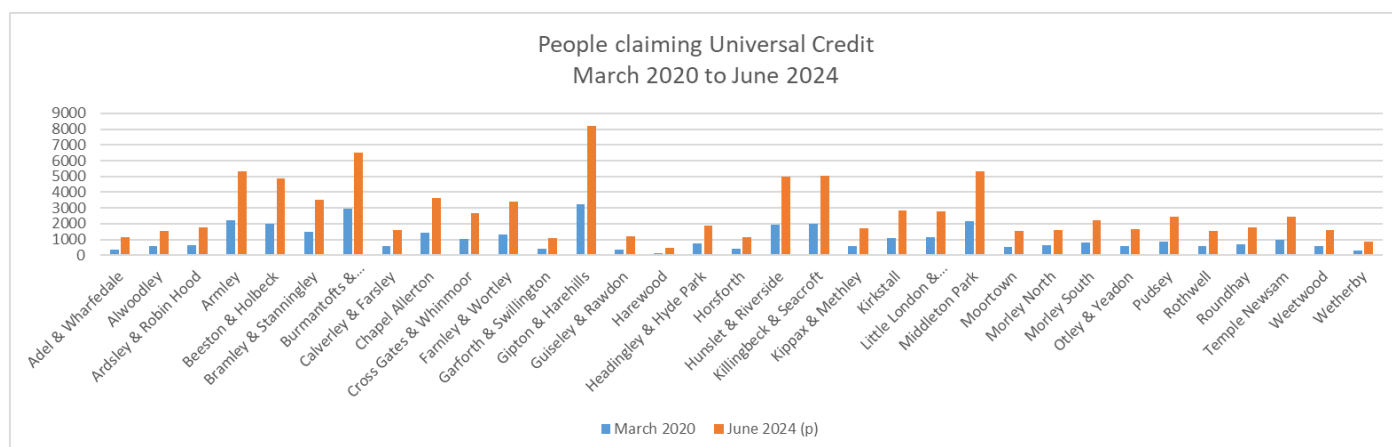
⁶ [Child Poverty Statistics 2024 - End Child Poverty](#)

Universal Credit

In March 2020, 35,450 were claiming Universal Credit in Leeds, this increased to a high of 74,515 people in March 2021. The latest provisional data shows that in **June 2024**, that figure has increased to 90,295 claimants, that remains more than double the pre-pandemic level.

All wards in Leeds have seen an increase in people claiming UC (Not in Employment), with the highest impact on our poorest wards. The most affected wards are Gipton and Harehills, where claimants have increased from 10.6% of Working Age Population (WAP), 2,209 claimants in March 2020 to 25.7% of WAP, 5,339 in May 2024, and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward where claimants have increased from 11.0% of the WAP, 2,072 claimants in March 2020 to 22.1% of the WAP, 4,166 claimants in May 2024.

Below details the information by ward across for UC all claimants.



1.1 The impact of poverty on children and families

Poverty has a profound effect on families and children living in them. Children who experience poverty are more likely to face a wide range of difficulties, both now and in the future. There are strong links between experiencing poverty as a child and having worse mental and physical health, a shorter life, lower grades in education, poor financial health and lower paid, insecure work.

Poverty is most often defined by income. But for most children, poverty is about more than just money. It is about growing up in a home without enough heat or nutritious food. Poverty means no new clothes, no telephone and no money for a birthday celebration. These deprivations have consequences that can last a lifetime. Research shows that children in poor families are less likely to complete a good education.⁷

The cost-of-living crisis is having a severe impact on families with children. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the war in Ukraine, Brexit and austerity and inflation has all increased pressures on low-income households and the most vulnerable in society, as well as pushing many additional households to experience financial uncertainty and hardship for the first time.

A report published in September 2023 based on an Education Anti-Poverty survey of 1,023 professionals working in schools in England, organised by the Child Poverty Action Group⁸ revealed:

- 79 % of school staff have to divert time from their allocated roles to combat child poverty, for example dealing with dinner money debt, sourcing food bank vouchers, hardship grants and home equipment like washing machines in families.
- Over half of teachers report an increase in the number of pupils struggling to concentrate on learning due to hunger and fatigue, compared to two years ago.
- 68% say more pupils don't have money for enough food at lunchtime.

⁷ [Child Poverty in the Midst of Wealth | UNICEF Office of Global Insight & Policy](#)

⁸ ['There is only so much we can do' - school staff in England | CPAG](#)

- 74% say there's evidence that children growing up in poverty have fallen further behind their peers with their learning.
- 70 % of headteachers say more parents are asking for help with essentials like food and clothing.

New data was released in December 2023 which revealed the North /South divide of children hit by the 2-child limit on benefits.⁹

- Yorkshire and Humber among regions with the highest percentage of households hit by the two-child limit.
- 13% of children in Yorkshire and Humber impacted.
- 12 of the 20 UK local authority areas with the highest percentage of affected families are in the North of England.

A report in September 2023 by Barnardo's found an estimated 894,000 children (11%) are without a proper bed, impacting on their wellbeing and education¹⁰. A report published in April 2023¹¹ about overcrowding in homes by revealed that households from ethnic minorities backgrounds were 3 times more likely to be affected by overcrowding than white households. Zarach¹² now is a member of the Child Poverty Board in Leeds to support this work.

In October 2023 October Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported¹³ that approximately 3.8 million people experienced destitution in 2022, including around one million children.

- The number of children facing destitution since 2019 has almost doubled and is nearly triple the number in 2017.
- Lone parents with children were around twice as likely to experience destitution compared with their share in the UK population (11% versus 5%).

To its extreme, poverty impacts on the mortality rate amongst children and infants. The National Child Mortality Database for November 2023¹⁴ shows that deaths were highest for children of black or black British ethnicity and those living in the poorest areas. The National Child Mortality Database includes data from reviews of all children who die at any time after birth and before their 18th birthday. The database started in 2019.

- the death rates in the poorest areas were more than twice as high as in the richest.
- for infants under one year of age, the death rate for the poorest went up from 5.4 per 1,000 infant population in 2022 to 5.9 in 2023.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health president, Dr Camilla Kingdon, said: "*Figures such as these in a nation as rich as ours are unforgivable. Reducing child poverty must finally become a national priority...This has to be a wake-up call for us all and I urge our political leaders to action.*"

Research published in June 2022¹⁵ suggests 10,356 more children living in English local authority areas became looked after than would have been the case had poverty levels remained at 2015 levels. The research team's modelling showed that within English local authorities, between 2015 and 2020, a 1% increase in child poverty was associated with an additional five children entering care per 100,000 population.

Using the IMD (index of multiple deprivation) data from 2023 there is a very pronounced pattern of diminishing chance of care from those from less deprived areas which is more exaggerated than in 2021 or 2022. Some analysis of this is detailed below.

- In 2023, children in the most deprived 1% of Leeds were 5.5 times more likely to enter care than the least deprived 80%
- In 2023, children in the most deprived 10% of Leeds were 9 times more likely to enter care than the least deprived 10%.
- 70% of children looked after are from the 20% most deprived areas in the city; with 20% increase in the number of children looked after in 2023 from the 20% most deprived areas in Leeds.

⁹ [New data reveals North/South divide of children hit by two-child limit on benefits - End Child Poverty](#)

¹⁰ [No crib for a bed: the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on bed poverty | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

¹¹ [National Housing Federation - Overcrowding in England](#)

¹² [We deliver beds and basics to children in poverty. \(zarach.org\)](#)

¹³ [Destitution in the UK 2023 | Joseph Rowntree Foundation \(jrf.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁴ [Child death data release 2023 | National Child Mortality Database \(ncmd.info\)](#)

¹⁵ [Child Poverty & children entering care](#), The Lancet, June 2022

2. The Leeds Approach

We know that the feeling of being in poverty, the feeling of being excluded and the feeling of being ashamed can impact a child for the rest of their life. We don't want this in Leeds. So, we are working together, as a city, to reduce the impact of poverty on young people. This is our moral imperative.

Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds was launched in 2019. The strategy was refreshed in late 2023 with consultation with over 20 groups of Children and Young people in Leeds. As a result, the names and aims of each of the 7 workstreams have been refreshed to reflect new emerging and existing priorities as well as addressing the feedback and voices expressed. This includes addressing the stigma of poverty, improving access to food and other basic needs and increasing our communication around available services. This strategy will be launched in the Autumn 2024 and future governance meetings and will report on this.

Our Ambitions

- We will be innovative, together, to break down the barriers that poverty creates.
- We will be brave, together, to revolutionise the way that Leeds works with children, young people and families who live in poverty.
- We will fight, together, to ensure that every child and young person who experiences poverty can thrive.
- We will work together to tackle inequality across services and organisations, to find meaningful solutions for those experiencing poverty.

2.0 Main issues

This section provides an update on each impact workstream, the projects that sit within the impact workstreams and details actions, impact and next steps.

3.0 Financial Health & Inclusion

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every family to be equipped with the support, guidance and opportunities needed to live financially secure lives.***

This workstream is led by Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare Communities and Environments.

The main projects are: Financial health and inclusion support directly to families; Increasing engagement in wider support and guidance to families to support financial health and inclusion; and Ensuring knowledge and understanding of financial health and inclusion issues and support.

3.1 Priority 1: Increasing engagement in financial health and inclusion support directly to families.

Update on recent activities.

The key areas of activity for priority 1 are the Healthy Holidays programme, Household Support Fund, and Free School Meal uptake.

Healthy Holidays

Healthy Holidays is a Department for Education funded scheme that delivers provision for children eligible for Free School Meals over the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays. The core of the programme is engaging children and young people with enriching, fun activities and a healthy hot meal, however the benefits of the programme are far reaching and long lasting. The multiplicity and varied nature of the programme within Leeds is a key strength.

The Leeds 2023 programme reached 22,000 children and young people through a wide range of schools, third sector organisations (managed by Leeds Community Foundation) and council provisions through Community Hubs and Breeze.

The programme is now in its final year of confirmed funding from the DfE. Leeds City Council has received £3.4 million for 2024, and has commissioned schools, third sector organisations and council provisions across Leeds to provide healthy food and enriching activities to children eligible for Free School Meals. The Easter programme has been successfully delivered and evaluation is now underway, alongside planning for the summer programme.

Additional support for the programme is provided by a range of Council and external providers enhancing the local offer and including food support from Catering Leeds, FareShare, Rethink food, Hamara and Give a Gift; Active Leeds swimming catch up programme; Parks & Countryside's trips and visits to Leeds City Council Activity Centres.

Household Support Fund

The Department for Work and Pension's Household Support Fund (HSF) is a short-term, national funding stream delivered by local authorities in England to support those most in need, principally with the costs of food fuel and essential items. The fourth round of the Household Support Fund was delivered over the 12-month period April 2023 to March 2024. This was the first time the fund's delivery period had extended over 12 months. Unfortunately, the recently announced extension of the Household Support Fund into round 5 has reverted to a six-month distribution period. Leeds City Council received £14.2m to allocate between 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 and will receive just under £7.1m for HSF5 to be delivered between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024.

In Leeds, the agreed approach has continued to be a mix of direct provision, application-based support and support offered through third sector organisations and council services already working to help households most impacted by the Cost-of-Living crisis. We are currently working on the Delivery Plan for HSF5.

Free School Meals

See data below.

Outcomes and outputs:

Healthy Holidays

The Healthy Holidays Programme in Leeds has a significant, beneficial impact upon the children and young people participating. Providers, especially schools, report ongoing and improved engagement from children and young people who have accessed the Healthy Holidays Programme; better transitions between primary and secondary education settings and reassurance in seeing children throughout Easter, summer and Christmas holidays from a safeguarding perspective.

Over three holiday periods in 2023, the programme reached 22,000 children and young people and served over 270,000 portions of food. Providers took up the offer of catch-up swimming through Active Leeds – 650 children attended 5 days of lessons at one of thirteen sites in the city. The strength of the programme can be seen through the wider wellbeing outcomes for the children, carers and providers. These outcomes include improved relationships, confidence, friendships, emotional and social support, keeping children safe from harm, and alleviates pressure on parents in key holiday periods.

The Easter Programme 2024 went well despite challenges due to the late release of DfE guidance and funding and the wet weather. Over 4,850 children attended, of which 87% were eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals

For the Summer programme, Healthy Holidays are running through 39 school provisions, 42 third sector organisations, 4 Breeze camps and 4 Community Hub & Library provisions. The Department for Education have introduced a requirement for the eligibility of all children to be checked, and so a Healthy Holidays Booking System has been introduced. Due to timescales, the team and providers faced a significant challenge around implementation - however the system is established.

“9 years old, he lives with his mum & stepfather has an older sister in high school & younger sister in nursery. His mum & stepfather have just had a baby. He has a good relationship with his dad but doesn't see him much, he is volatile & very aggressive. Despite his age he frequently plays out in the estate, involved in petty crime & anti-social behaviour such as fire setting & criminal damage. He is known by the anti-social behaviour team. His family are at threat of eviction. Mum struggles with mental ill-health & finds it hard to put boundaries in place. Mum did not apply for holiday clubs but then sent a text asking for help. He attended many, absolutely thriving & was amazing. He engaged in activities & was allowed to be a relaxed little boy, winning awards & engaged. It was a joy to see him so relaxed & happy. Staff enjoyed spending time with him. In our community he is at risk of criminal exploitation but in holiday clubs he was a relaxed little boy who was safe, well fed & happy”.

“It is an amazing opportunity to be able to provide our families with such wonderful holiday clubs. We can safeguard and target families and know that they are physically active, not socially isolated and fed. Having sight and interaction with the most vulnerable pupils and members of society, knowing they are safe, warm, fed in a safe environment with such impacting opportunities is a sound framework that we would love to continue to build on. It is a huge thanks to HAF for allowing us to provide such a lasting legacy”.

Household Support Fund

Leeds received £14.2 million for use between 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. The funding was distributed according to our Delivery Plan for 2023/24 and included:

- Approximately £5.4m in direct cash awards to households in receipt of Council Tax Support who are on the lowest incomes in the city (this included 16,937 households with children and an estimated 33,200 individual children). In addition, payments were made to households solely claiming Housing Benefit who missed out on DWP Cost of Living payments during 2023/24.
- Increased funding was made available for the Local Welfare Support Scheme, our application-based scheme supporting people in crisis, and additional payments also made to people applying for Discretionary Housing Payments and demonstrating exceptional hardship. Almost £2m was allocated to these areas of support.
- Winter support initiatives amounting to £234k were delivered including funding for Public Health winter warmth priority projects and the welcome spaces network.
- Housing costs in exceptional circumstances for Housing Leeds tenants and distributed through Housing Leeds. Support was also provided for homeless households and those threatened with homelessness administered by Leeds Housing Options. £700k in total was allocated for these initiatives.
- £500k was allocated to Children and Families'. Support was offered through a range of projects including 0-5's in low-income households, care leavers, Roma families, section 17 and foster carers.
- Third sector - £3.4m was allocated as follows:
 - Voluntary Action Leeds to support the Leeds Community Anchor Network.
 - The Leeds Food Aid Network to support a wide range of food aid providers including the City's Cultural Food Hubs and charities such as Zarach and Leeds Baby Bank.
 - Forum Central to support health and social care charities and grassroot organisations providing direct assistance to households in need.
 - Advice agencies to provide practical help to clients actively engaging with advice.

For the year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, £13,386,794 was spent in direct support of 187,196 households, over 44% of which included children. This spend was delivered through awards linked to receipt of Council Tax Support, the Local Welfare Support Scheme, additional payments to people applying for Discretionary Housing Payments and through direct targeted support delivered by third sector partners. During Q3, 16,925 vouchers with a value of £100 were issued to households with children and in receipt of Council Tax Support. The redemption rate for this cohort of recipients stands at over 95% as at 31/3/24.

Free School Meals

Free school meals (FSM) in Leeds are administered by the Council Tax and Benefits Service and schools are supported by the Health and Wellbeing Services. Information on free school meals take-up is recorded annually by data provided by schools as part of the January census. In January 2024, School Census data for

England reveals 2.1 million children - 24.6% of all pupils were eligible and claiming a free school meal nationally. In Leeds, 34,956 (26.5%) of pupils in Leeds were eligible and claiming a free school meal. This figure is up by 787 pupils (2.3%) from 2023 when 34,169 pupils were eligible and claiming. (These figures exclude all infant children on universal free school meals regardless of income).

Of the children eligible, take up rates have fallen from 78.2% in 2023 to 75.9% in 2024. This equates to 8,435 pupils not taking up their free school meal on the day of the School Census. Transitional protection was introduced in April 2021 and is currently set to be in place until the end of the roll out of Universal Credit in March 2025. This may be impacting on FSM take up as there could be an increasing number of pupils eligible and registered whose families may not need the support and would have previously become ineligible prior to transitional protection.

The Health and Wellbeing Services, in partnership with the Council Tax and Benefits Service, also provides training twice per year to support schools with maximising the number of children who take up free school meals that they are entitled too. This course took place in January 2024 and in May 2024 and was attended by 18 schools. [Free school meals and tackling poverty in schools | Leeds for Learning](#)

The Health and Wellbeing Services and the Council Tax and Benefits Service are currently engaged with a research study with The University of York who are looking at 'autoenrollment' schemes across the country. Leeds has been administering free school meals with a combined application process with Council Tax Support, whereby free school meals are automatically awarded, unless a family proactively opts out.

The Health and Wellbeing Services, in partnership with Leeds University and Sheffield University, are delivering a breakfast in schools survey with schools, which was launched in May 2024. The survey aims to map current provision, identify gaps and encourage more schools to provide a nutritious breakfast as part of their offer. Providing breakfast in schools can help to remove hunger as a barrier to learning. The project will also aim to identify schools who may be eligible for free or subsidised breakfast offers and ensure they are maximising available funding.

Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) are provided at no cost to all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and are not means tested. For UIFSM each meal taken by an eligible pupil attracts £2.53 per day, providing £480.70 per eligible pupil. Meals for pupils in these year groups who are entitled to means tested FSM are funded separately. Take up of UIFSM in the January 2024 census showed a consistent take up at 90.1%.

Pupil premium funding is made available to schools based on numbers of disadvantaged pupils in different categories, which includes pupils recorded as eligible for free school meals (FSM) or those that have been recorded as eligible in the past 6 years (FSM Ever 6). This includes eligible children of families who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). For the financial year 2023-24, the total number of pupils eligible for the deprivation pupil premium was 33,798. Schools will receive £1,455 per eligible primary pupil and £1,035 per eligible secondary pupil. Full details and the conditions of the grant are available at [Pupil premium 2023-24: technical note - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Next steps:

Healthy Holidays

The booking system implementation will continue, with parents/ carers encouraged to sign up. The summer programme will be evaluated, and the Christmas programme is in the process of being planned. Current funding for the programme is due to end after Christmas, and there is currently no indication if there will be any Healthy Holidays funding in the future. Information regarding this should be provided in autumn statement at the end of October 2024.

Household Support Fund

The focus is currently on the construction of the Delivery Plan for HSF5 which also needs to be submitted and agreed by the DWP. The work will then move to the distribution of funding to ensure it reaches those most in need over the delivery period up to 30th September 2024. For clarification / information regarding HSF future funding is expected September 2024.

Free School Meals

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3.2 Priority 2: Increasing engagement in wider support and guidance to families to support financial health and inclusion.

Update on recent activities.

In terms of engagement in wider support and guidance, the current focus is on the Uniform Re-use scheme and gambling-related harm work.

Leeds School Uniform Exchange (LSUE)

Funded by Leeds City Council (Financial Inclusion Team), Zero Waste Leeds (ZWL) co-ordinate the city's school uniform reuse scheme, aiming to reduce the number of uniforms sent to waste, reduce the stigma of wearing second hand clothing and tackling poverty through encouraging more families to reuse and donate rather than to feel pressured to buy new uniform every term.

Uniform exchange promotional events supported by ZWL take place across the city, during half term and seasonal periods, complimented by various regular weekly exchanges, alongside community groups and support services such as food pantries.

In addition to uniform activities, ZWL also coordinate the Winter Coat Campaign which facilitates the donation and distribution of free coats and winter clothing to those most in need, alongside wider support in Welcome Spaces and Community Hubs/Libraries.

Gambling Related Harm

Gambling-related harm continues to be a key priority for Leeds City Council through a strong partnership approach, led by Financial Inclusion and working with Public Health, Licensing and wider Council services, treatment services and external partners.

The Leeds Gambling Harms Group is a citywide partnership bringing together services to collectively address gambling-related harm in the city. The group have identified 'protecting children and young people from gambling-related harm' as a key priority for the group. This continues to be part of the forward work programme and currently focusses on:

- The annual analysis of the gambling questions within the My Health, My School Survey.
- The commissioning of a train the trainer for secondary school staff in partnership with Sheffield-based charity Gambling with Lives.
- The communication of key messages regarding prevention and support via key websites.

In addition to the above work, work continues to support adults within the wider gambling harms work programme. Children can be impacted by the gambling of a parent, carer or adult in their life and this wider

programme could therefore indirectly reduce further harms they could otherwise experience as a result of this.

The annual 'My Health, My School Survey' included questions on gambling for the fifth year running. Revised gambling questions were included in the 2022-2023 survey, taking into account feedback from clinical experts and young people. These questions are currently being analysed and a Power BI dashboard has been developed to present the data in a more engaging and dynamic way. This has allowed the Financial Inclusion Team to undertake more detailed analysis of last year's responses and has demonstrated some concerning new findings around a correlation between children and young people that gamble and self-harm and suicide. Once the analysis has been completed, the data dashboard and an associated report will be distributed.

A survey carried out with staff in Secondary and Further Education settings found that there is a need for further training and support with gambling harm resources. In response to this, a training and resource package was developed in partnership with the charity Gambling with Lives and was piloted in Leeds in February 2023. 100% of attendees rated the session as excellent. Following the success of this training package, Leeds Public Health are commissioning a further session to support staff from primary schools, secondary schools and colleges, with a focus on those with a pastoral support role. This forms part of a wider regional pilot to develop a training offer around children and young people's gambling, without industry funding or influence.

Work has recently been underway to review websites and gambling support information for children, young people, parents and guardians in Leeds, including MindMate, Leeds Money Information Centre – Gambling Harms page and Leeds Safeguarding Children's Partnership websites. Updated information has incorporated any emerging gambling trends amongst young people.

Leeds City Council continues to roll out Harmful Gambling Guidance for all staff. This guidance aims to support staff experiencing gambling related harms, whether it is caused by their own gambling or that of a loved one. In order to promote this guidance further and encourage other employers in Leeds to adopt a version of their own to support staff who may be experiencing gambling harms or are in recovery from, the Financial Inclusion Team will be part of a panel discussing 'How to be a recovery friendly employer providing flexible, effective and sustainable workplace support' at the upcoming Leeds Mindful Employer conference on 21st May.

Outcomes and outputs:

Leeds School Uniform Exchange Quarterly Update (March 2024)

81% of schools covered by a uniform exchange.

93 schools not currently covered – 29 in most deprived areas of Leeds according to IMD.

Number of Community Schemes: 19

Number of weekly pop-up shops: 12

New additions to the LSUE website: 6 schools/schemes since October 2023

Uniform Rails at 5 Community Hubs including Kippax, Burmantofts, Seacroft, Compton Centre & Holt Park

Recent Pop-up shops held during the February half term holidays results:

Kentmere Community Centre: 140 items

Meanwood Community Centre: 104 items

Nowell Mount Community Centre: 503 items

Reduce, Reuse Kids Clothes (Pudsey): 92 items.

Leeds Winter Coat Appeal (16 October 2023 – 29 February 2024)

The appeal hosted 49 donation points including leisure centres, community hubs, businesses, health centres, community groups and schools/universities and 32 public distribution points including Community Hubs and community groups (including Welcome Spaces).

Total amount of winter items collected: 7,633 (increase from 2022/23 total of 6,500 items)

Cost Saving: Total £144,586.43

Textile Waste Saving: 5,182.02kg

CO2 Emission Saving: 111,413.43kg

1149 winter items were distributed via local charities including to Leeds Baby Bank and Zarach.

Gambling Related Harm

In the 2021/2022 My Health, My School Survey analysis showed that 1988 secondary school pupils completed the gambling questions within the survey. Of those, 24% reported they had gambled, 0.6% reported gambling as a cause of concern or worry (an increase of 0.2%) and 49% reported they need better information on learning material in school on gambling. The 2022/2023 responses are currently being analysed and a Power BI dashboard will be available imminently.

Next steps

Leeds School Uniform Exchange

Funding has been secured for both LSUE and the winter coat appeal for another year in March 2024, with quarterly meetings with Zero Waste Leeds, LCC Financial Inclusion Team and representation from Children & Families in place. The school uniform exchange continues to focus on increasing the overall coverage of schools in Leeds, particularly concentrating on schools in areas of high deprivation.

Gambling Related harm

The findings of 2022/2023 My Health, My School gambling question responses will be analysed and will inform the children and young people's gambling work stream.

Financial Inclusion and Public Health will continue to work with the LCC Health & Wellbeing Service/Healthy Schools Team to improve the gambling questions within the My Health My School survey to ensure the latest trends amongst young people are incorporated where possible.

Financial Inclusion will with other anchor organisations in the city to implement their own Harmful Gambling Guidance to support employees. This will be through participation in the upcoming Leeds Mindful Employer Conference in May.

Financial Inclusion and Public Health will continue to deliver work on children and young people's gambling within the work programme of the Leeds Gambling Harms Group.

3.3 Priority 3: Ensuring knowledge and understanding of financial health and inclusion issues and support.

Update on recent activities.

Resources and Training

A Google drive containing key resources, and messages across services and organisations continues to be maintained.

A suite of online and printed resources is maintained, distributed and refreshed by the Financial Inclusion Team to assist families and frontline workers in accessing quality assured, free, confidential and impartial help and advice on a range of money related matters such as debt, energy, food and utilities. Resources are available online and in printed formats with translated materials available. Printed resources are available from a variety of locations and services across Leeds including advice and support organisations, third sector, housing, community hubs and libraries, health and via other council services such as gas and electric teams, public health and children's services.

The Financial Inclusion Team continues to deliver briefings, training and awareness raising sessions focussed on financial inclusion subjects including tackling poverty and financial inclusion, cost of living, fuel

poverty support and training, signposting and Welcome Spaces. Sessions are delivered in collaboration with relevant partners organisations and experts and are promoted and attended by a range of council and partner services including those working directly with families with children.

Cost of Living Response

In September 2022 Leeds City Council set up a citywide approach to mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Building on a long established and effective approach to tackling poverty and addressing financial inclusion in the city, strategic and operational partnership groups were established, focusing on ensuring awareness and understanding of support available, practical support, and ensuring short-term funding available is coordinated and maximised. In addition, theme-based discussions also took place to ensure deeper understanding and collective responses to issues such as Housing, Child Poverty, Crime and Community Safety, Migration, Third sector support, Health and Social Care.

Outcomes and outputs:

Resources and Training

Since the last update provided in which we had distributed over 85,000 resources after launching a new suite of materials, the Financial Inclusion Team have distributed a further 13,000 in the last six months on a request-by-request basis.

The Leeds MIC website www.leedsmic.org.uk , includes links to local and national advice services and also includes a link to the Leeds MIC Map showing where to access advice services across Leeds.

Physical resources available including flyers (including translations), concertinas, posters and business cards. Over 40,000 printed resources have been distributed to organisations including council services, NHS and health settings, DWP, third sector and universities since January 2023.

In addition, the comprehensive Managing Your Money printed booklet has been updated and redesigned, with 20,000 copies distributed to Community Hubs and Libraries, Housing Teams and a range of external financial inclusion partners from October 2023.

Financial Inclusion Team have delivered training and awareness sessions to a wide range of council (including elected members) and health services in the last quarter including:

- Adult Social Care- Age Friendly Board, Equalities Hub for older people, Age Friendly Partnership
- Childrens Services: Child Poverty Impact Board
- Elected members: bespoke member training sessions around financial inclusion and gambling related harms (x2).
- Third Sector: Welcome Spaces groups, Religion or Belief Hub

In the last quarter, the Financial Inclusion Team have delivered training to 126 people.

Cost of living Response

Full details of the activities undertaken, and the impact made were reported at Executive Board in April 2024¹⁶ and Scrutiny in December 2023¹⁷.

Next steps

Resources and Training

The Financial Inclusion Team will continue to update resources, as required, and distribute to frontline services, monitoring any distribution to understand reach. The google drive continues to be maintained and shared on a regular basis.

¹⁶ [Cost of Living Update Report – Executive Board 17th April 2024](#)

¹⁷ [Reducing Poverty Improving Financial Inclusion DEC 2023 FINAL.pdf \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#)

Continue establishing a clear and concise narrative using poverty statistics, data and local evidence, maintaining resources such as the Leeds Poverty Fact Book.

Members of the Financial Inclusion Team are liaising with partners and cross council services to ensure training and awareness sessions with respect to specific areas of concern/emerging issues within the context of the cost of living are available to frontline services including Children & Families.

The Financial Inclusion team and representatives from Children and Families are also working together to increase awareness and partnership working with respect to food aid provisions in the city.

4.0 Best Start for Health & Wellbeing

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every baby in Leeds from conception to age two to have the best start in life, with a focus on families living in the most deprived areas to ensure equitable outcomes for all.*** This workstream is led by Kathryn Ingold, the Chief Officer - Public Health.

4.1 Priority 1: Breastfeeding – uptake and maintenance

Update on recent activities.

The Leeds Breastfeeding Plan is the overarching strategic document driven by the Breastfeeding Plan Partnership to increase the number of babies who are breastfed and give them the best start in life with a particular focus on the number of babies receiving breastmilk at birth and at 6-8 weeks. Breastfeeding is budget friendly and provides food security for the infant in the first six months of life and thereafter alongside other foods.

The Leeds Breastfeeding Peer Support ‘Bosom Buddies’ contract has been extended to 31st March 2027. Additional funding has been secured to ensure continuation and development of the Breast Pump loan scheme and to enable continued increased activity previously funded by Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Increasing the knowledge and confidence of practitioners to support women and families with feeding. Health Visiting, Midwifery, Neonatal service maintained UNICEF Breastfeeding Friendly Initiative (BFI) accreditation status.

The 2-day breastfeeding and relationship building training package has been revised (Dec 23) to ensure the evidence base remains current and it is in line with BFI standards.

Work has commenced on reviewing the policies and guidelines from Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust (LTHT), Leeds Community Healthcare (LCH) and Leeds City Council (LCC), for pregnant people and new parents returning to work breastfeeding. The aim is to ensure best practice across these organisations to ensure that breastfeeding is promoted, supported and protected.

Outcomes and outputs:

The Leeds breastfeeding initiation rate in Q3 2023/24 is 74.7% up slightly on the 2022/23 rate of 73.3%. However, the rate for deprived Leeds remains significantly lower at 65.5%. Breastfeeding maintenance (at 8 weeks) Q3 rate is 48.6% compared to 46% in 2022/23, the Q3 rate for deprived Leeds is 43.1%

‘Bosom Buddies’ peer groups are run by trained breastfeeding peer supporters who are mothers that breastfed. There are now around 70 active peer supporters in Leeds in groups and on postnatal wards. There are currently 11 peer support groups across the city in Pudsey, Little London, Middleton, Gipton, Burley, Crossgates, Castleton, Chapteltown, Guiseley, Otley and Garforth. A total of 414 group sessions were delivered last year with 1055 families attending.

150 breast-pumps allocated as part of the loan scheme. 97% of parents rate the scheme excellent, with the other 3% rating us as very good. "Very easy to access. Amazing service. The pump was brought to me in hospital on the same day I emailed Bosom Buddies."

Children's Centres have undergone the UNICEF assessment visit for Stages 2 and 3 of the BFI accreditation. Final audits completed in May 2024 and awarded full accreditation in June.

Preparation for Birth and Beyond (PBB) (antenatal parenting programme) continues to be delivered universally, city wide at Childrens Centres. This is delivered in partnership by 0-19 Public Health Integrated Nursing Service (PHINS), Childrens Centres and maternity service. Currently 7 groups run per month with a mix of virtual and face to face with varying number of attendees (pregnant women and partner/supporter). In Qr4 12 face to face groups ran with 98 pregnant people attending most with a partner/supporter, and 9 virtual groups ran with 96 pregnant people attending most with a partner/supporter. Baby Buddy App is promoted at all PBB sessions, in March 287 people in Leeds downloaded the App, the top area for downloads was Hunslet and Riverside.

Next steps

- Continue to recruit and train new peer support volunteers for community groups and on postnatal wards. Improve communications to young parents via social media posts and the design of a leaflet for midwifery. Establish a young mums group.
- Continue to promote and develop the Leeds is Breastfeeding Friendly scheme.
- To look at the Breastfeeding Plan priority actions through a poverty lens to understand current links and use them to focus and facilitate opportunities.
- To use the breastfeeding dashboard data to drive work in areas where inequalities continue to widen.
- To continue to evaluate parents experience of PBB and facilitate sessions according to need. Continued promotion of Baby Buddy app

4.2 Priority 2: Early Communication skills – PEEP Programme

Update on recent activities.

Since 2022 a programme of practitioner training by Parents as Early Education Partners (PEEP) [Learning Together Programme](#) (LTP) has upskilled a range of practitioners to run PEEP sessions for preschool children and their families in children's centres and other settings across Leeds. To date there are 77 practitioners across Leeds (Children's Centre Teams, Library staff and 3rd sector) who have attended this training.

LTP helps parents, carers and practitioners make the most of everyday learning opportunities, supporting their babies' and young children's learning through communication and play and extends what parents/carers already do to support their child's learning in everyday life. Peep is a strengths-based approach to working with families, focusing on doing *with* rather than doing *to* and has been successfully run in settings such as playgroups and children's centres (as part of existing groups/activities or stand alone, in groups or 1-2-1 work (evaluated in 2022 by NESTA). PEEP sessions can involve:

- talk time, to discuss key ideas with parents and carers relating to the topic focus.
- songs and rhymes
- books and stories
- way for families to put ORIM into action (Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction, Modelling)
- play activities (during the session and/or ideas to try at home).

By offering support to families in this way it provides the opportunity to target support for families and provide key information on how they can support their children by communicating in an informal way as

well as giving the opportunity for families to share stories and gain peer support which is identified as being something families have said they value in a recent evaluation of Leeds Speech and Language Therapy Service conducted by Nesta.

Speech, language and communication pathway for practitioners supporting children and families in Leeds is in final draft and awaiting sign off.

Outcomes and outputs:

Leeds child development data for the percentage of children achieving the expected level in communication skills at 2 to 2 and a half years in 2022/23 was 89.6% this is similar to the regional figure of 89% and lower than the England rate of 95.9%. Trend data shows an improvement on the 2021/22 figure of 86.9% but is still below the pre-pandemic rate of 94% in 2019/20.

Leeds Early Years Impact Summary 2021/22 shows school readiness/good level of development at end of reception year (all areas) at lower than the national average (61% in Leeds compared to 65.2% national average) and this has dropped since 2018/9. There are large inequalities in child development between those living in the most and least deprived areas of Leeds, children growing up in Harehills (part of Gipton and Harehills Ward) have the poorest outcomes in terms of communication and language at age 5. Notably these are also the areas with the lowest take-up of early education age 2. This project, by targeting families in key areas and those accessing groups/activities who are not in nursery provision, helps to inform families of the rich learning that can take place in the home environment which will hopefully improve future school readiness data.

Colleagues at NESTA evaluated the PEEP project in 2022 which resulted in completed questionnaires from 24 of 26 PEEP trained practitioners (at that time) and interviews with 6 parents which showed positive results. All respondents who had attended the training found some, or all relevant to their work and all parents interviewed could identify specific changes in their behaviours as a result of the Peep sessions they had attended. The majority of these were focused on communication and language development.

“Normally, most of the time before I was looking at Facebook or Instagram in my daily life when giving them breakfast, lunch or dinner. But now I’m not doing that, I’m communicating more - and doing the things in the leaflets”. (parent)

(NESTA evaluation of PEEP in Leeds 2022)

Next steps

A project has recently started involving more practitioners to be trained in the Learning Together Programme with the potential for further training on the [Peep Progression Pathway](#). The Pathway training builds on the Learning Together Programme by enabling practitioners to support the learning of the parents/carers through a portfolio assessment and recognised accreditation by offering the opportunity to achieve nationally recognised units to cover three qualification levels for parents and carers as learners while supporting their children. At each of these levels, learners can follow a unit covering any of the five Peep learning strands - Communication and Language, Health and Physical Development, etc, and/or any of the four developmental stages - Babies, Toddlers, Pre-schoolers or Early Childhood - of the Learning Together Programme.

It is planned to also extend the offer of the LTP training for more practitioners in Leeds, including practitioners in Libraries and Speech and Language Therapy Services, for targeting those who have concerns about their child’s speech/language and/or those awaiting Speech Language Therapy services.

These workstreams offer a valuable and timely opportunity to build on previous training and upskill the practitioners working with families to enable them to learn about supporting their child in a range of areas around speech, language, communication and other key school readiness and themselves achieve accredited units which can be used for future qualifications and work opportunities.

Finalise the speech, language and communication pathway for practitioners.

4.3 Priority 3: Economic wellbeing 0-19 service

Update on recent activities.

The 0-19 Public Health Integrated Nursing Service (PHINS) has an economic wellbeing pathway linked to their internal intranet, making it accessible to all practitioners. The pathway describes how the 0-19 PHINS and Early Start practitioners will support families to achieve economic wellbeing. This includes support to families to:

1. Maximise income.
2. Manage debt.
3. Access support services
4. Reduce fuel bills.
5. Develop financial literacy.
6. Access education and work

The pathway includes links to a vast range of support that practitioners can signpost to including food banks and Healthy Holiday clubs. The service also ensures families are receiving all benefit entitlement including access to dental care and prescriptions during pregnancy. In addition, they ensure families are aware of the 2-year-old child place entitlement for those on specific benefits.

In Q2 commissioners requested an audit of three, 0-19 pathways as part of the quality assurance process. This included economic wellbeing, safe sleeping and domestic violence and abuse. See below for information.

Sarah Cooke, Clinical Change Lead for the 0-19 service attended the Child Poverty Board meeting in Oct 2023 to deliver a presentation on how the service support families around economic wellbeing.

Outcomes and outputs:

The 0-19 PHINS practitioners support families with social and economic needs through their mandated contacts with children and families. Needs are identified and reviewed with practitioner's enquiring about food availability, debt, benefit entitlement and employment. The service also ensures families receive all benefit entitlement including access to dental care and prescriptions during pregnancy. In addition, they ensure families are aware of the 2-year-old child place entitlement for those on specific benefits.

In Q3 the service had 80 ASDA vouchers to give out to support children and families in desperate need and suffering poverty. The numbers of families who struggle over Christmas is still high and economic wellbeing intervention featured in at least 10% of all contacts carried out.

The total no. of economic wellbeing interventions during this period was 2651, which is consistent with numbers from the previous quarter.

Next steps

The service and commissioners will continue to monitor economic wellbeing interventions each quarter and will continue to update the pathway with information on relevant support services.

The service is due to attend a meeting with Public Health Children & Families colleagues and other key partners to explore opportunities for welfare advice across maternity and early years.

5.0 Housing & Provision

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to support every family and young person living in social housing in Leeds to achieve a sustainable tenancy.***

This workstream is led by Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer Housing, Resources and Housing.

Priority 1 - Joint Working Between Housing and Children's Social Work Teams to Support Families in Council Tenancies

Update on recent activities.

Partnership working continues with Children's Health and Disability (CHAD) with continued attendance at their Operations Group where we discuss inappropriate referrals and learning outcomes. Formal guidance has now been produced by a working group of CHAD and Housing staff this will shortly be issued to Contact Centre, Customer Service, and Housing staff to help them identify the correct route for enquiries relating to adaptations and reduce inappropriate referrals and unnecessary waiting times.

Housing staff attended West Yorkshire Trauma Informed Foundation Training promoting understanding of the barriers to engagement and awareness of how to appropriately respond to a person that has suffered trauma, improving confidence, communication, and insight about the approaches for engaging with and supporting families to achieve better outcomes.

Housing Officers and Housing Managers met with representatives from the Institute of Health Equity (IHE) who are leading on the Marmot City health programme for Leeds with the aims of, increasing everyone's opportunity to have all the right building blocks of good health and developing approaches for everyone but at a different scale or intensity depending on the needs of different communities. Housing has been identified as one of the priorities of the programme. Staff shared their experiences of inequality issues from a housing perspective, and their thoughts on the areas that the partnership could have most impact.

A dedicated Damp & Mould team was set up in the wake of the coroner's report on the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale which saw a ten-fold increase in damp and mould enquiries from tenants and visiting professionals. Significant time and resource have been dedicated to the refining the processes, data management, communications and staff knowledge and skills associated with damp, mould, and condensation. Actions have focused on compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Service's self-assessment, including the introduction of a Damp and Mould Policy and Damp and Mould Strategy, consistent with industry guidance and best practice. Training has now been delivered to all front-line staff within Housing Leeds. An e-learning package is in development to supplement this training and will be made available for all visiting staff across the organisation.

Outcomes and outputs:

Case study example - Family A - had stopped making rent payments for their home, they were refusing to engage with the local housing team despite 24 months' worth of visits, letters, and ongoing enforcement on their tenancy. Approach had been made to Children's Social work team over risks to the family's tenancy due to rising arrears and non-engagement. CSW visited but were unable to get the parents to engage with Housing or make the necessary payments, there were no concerns at the visit about the children's welfare. Support and enforcement options were exhausted, and case referred to court due to large arrears c.£6k. District judge granted a suspend possession and order the parents to pay their rent plus an additional amount to gradually reduce their arrears, they did not attend court and failed to pay as ordered by the court.

The courts subsequently issued a warrant for the family's eviction, Housing and CSW carried out a joint visit to deliver the eviction notice, advised the parents they could still stop the eviction if they attended court ask for a suspension and agree to engage make payments on their rent. Parents attended court with support from Housing Paralegal team and Judge agreed to a suspension of the eviction on condition the parents engaged with and accepted support from Housing to check their income, maximise their benefits and commence rent payments. Parents met with Benefits Officer submitted a claim for UC and have agreed for rent element to be paid direct to LCC with an additional amount to pay off the arrears each month.

Next steps

To build on conversations with Children’s Social Work and the Court Bailiff team to ensure we are doing everything possible to support families facing eviction and ensure we continue to try and prevent tenancies failing, up to and including at the point of eviction. We will consult with Children’s Social Work Duty and Advise team on our Terms of Reference for requesting warrants to ensure all households with children have been assessed and relevant support provided.

To build on early conversations with Employment & Skills colleagues to improve understanding and build closer working in a bid to better understand and support our tenants needs in accessing training and employment also the wider offer from Employment & Skills around digital inclusion, budgeting, and financial wellbeing.

Priority 2 -Refreshing the Rehousing Pathway for Care Leavers

Update on recent activities.

Leeds Housing Options (LHO) continue to work with partners in children’s social care around future joint protocol for assessment of 16/17 year old homeless young people.

Training has been delivered for senior and operational managers within both services to raise awareness of the Southwark Judgement¹⁸ and best practice for handling homeless cases within this age group. The training was delivered by a national expert and has also delivered “train the trainer” sessions so this knowledge and expertise remains available and deliverable in future.

Leeds Housing Options are supporting Adults and Health Commissioning with a successful Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme bid from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities that will see £7,855,257 brought into Leeds for the city. £2,086,332 of his bid is ringfenced for young people who are experiencing severe multiple disadvantages and are a high risk of becoming adult rough sleepers. This money included both revenue and capital and will provide a 5-bed intensive ‘Core’ environment that will offer a home for at least 3 years, with 247 staffing and specialist support around mental health and trauma as well as 12 dispersed 1 bedroom ‘Cluster’ houses out in the community with intensive support. The multidisciplinary and intensive support directly attached to an accommodation provider will be the first of its kind and is an exciting opportunity to addressing the needs of individuals that extend beyond housing alone.

Additional cross directorate staff – LHO is now resourcing support to Children’s services with the Staying Close project. The focus is to help to rehouse care leavers, specifically those that are accommodated (often at great expense) outside of Leeds. Support currently offered includes dedicated surgeries, providing advice and upskilling staff and tackling barriers that are preventing care leavers from transitioning into independent living’.

Work carried out by the Local Government Authority -funded project to improve the rehousing pathway for young people helped to inform this work through considering available data, relevant policy and strategy documents, semi-structured interviews with internal and external stakeholders, including some young people, dip sampling of 20 recent cases of homeless 16- and 17-year-olds, visits to some services and the author’s own knowledge of youth housing options and homelessness.

Consideration has been given to the national context in terms of child poverty, the impact of Covid -19 on young people and on housing and homelessness, cost of living crisis, the housing crisis. Also, the local picture regarding young people, population, deprivation, and the local housing market

Outcomes and outputs:

Dip sampling showed that most teenagers who go on to become homeless at the age of 16 or 17 are already known to Children’s Services due to other risks and needs. There are an impressive range of

¹⁸ [Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/provision-of-accommodation-for-16-and-17-year-olds-who-may-be-homeless-and-or-require-accommodation)

universal and more targeted services for children, young people and families in communities, but there are gaps for some 16- and 17-year-olds, often those most at risk of homelessness, especially if they are no longer at school or college. They do not have 'touch points' to services and are at risk of being out of sight when they are at highest risk of homelessness.

Young people learn about housing and their options locally from their families and peers, but this can be supplemented by the provision of local information provided by the local authority or another agency. Realistic information and advice can cover in some detail the realities of living independently and the extent to which some housing options are limited for young people in a local area.

What young people said:

- "They didn't teach us about life – about this - they taught us about passing qualifications. There was no 'what's next?'"
- "They told us about what's in a cell in your body, but not how to actually live".
- "No one gives you a heads up - so you are obviously going to fail and then everyone gets mad at you."
- "I wish we'd learned about money and how to budget."

What young people said about living in non-commissioned 'exempt' supported accommodation in Leeds:

- "My house is so lonely."
- "... advice is 'don't work'. The rent is not affordable if you're working."
- "You're not allowed visitors or family in."
- "My social anxiety is horrible."
- "I find it too overwhelming now - I don't want to sound ungrateful but it's too much, all the bills and it's a massive house."

When asked what they needed at the point of housing crisis young people responded:

- "We need something stable, that's there, that's not going to change, that you know you can rely on."
- "There needs to be more places where you can actually talk to someone."
- "There should be more centres for young people - it's better than being on the street."

Next steps

To progress with the joint assessment protocol and the Young Persons Multi Agency Panel which relaunched in May 2023. The panel is attended by Our Way Leeds – who provide housing support and accommodation to people aged 16-25 living in the city - Children's Services, Corporate Parenting, Youth Justice Team, Housing Options and Housing Management.

To progress with work at the Kirkstall Brewery site to create good quality Council accommodation to temporarily house homeless families and reduce our reliance on bed and breakfast and expensive night by night accommodation. We are working towards occupation in September for housing and are working very closely with Children's and Families as part of the planning.

Priority 3 - Supporting Families in Council Tenancies to Maximise their Income.

Update on recent activities.

During April 2023 and March 2024, the Housing Officer Income (HOI) team worked with **5143** Households in total and been able to secure **£3,175,000** in additional income for them with an average additional income per family of **£617**. Of the **5143** total households supported, **1414** of those were households with children.

This generated for them **£668,000** of additional income which works out as an average of **£472** of additional income per family supported.

We have been able to secure income for households from 19 sources. The 5 top income streams which have generated the most for households are:

1. Universal Credit
2. Housing Benefit
3. Disability Benefits
4. Pension Age Benefits
5. Council Tax Support

The team feel that the current Cost-of-Living crisis is still affecting tenant's city wide and forms the basis for many conversations they are currently having. They increase in referrals for tenants of pension age has continued to increase and they have focused on reaching tenants that that may be eligible for Pension Credits. The team have also worked closely with Leeds Benefits Service (LBS) targeting tenants reported on the Housing Benefit HB stop list and the DHP renewal process.

Tenants are still struggling to make ends meet as neither benefit levels nor wages have increased accordingly. Many of our tenants continue to pay for their fuel via top up meters and are finding it increasingly difficult to find the money to top up as the current situation continues.

Food and Fuel poverty issues are raised by most tenants they engage with regardless of the main reason for referral. This comes at a time they have been able to refer tenants to the LCC/British Gas Emergency Fuel Voucher Scheme which initial run for the second successive year.

The team have been working closely with LBS regarding Pension Credits (PC) & Housing Benefit (HB).

Housing Benefit – LBS provided a list of tenants who they had been unable to contact with regards their HB claim and these had been suspended. Each team member attempted to contact the listed tenants from within their area supporting them to provide necessary information to ensure their claims remained live.

Pension Credits – The team worked closely with LBS who had provided a list of pension age tenants that were not currently in receipt of Pension Credits. Each team member attempted to contact tenants within their areas to perform benefit checks and advise on eligibility/assist with applications where necessary.

A poster campaign was launched within all Retirement Life properties across the city advising tenants that they could be eligible for Pension Credits and encouraging them to contact their local area housing offices for referral to their Housing Officer (Income) (HOI) team member.

Outcomes and outputs:

Case Study 1 – High Rent Arrears due to issues with UC Housing Costs

Mrs B referred to HOI by Housing Officer due to high rent arrears. Mrs B had an Under Occupancy deduction reducing her entitlement to housing costs yet needed to use the additional bedroom for overnight care due to her son's health condition. Mrs B had requested an additional bedroom be awarded previously which would increase her entitlement to housing element to 100% but this was refused. HOI completed a mandatory reconsideration, and the decision was overturned resulting in a large backdate reducing her rent arrears considerably.

There was a third-party deduction in place due to previous HB overpayment significantly reducing her UC award. Liaised with Leeds Benefit Services and who reduced the monthly deduction thereby increasing monthly income by £100pcm. Completed application for Child DLA with decision currently outstanding. Issued food vouchers and referred to the LCC/British Gas Fuel Voucher Scheme which provided short term support.

Case Study 2 – High Rent Arrears due to issues with Housing Benefit Claim

Miss C referred by Housing Office as HB claim had ceased in September 23 resulting in rent arrears of almost £2000. Miss C is a single Mum to 3 children. Miss C was unable to complete HB application due to serious mental health concerns. HOI completed HB reconsideration based on mental health grounds and HB was reinstated with a backdate clearing majority of rent arrears. HB being reinstated prevented a move to UC which would have made Miss C considerably worse off financially. Miss C had made numerous attempts to complete PIP application but issues with her mental health had prevented their completion. HOI made several attempts to complete this with Miss C, but she frequently missed appointments with DWP. HOI liaised with DWP who agreed to accept a paper application for PIP which removed the need for Miss C to attend appointments. Application completed with successful outcome.

Next steps

Our priority will be to continue to support tenants to pay their rent and maintain their tenancy during the cost-of-living Crisis.

We will advise and assist tenants by carrying out income health checks to ensure maximum entitlement is being claimed and where applicable we would request DHP or make referrals to the Leeds Welfare Support Scheme.

We recently moved the Paralegal Team to sit within the Income Service, to better align their work with our priorities. We will be consulting with local housing teams and the Housing Options service on how this resource can be utilised to help those on low incomes who are struggling to make rental payments, sustain their tenancies.

6.0 Employment & Transitions

The aim of this workstream is: ***All young people have access to a wide range of work experience, employment and volunteering opportunities.*** This workstream is led by Dawn Hall, Head of Service Employment and Skills. This is also the services commitment to CFL Wish 11 led by Tracey Greig

Update on recent activities.

Ofsted Inspection 11th – 14th December 2023 – The Employment and Skills Service, Adult Learning and Employer Provider Apprenticeship programmes were judged Outstanding in all areas. Leeds City Council is the first Local Authority to achieve the outstanding judgement since the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF) commenced in September 2019. Ofsted said “Adult learners gain valuable skills, which often transform their lives. They benefit from a highly ambitious curriculum that meets a diverse range of needs across the city, widens participation in learning, improves life chances and develops stronger communities. Learners are supported very well to achieve aspiring and personalised targets relevant to their skills, age and phase of education. They are motivated and empowered to make the transition to further learning or employment.”

Service Engagement during April 2023 – March 2024 32,184 people attended 227 community and school events and activities, including Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair, Leeds Digital Careers Festival, Leeds Creative Skills Festival and SEND Next Choices.

Leeds Apprenticeships Recruitment Fair took place on 5th February 2024. Visitors were able to find out more about Apprenticeships and meet with providers and employers across all sectors. 119 exhibitors attended on the day to offer information, advice, guidance, and live vacancies. 11,000 visitors had the opportunity to find out about apprenticeships. There were 17 presentations, attended by approximately 250 people which ran throughout the event providing an insight on various topics including STEM, Green Apprenticeships, the power of work experience, a day in the life of an apprentice and how to submit a successful application form.

Yorkshire Learning Providers Awards Ceremony took place on 25th March 2024 at York Racecourse, Employment & Skills Service won the award for Equality and Diversity for our work in delivering the SEND Next Choices event

Connecting Communities to Health and Care Careers focuses on narrowing inequalities with a one system approach across the sector, adapting recruitment methods and building on the good practice models in the system. A hub and spoke adapted recruitment model continues to be expanded, prioritising the most deprived wards across the city. Through extensive community engagement and continuous promotion, 359 have attended an information session, a person-centred approach that provides next steps to recruitment.

From April 2023 to March 2024;

- 106 gained employment
- 118 customers have successfully completed a programme
- 88 are being supported to improve their functional skills to achieve the required level through Adult Learning
- 41 are being supported to move into employment either through the Employment Hub or NHS Talent Pipeline

SEND Next Choices – Getting ready for Adult Life took place on 25th June 2024 for its third year at the Leeds First Direct Arena. The event aims to support young people who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Over 2,000 young people along with parents, carers and teachers attended. There were 75 exhibitors who offered jobs, apprenticeships, volunteering, training opportunities, leisure activities and other dedicated support.

Family Learning taster and engagement sessions were offered, in early spring, at the Family of Schools meeting in Armley. The offer is in response to a request for support from the Communities Team to address high levels of NEET and Unknown in the area.

Following on from the **Hospitality Event** held 23rd February 2024, DWP requested that we replicate the sessions for 2 further jobs fairs being held at Southern House and Pudsey Jobcentre in April. Employment Hub advisors delivered sessions in CV preparation, interview techniques in readiness for the events.

Tech Careers Launchpads specific for WIID (Women in Leeds Digital) events took place on 13th May and 19 June 2024. Part of the series of Tech Launchpad, delivered in partnership with Northcoders and other digital organisations to deliver a workshop for “getting noticed in Tech”, “personal branding”, “confidence building”, panel session and networking.

ASDA MCE - E&S once again supported the Ahead Partnership’s GirlTech event, took place on 17th May 2024 with 120 female students in year 8 from Leeds schools. E&S delivered an Apprenticeship information session workshop and taking part in the career's carousel to inform the students about digital Apprenticeship pathways.

Digital Apprenticeship Info sessions, Leeds City College, occurred on 23rd and 25th April 2024, E&S delivered Apprenticeship information sessions for Digital T-Level students at Leeds City College as part of their ‘World of Work’ week.

Global Banking School Business, Accounting & Digital Jobs Fair was held on 19th April 2024 at Great George Street. E&S delivered a presentation to talk about apprenticeships within this sector.

Leeds SEND Employment Forum took place on 8th May 2024 at Nexus. This forum examined ways to increase employment opportunities for those with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities.

Local T-level College and University students were welcomed to a Student Insights event at Bruntwood SciTech, Leeds on 24th April 2024 to hear from guest speakers about tech career options in a range of tech roles. Helping to demystify tech roles and highlight the breadth of opportunity available within the sector and with local employers.

Tech Skills Springboard webinar was launched on 18th and 25th April 2024. The initiative is in partnership with Microsoft with University Academy 92 as the skills provider and will deliver a 12-week programme to students aged 14-16 in Leeds. Students will have the option to study tech modules including artificial intelligence, software/app development, cloud computing, and data, focusing on practical digital and business skills that will help students explore topics of interest not covered in traditional education, aiding students with further education study and employment choices.

Connecting Schools to Hospitality programme - a programme of activities has been delivered for schools visiting hotels in the city to get involved in practical activities to experience working in the sector. The programme will conclude in July with a celebration event to be arranged for July.

Working with LCC Children's and Families to deliver a contract with WYCA to explore how good quality careers advice can reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training. Businesses in the city supported over 13 secondary schools and colleges with 29 careers activities including careers fairs, mock interviews, work experience and much more. In total this has supported over 7874 of young people and involved 509 hours during the 2023/24 academic year

During the most recent academic year The Employment and Skills service delivered 105 sessions in secondary schools, FE and 6th form colleges engaging with 8,175 students, 912 parents and 388 teaching staff.

Outcomes and Outputs

From April 2023 to March 2024 13,513 people have accessed our services:

8,674 (64%) of those accessing the service live in neighbourhoods that fall within the 20% most deprived SOA's on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

8,328 (62%) customers identified as ethnically diverse and 737 (5%) declared a physical disability and 857 (6%) experience poor mental health.

2,559 (19%) customers were young people age 16-24.

Supported 2,457 people into work (including 324 Apprenticeships):

1,361 (55%) of those supported into work live in neighbourhoods that fall within the 20% most deprived SOAs on the Index of Multiple Deprivation

1,145 (47%) customers identified as ethnically diverse and 67 (3%) declared a physical disability, 89 (4%) experience poor mental health

679 (28%) customers were young people aged 16-24

Supported 4,300 people to improve their skills:

2,675 (62%) of these learners lived in neighbourhoods that fall within the 20% most deprived SOAs on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

2,837 (66%) learners identified as ethnically diverse, and 377 (9%) learners declared a physical disability and 457 (11%) experience poor mental health.

460 (11%) customers were young people aged 16-24.

Engaged with 498 employers new to the service to secure jobs, skills, Apprenticeships and education outcomes:

Of the 113 employers engaged this quarter:

86 were SMEs.

27 were large organisations (250+ employees)

Support was provided across all sectors of industry including:

- o Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
- o Professional, scientific and technical activities
- o Health & Care (including Childcare)

Next Steps

Connecting Communities to Health and Care Careers Information and Assessment Sessions will be delivered at sites across the Priority Wards and City Centre Hub in line with planned pre-employment courses. The sessions will continue to support recruitment to roles within the Health and Care sector, including Adult Social Care, Children's Residential Practitioner and Administrative roles. Additional Community Learning provision will also be in place.

Multiply Programmes planned for delivery within the Priority Wards. Venues will include Armley Hub, Dixons Academy, DROSC, Middleton family hub. Advisors will be working with the organisations to identify areas of focus for the programmes. Delivery continues with 'money and work' sessions at both Merrion House and Compton Centre; targeted drop-in support at Merrion House to support learners into employment in partnership with social care recruitment. A range of new courses continue to take place to support learners at Greenmount Primary school; Gipton South Childrens Centre; Bankside primary school; Shakespeare Primary school; Hillcrest Academy and BITMO. Awareness raising activity planned such as 'Nelly' the bus visiting Leeds Kirkgate Market. Videos and case studies will take place for learners who have secured employment as a result of Multiply and wider E&S support. Over 600 learners will be supported between now and end of March 25.

7.0 Family Help

The aim of this workstream is: *We want to ensure that children, young people and families experiencing poverty are able to access help and support without stigma or prejudice.*

This workstream is led by Farrah Khan, Deputy Director Social Care, Children and Families Service.

7.1 Priority 1 – Connecting services to better support families.

Update on recent activities.

Family Hubs are being developed across Leeds, in line with national policy and our own local priorities. The purpose of Family Hubs is to bring together multiple organisations to make it easier for families to get the help they need. As Leeds already has a network of Community Hubs, work is being done to integrate the new Family Hub approach into our existing Community Hub arrangements wherever possible.

Family Hubs will unite a number of different organisations, so that people only have to explain what they need help with once, rather than having to tell many different people. Meanwhile, professionals will be able to work together more effectively to help overcome any difficulties families might be facing.

Family Hubs will consist of social workers, family help practitioners, mental health coordinators, substance use coordinators, domestic violence coordinators, SEND coordinators and the police. There will be seven Family Hubs developed across the city to serve the needs of all communities and linked directly into an existing Community Hub.

The Family Hubs are integral to the Community Hubs and the way in which these services will work together is critical to the effective delivery for children and families.

Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) continues to be delivered and 2024 will see the additional recruitment and training of volunteers in 'Being a Parent' and 'Living with a teenager' programmes. The key objective for 2024 is to deliver EPEC citywide in order to reach more families.

Childrens services continue to support the Communities directorate Migrant Access Project (MAP). The project works to ensure new and emerging communities in Leeds get an understanding of local services through Migrant Community Networkers (MCNs). 2024 will see specialist briefings to upskills MCNs on child exploitation.

It was highlighted in 2023 that there are several Families living in B&B accommodation. Childrens services will support the introduction of Kirkstall Forge temporary an Early Help offer of support for these Families. This will be aligned with the Family & Community hubs and Childrens Centres offers and will be in the form of a bespoke leaflet specific for the location providing advice on local amenities such as the library, local children's centre, parks and children's activities.

We continue to work alongside the Leeds Childrens charity who have provided many free activities for disadvantaged children and families over the summer period. This has provided opportunities for Children to take part in new activities as well as meet footballers from Leeds United. This partnership will grow in 2024 with the introduction of more activity offers for children and families supported through Family Help.

Outcomes and outputs

Childrens Services to deliver briefings on Child exploitation to the MAP.

EPEC delivery for January 2024 targeted East Leeds. Going forward we will deliver in other areas of Leeds.

Next steps

EPEC 'Living with a Teen' course will launch Spring 2024. The 2024 timetable will see expansion into other areas of Leeds.

To develop support offers for families living in temporary accommodation.

7.2 Priority 2 – tackling inequality in accessing services and support.

Update on recent activities

Childrens Services are committed to the voice of parents and children being at the heart of everything we do. We have held an annual 'Let's talk' session for several years now, and the latest was held in November 2023 with over 30 parents attending. The event was also attended by Senior Leaders committed to hearing the voice and experiences of parents.

Let's Talk has been instrumental in developing parent led training for social workers, advocacy for parents involved with child protection conferences and peer training courses.

Next steps

Through Let's talk sessions we now have 3 advocates volunteers actively advocating for families within child protection.

We are planning to hold our first parent support group for Parents who have experienced the child protection system. This followed feedback from Let's Talk sessions that there was a great need for this support. The support group will involve upskilling parents on processes in addition to self-care support.

7.3 Priority 3 – Workforce Development

Update on recent activities.

The launch of the revised early help documentation and notification (formerly registration) process happened in the summer of 2023:

The launch reached colleagues from across the Children and Families Partnership with 398 accessing the on-line briefings and 248 accessing the early help practice and process development sessions. Attendance of the latter was dominated by primary school, children centre and cluster staff. 73% (180/248) of

attendees at the practice development sessions completed an evaluation; 70% (126/180) had attended an on-line briefing first. Feedback overall was very positive with 88% affirming that their skills, confidence and knowledge had been enhanced and 93% finding the activities and materials very useful. The full report includes an analysis of feedback which was grouped into three themes: (1) the response to the revised documentation and processes generally, (2) attendees' experience of the early help practice and process session and (3) further support needs. Multiple recommendations were made in response and to progress this work further.

The Report's recommendations include:

- 1) Implement a sustainable rolling programme of early help practice and process sessions - as structured in July 2023 - delivered once per term for an average of 15 participants and supported by two or three leaders.
- 2) Review the extent to which the cascading of the strategic message has reached senior leaders in settings and services and identify further opportunities through existing forums (e.g., Head teachers Forum, Best Start Board etc.) to promote these and secure alignment with the revised documentation and notification process.
- 3) Liaise with Targeted Service Leads to explore further support and training needs required for schools within cluster arrangements to adopt the revised documentation.
- 4) Target secondary schools outside of cluster arrangements to ensure key messages have been cascaded and to encourage their adoption of the revised documentation.
- 5) Liaise with the youth service to explore further communication and support needs to ensure key messages have reached this service and respond to any further support to adopt the revised documentation.
- 6) Identify how best to communicate with post-16 providers and ensure they have received the key messages and understand expectations to adopt the revised documentation.
- 7) Liaise with health colleagues to determine if there is additional support required to cascade key messages and support the adoption of new processes and the early help notification only documentation.
- 8) Establish the Early Help Champion role to create a supportive network that brings practitioners together, develops relationships and shares knowledge and skills across the system.
- 9) Create a film targeted at young people and families that explains the early help documentation and notification process.
- 10) Develop and resource a plan for the quality assurance of early help work submitted to the local authority for the purposes of notification in order to inform further training and development needs.

During October 2023 2 bespoke briefings were delivered by the Financial Inclusion team to Childrens Services covering support available for families. The briefing included details of household support fund, healthy holidays, utility support, food support and general money advice. Over 300 practitioners attended the training and found the information very useful. Practitioners told us the most common needs they support families with are; damp/ mould problems, overcrowded housing, debts for utilities including water, families not attending hospital appointments due to travel costs, foodbanks having to limit families access, childcare provision closing which in turn is seeing parents not able to work, family stress and the link this is having on school attendance, demand in need for baby essentials, and a rise in criminal exploitation.

Delivered by Professor Claudia Bernard, the "Poverty and neglect masterclass" was delivered to Services practitioners in November 2023. The masterclass drew on current knowledge to address neglect- the most common form of child abuse. It also focused on the discourse about the links between poverty and neglect.

Outcome and Outputs

- 248 practitioners attended Early Help practice and process in person sessions. 398 attended the online briefing.
- 300 practitioners attended the 'available support for families' briefing.

Next steps

The Early Help Registration Task and Finish Group is implementing the recommendations from the Early Help paperwork process. Recurring feedback includes an ask that there is the 'buy-in' of senior leaders; supporting them to have the time and capacity to align their early help work to the Leeds Practice Model. The extent to which this workstream has impacted upon an increase in early help notifications is to be analysed and reported to the next Board meeting in September 2024.

Beginning in 2024, Poverty briefings will be delivered within Childrens Services every 2 months. These will cover various topics including practical support for families, risk of loan sharks- how to identify and what support is available, supporting conversations with families around poverty, Marmot city, regular updates from the Poverty board workstreams.

To support wish 8 (supporting families experiencing poverty) of the Child Friendly Leeds wishes, a blog has been developed for the Child Friendly Leeds social media. This includes fun, free activities for families in addition to practical support that families can access. The intention is to have a link to this from the Money Information Centre to improve communication to families as well as create awareness for practitioners. In addition, we are also working on a booklet of support which will be available to professionals supporting children and families. The booklet provides detailed information on support available to families and how professionals can make a referral. Examples include local foodbank provision/ support with utilities/ babybank.

8.0 – Removing Barriers to Learning

The aim of this workstream is: *We want to support schools and settings to ensure that CYP who live in poverty can access learning and improve their educational experiences and outcomes.*

8.1 Priority 1 Early Years - Take up of free nursery places for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds.

Update on recent activities.

Leeds entered into a long-term partnership with Nesta alongside York and Stockport called Fairer Start Leeds and is a three-to-five-year innovation partnership with an aim to work together so that all children have a brighter start for a stronger future. The partnership centres on a shared commitment to reimagining early years support to deliver tangible improvement to the lives of disadvantaged children. There is a greater focus on collaborative working with York and Stockport, sharing the learning across the partnership.

We are now in the third year of our partnership with Nesta and the focus for the project involves NESTA working with the Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service, Leeds' Library Services and Leeds Council to see if we can find new ways to work together to improve support for children and parents by looking into how Speech and Language support and services can be improved within Leeds.

This work aimed to develop a better understanding of:

Common referral sources to the CLST service and characteristics of children/families referred from different sources

- Socio-demographic and economic characteristics of children and families currently on the CLST waitlist broken down by whether or not they are re-referrals and/or accepted by the service.
- Whether wider language and communication support in Leeds (inc. library services) is geographically targeted by need, correlated with outcomes and whether there are differences in acceptance to the CLST service by area
- Differences and accuracy in CLST service pathways
- Differences in episodes of care including wait times between discharge and re-referral and between re-referral and appointment

Outcomes and Outputs

As a result of the above, a revised pathway into the speech & language therapy service has been developed along with a communication & language toolkit available for all practitioners to use. Recent workshops

have been delivered across the city to launch this toolkit and were attended by health & early years/ education practitioners.

Two-year-olds take-up

Leeds has an average take-up city wide of 72.7%, based on three terms worth of data (Spring 2023, Summer 2023 and Autumn 2023). The inner-city areas of Harehills (50.5%), Woodhouse (56.9%), and Holbeck (62.4%) are still significantly below the city average. Further work to increase take-up in these areas is a priority as is Richmond Hill (59.1%) which is now also a priority area.

Burmantofts, which was a priority area in 2022, now has an uptake close to the city average (72.6%)

Inner City Areas with lowest uptake (2023)

PPA	Average Uptake of 2-Year-Old Places (2023)
Harehills	50.5%
Woodhouse	56.9%
Richmond Hill	59.1%
Holbeck	62.4%

Eligible Children

City wide, the number of 2-year-olds eligible for FEEE funding has decreased over the past 3 years: From 3609 in Spring 2021 to 2746 in Autumn 2023.

Three and four-year-olds take-up

Take up of FEEE for 3- and 4-year-olds in Summer 2023 was 92.2%, which is an increase of 0.6 percentage points on Summer 2022 (91.6%) and an increase of 3.2 percentage points since Summer 2021 (89.0%).

The area of Harehills is an outlier with significantly lower uptake than other areas; in Summer 2023 there were 1,119 children living in this area who were eligible for a funded place, but only 70.4% took one. This means 331 eligible - & 4-year-olds in Harehills did not access nursery funding in this term. Harehills is deemed to be the priority area in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, to increase take-up.

Other areas of concern are Chapel Allerton (85.9%); Burmantofts (88.1%) and Holbeck (89.8% uptake).

Next steps

In preparation for the new Two-Year-Old scheme from April 2024 for eligible working parents, Leeds Family Information Service are hoping to capture some data from providers (via a survey), to understand the number of children currently in settings and paying for childcare, who are likely to become eligible for a funded place of 15 hours from April onwards. The Department for Education haven't yet launched the application portal, but the criteria will broadly follow that for the current 30 hr scheme. This will help inform where there may potentially be sufficiency issues within Leeds. The survey closed on 26 January.

8.2 Priority 2 – Emotional Health and wellbeing/ Mental Health

Update on recent activities.

The My Health, My School (MHMS) annual school survey 2022-23 launched to schools in September 2022 for the academic year. All participating schools were able to access their own survey data to inform planned interventions. The Health & Wellbeing Services collated data at a city-wide level. The MHMS survey is included in the actions within priority 4 of The Refreshed 3As Plan.

Outcomes and outputs

A total of 25,648 pupil responses were received from 202 Leeds schools and settings participating in the 2022-23 survey. The raw data survey results were made publicly available on Data Mill North. A number of resultant Annual Reports, reflecting the survey themes were also published. Broadscale consultation on the

MHMS survey question set for 2023-24 commenced at the beginning of February and was open for a 4-month period. Leeds City Council Service representatives were invited to review and suggest amendments to the survey questions to be used with schools for the 2023-24 academic year as well as being tabled as agenda items on various strategic Programme/Project Boards facilitating broader discussion. Following the review, the survey was revised, amendments made and drafted for approval by Steering Group members over summer 2023. The revised My Health, My School survey went live to schools in September 2023. As of January 2024, there have been an encouraging number of 6871 survey responses from 53 Leeds schools and settings indicating a degree of confidence that the total number of survey returns for the 2023-24 academic year will be at least in line with last year's results.

Next steps

December's MHMS Steering Group meeting 2023 considered survey results from the 2022-23 survey and endorsed a subsequent survey consultation this year on the question set for the My Health, My School SEND survey 2024-25. In light of the continued increased annual uptake of the survey, both in the number of responses and numbers of participating schools year on year a proposal to further strengthen governance arrangements for the survey was accepted. The plan is to complement the Steering Group through establishing a new, formalised, multi-agency Management Group capturing expertise from beyond LCC (e.g., NHS, Leeds University, Leeds Trinity University, etc.) to work alongside LCC colleagues. This will provide greater, more immediate day to day support and a bridging mechanism between the Operational and Steering Groups. The Management Group will provide further rigour on the question set, data analysis and proposed changes going forward aiding development of the survey and is to be underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

8.3 Priority 3 – The 3 As strategy - working with schools to improve attendance, achievement and attainment.

Update of recent activities

The 3A's Strategy is has been refreshed. The refreshed strategy takes into account the change of one of the CYPP obsessions that *"young people in Leeds attend school, achieve, and attain well"*, and they also *"continue their route of a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination"*.

The '3 As' is a directorate-wide strategy which identifies how LA services can support schools in their work with young people to raise outcomes.

- **Attainment:** children reach their full potential in learning
- **Attendance:** children need to attend school as much as possible for them, not just to learn, but to be safe and build friendships
- **Achievement:** all children have the opportunity to take part in positive activities in their local community such as sports, the arts and volunteering.

The strategy focuses on the learning and outcomes of all the children and young people in Leeds including those living in areas of the city with high indices of multiple deprivation, children looked after, children and young people with SEND, vulnerable learners and children and young people experiencing SEMH problems.

The Refreshed strategy has the following five priorities...

- Priority 1 - All children and young people in Leeds are supported to improve their communication, language, and literacy so they develop into strong readers taking into account their individual needs.
- Priority 2 - Support education providers to ensure children and young people regularly attend.
- Priority 3 - Support education settings to meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

- Priority 4 - All children and young people and staff in learning settings feel safe and supported with their wellbeing.
- Priority 5 - Ensure all young people in Leeds participate in education, employment and training after statutory school age and progress to a positive destination.

Outcomes and outputs

The new 3As strategy was approved at the end of December 2023 and was launched in early 2024 and therefore outcomes and outputs will be reported at the next meeting.

Next steps

Once approved the next steps will be to implement the actions detailed on the plan. An update will be provided on the next report.

9.0 Green Spaces

The aim of this workstream is: *We want to improve access to green spaces and opportunities to play in priority wards by cultivating the time, space and attitudes needed for children's play improving the quality of existing green spaces, and making streets safe, playful spaces for people to connect.*

This workstream is led by Sarah Wilson, Senior Design Officer and Jenny Rutherford from Child Friendly Leeds Team.

Priority 1 Play Sufficiency

Update on recent activities

Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds are working in partnership on the Play Sufficiency project. Play Sufficiency is about securing sufficient opportunities for children's play and that involves far more than simply looking at designated provisions (although these are still important). Securing sufficient opportunities for play is about cultivating the time, space and attitudes needed for children's play to flourish, in their homes, on doorsteps and residential streets, within local neighbourhoods and across local authority policy and practice.

Play Sufficiency is an ongoing process of research and action to assess, improve and protect children's opportunities for play. The assessment stage explores what is working for who, where and why at a neighbourhood and organisational and/or local authority level.

Research has been conducted in priority wards in the South, East and West of the city (Boggart Hill; Lincoln Green; Cliftons and Nowells; Holbeck and Beeston Hill; New Wortley). Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds are currently writing up the Play Sufficiency Assessment Report, which collates all of the background, context and findings from the extensive research programme.

On September 26th the Play Sufficiency team hosted a Strategic Priorities Workshop at John Charles Centre for Sport. Ben Tawil and Mike Barclay, play consultants from Ludicology commissioned to guide us through the Play Sufficiency work in Leeds, provided a brief overview of the Play Sufficiency process and the principles behind this approach. Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds then presented each priority, with supporting background research. Over half of the session was dedicated to discussion focused on each strategic priority: What work is already going on? What are the challenges to delivering this priority? How can we work collectively to progress this priority for children, families and communities in priority wards.

See below for Play Sufficiency priorities:

- Priority 1: Facilitate the cross-service endorsement of Play Sufficiency and embed key principles within Leeds City Council departments.
- Priority 2: Celebrate and enable parents and carers permissions, confidences and skills for play.
- Priority 3: Grow a play workforce of adults whose work directly and indirectly impacts upon children and their play.
- Priority 4: Facilitate sufficient time, space and attitudes towards play in educational settings.
- Priority 5: Enable sufficient time, space, design and attitudes to play for children with protected characteristics.
- Priority 6: Create streets that are safe, welcoming and encourage children's play.
- Priority 7: Improve the variety of spaces available for play for all age groups within close proximity of children's homes (including informal and designated spaces).
- Priority 8: Improve access to nature-based play environments.
- Priority 9: Improve the perception of teenagers and improving their opportunities to play and hang out.

The Strategic Priorities Workshop brought together representatives from across the council to think collectively about how to improve opportunities for play in priority wards. The energy and commitment in the room was evident. From the Open Space Spotlight key ideas and actions were put forward that can be fed directly into the next phase: the write up of the Play Sufficiency Action Plan.

Play Sufficiency was taken to Exec Board in December 2023 and all recommendations approved. This was a joint report by Child Friendly Leeds and Active Leeds and presented by Cllr Venner, with comments from Cllr Arif. The work follows the 2007 Play Strategy which included a call for a citywide Play Partnership. A strategic board – the Play Sufficiency Partnership, supports the project, formed of LCC representatives and partners. The paper proposed that a Play Champion is appointed from Executive Board, who will lead the development of an Action Plan which will report annually to Executive Board. Councillor Venner has agreed to be the named champion.

Outcomes and outputs

Full Play Sufficiency Assessment report to be completed in 2024. This will share detailed findings about factors supporting and constraining children's freedoms to play. The Play Sufficiency Assessment report will be shared with partners who have been involved with the project so that they can comment on the draft report.

Play Sufficiency research has been used to bring in significant external funding to priority wards in the south of the city. The National Lottery Reaching Communities bid funding will deliver a project that focuses specifically on play, responding to the Play Sufficiency insight which articulates how children feel about their opportunities to play in their local area. Ludicology will also be involved in evaluation of the project.

In early May, the strategic board – the Play Sufficiency Partnership – will convene to drive forward the Play Sufficiency Action Plan. This will focus on the principle that play is everyone's business. The cross-directorate and city-wide partnership will drive towards achieving ambitious outcomes made possible through a whole systems approach.

A Leeds Community of Play has been established, led by a small steering group of partners. Close partnership work with [Playful Anywhere](#) has catalysed the coming together of playful and creative organisations, largely made up from the third sector and community/voluntary sector. Playful Anywhere CIC is a Leeds-based social enterprise with a mission to catalyse creativity, inventiveness and playfulness, where we work, live and travel. The Community of Play operates in parallel to a Festival of Play 2024 (a DIY two-week city-wide festival of play) and holds a space for

playful people, partners and businesses to connect, build relationships and network to champion and advocate for children's right to play.

A Play Sufficiency workshop has been delivered in partnership with the Safer Stronger Communities team at the Armley Children, Young People and Families Partnership. Specific local Play Sufficiency data was shared with a selection of different partners, including elected members, third sector partners, policing teams and teams from across Leeds City Council.

Next steps

- To share finding of the research through a series of community workshops
- To embed Play Sufficiency principles, findings and recommendations within the Priority Neighbourhood Partnership Plans in priority wards of the city.
- Complete all resources to share across teams within the council. This will include:
 - The development of a video outlining our key research findings and priorities
 - A set of Play Pamphlets that will go into greater detail focusing on our key themes.
 - A full Play Sufficiency Assessment report
 - An abridged Play Sufficiency Assessment report
- Produce a Play Sufficiency Action Plan

Priority 2 Planning for Play

Update on recent activities

The Planning Service influences the provision of green space and play in new developments through engagement with National Government, Local Plan policies, design guidance and consultation with technical specialists during the consideration of planning applications.

Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee Inquiry

The (LUHC) Committee has launched an inquiry looking at how better planning and building and urban design in England could enhance the health and well-being of children and young people.

The inquiry states:

It's important for children and young people's mental and physical health that they have access to spaces to play and to socialise.

In our inquiry, we want to find out more about how children and young people experience outdoor spaces in towns, cities and rural areas across England. What policy interventions from local and central government could help to deliver streets, estates, villages, neighbourhoods and parks that enable kids to enjoy active outdoor lifestyles and engage with others?

Child Friendly Leeds and Strategic Planning (Policy and Plans) responded to this inquiry with best practice in Leeds (and elsewhere) and made recommendations regarding next steps. The CFL 12 Wishes, Play Sufficiency and play streets featured heavily as part of this submission to demonstrate the ways in which Leeds City Council are already working to tackle the issues that this inquiry highlights.

Over 100 organisations and individuals submitted written evidence to the inquiry, collectively making the case that more needs to be done to consider and meet children's needs in the planning process and in government policy. [Intelligent Health](#) was one of the organisations submitting into the inquiry and they cited Leeds as best practice in relation to the flagship work around Play Sufficiency. Leeds was also referenced during the inquiry panel by Alice Ferguson, Associate and Board Director of Playing Out as being a 'gold standard' for our work on Play Sufficiency.

Our work contributing to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee Inquiry has resulted in an invitation to deliver a workshop at the TCPA conference: *Developing well – creating places and spaces where children and young people thrive*. Play Strategy Officer, Senior Planning Officer (Policy and Plans) and Councillor Venner (Executive Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships and nominated Play Champion for the city) delivered this session in June 2024.

Local Plan update

The Leeds Local Plan is made up of a number of documents that contain planning policies that guide the amount and location of development in the Leeds district. It also includes more detailed topic-specific policies that will guide different types of development, and make sure that priorities such as design, green space, heritage, infrastructure, flood risk management are considered during decision making.

We are required to review our planning policies every 5 years, to check they are still working, relevant and fit for purpose, and to identify any policy gaps that may have arisen. Following a review of all our Local Plan policies in 2020, a number of policies requiring update were identified. These include policies on green space and new policy G4b is proposed to ensure new developments include good quality green space and play:

In order to be considered high quality new green and blue space should seek to meet the following objectives:

- c. serve multifunctional purposes for human health, recreation, play sufficiency, ecology, carbon capture and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.
- e. usable for recreation including facilitating movement, play – both formal and informal, rest and observing nature
- o. a mix of formal and in-formal play provision with innovative spaces using natural materials and varied planting to allow imaginative play and connection to nature.
- p. is suitable for children and young people of different ages and abilities in line with local play sufficiency.
- q. Any play provision needs to be designed in accordance with national guidance (such as Fields in Trust) and local play sufficiency assessments.

Additionally, further consideration is being given to how the Local Plan can include reference to the provision on indoor play facilities associated with high density residential schemes particularly in the city centre.

Final public consultation on the first Local Plan update is underway before the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination. A further Local Plan update is currently being scoped ('Local Plan 2040') and this is likely to include specific play sufficiency policies.

Design guidance

Green Space guidance for how green spaces should be designed in planning applications for proposed developments was finalised and published on the Council's website in August 2023 for use by Developers, Designers, Planning Officers.

The guidance is intended to set the standard for good quality green space and play until new Local Plan policy G4b is adopted; and includes good design principles for green space location, layout, accessibility and play provision.

Outcomes and outputs

Ongoing monitoring of policy and guidance use by officers and resulting green space and play quality will be carried out.

Next steps

Continue to support Planning Policy colleagues with adoption of new green space policy, and advocate for the inclusion of play sufficiency in Local Plan 2040.

Deliver workshop at the TCPA conference (June 2024).

Ahead of the conference, develop a network of local planning authorities interested in Play Sufficiency and play and the built environment.

Deliver training for elected Members on planning and play, alongside Planning Policy colleagues. This will involve looking at a range of ways in which Members can support children's right to play and will provide guidance on how to design in opportunities for good quality play.

Priority 3 Urban 95 Project

Update on recent activities

A Leeds team of three representatives from the Council have recently completed the Urban95 Academy programme: a global sponsored leadership course designed for local governments that are dedicated to early childhood development. The programme was delivered online over seven weeks, during which city leaders learned how to plan, design and implement child-focused infrastructure, policies and programmes related to public space, neighbourhood planning, mobility and transport whilst also developing effective analysis, strategy and leadership skills. The programme focused on how to design better cities for babies, toddlers and their caregivers.

As part of this work, the Leeds Team highlighted a local challenge for our city and designed an outline strategy for how to address this challenge. The priority for Leeds was to address the dominance of the car and how this impacted children's opportunities to play in the streets and green spaces around their homes. Children are becoming less visible in our streets and across our built environment. Nationally and globally there has been a significant shift in the function of streets, with competing demands between the place and movement function. It's about a better design of streets that need to function as spaces that allow people to connect with one another, that can connect cities but at the same time offer opportunities as places for public engagement and play.

The strategy focuses on how the Council could introduce low traffic/active travel type initiatives positively to communities through the lens of play (It's worth noting that the terminology 'active travel' and 'low traffic' would not be used as part of this project).

This proposal places great emphasis on the importance of playful, in-depth and thorough engagement. There are two strands to this engagement:

1. Partner engagement – the power of play as an organising principle to ensure that stakeholders across different departments and directorates are working towards a collective vision and set of outcomes.
2. Community engagement – empowering communities to make decisions about the spaces and culture of their neighbourhood. Residents work towards a collective vision of what they want their neighbourhoods to look and feel like

Community engagement would focus primarily through the lens of play and would be coordinated through the organisation Playful Anywhere. Founder Emma Bearman says: 'Play is a great way to bring people together to catalyse a space and to imagine the potential of what it could be'. This is really the guiding principle of our engagement approach.

Engagement Methods:

The Playbox

- **Catalyst for play:** The brightly coloured box is an immediate invitation to play and be curious. It draws people to a space and gives permission for play. This is really important. So often in Leeds it's not the case that neighbourhoods contain no playable space, but rather that spaces aren't giving permission for play and inviting social interaction. The presence of the Playbox – in an immediate sense will facilitate play and provide opportunities for play. This is crucial to healthy childhood development and ultimately creating better cities for children, for families and for everyone.
- **Catalyst for conversation:** The Playbox animates a space and creates an inviting environment that draws people in. This is often one of the most difficult parts of community engagement: the initial starting point. The approach with the Playbox helps to break down these initial barriers. Its physical structure is robust, and it can be left in situ without fear of damage. It can collect and share stories, data and information like a gallery space. It prompts the imagination by virtue of being in a space and makes people think differently from the get-go.

Play Streets

Running alongside the neighbourhood planning thread catalysed by the Playbox will be the second strand of community engagement: play streets. Supporting residents to open streets for play will allow them to experience how streets change when you remove the dominance of the car. It is a powerful way to visualise your neighbourhood: presenting opportunities for play, socialising and positive interactions. Caregivers can conceive how it feels for toddlers to play in public realm without fear of speeding cars; possibilities for unused space to become a focus for exploring nature and growing plants; plain walls can become a canvas for local art. Residents start to reclaim space and understand how they have the power to shape the neighbourhood they live in.

Play Street Enablement Project

Child Friendly Leeds have secured funding to continue work on the Play Streets Enablement project. This project focuses specifically on priority wards, where the benefits of play streets would be significant, but where a resident's capacity for completing the play streets application process independently may be limited. Third sector partners will be commissioned to support residents to organise play streets and get them up and running, with the long-term vision being that residents will feel confident in sustaining these sessions independently. Focused work is likely to take place in the following areas: Seacroft; Lincoln Green; Halton Moor; Osmondthorpe; Middleton; Holbeck. We will be looking to coordinate this project with a range of services who can signpost to much needed support and resources, highlighting just how powerful play streets can be as a tool for community development. The project aims to bring opportunities to play and socialise – as well as support and services – to the doorstep.

Partnerships with third sector, including Incredible Edible, will enable a holistic approach to streets in priority areas. The project will encourage residents to think about their street as a space to play, socialise and connect – as well as facilitating opportunities to grow healthy foods or identify blank space for community murals.

Child Friendly Leeds have also secured funding in partnership with Leeds University to receive portable air quality monitors. This project will run in conjunction with the play streets enablement work so that residents (ideally it will be children who are leading on this work) can monitor levels of air pollutants outside of, during and after playstreet sessions.

Outcomes and outputs

Data collection regarding play streets will be collected at a city-wide level e.g., Number of play streets (including number of new play streets); number of regular play streets (streets that have an Annual Pass and hold play streets regularly throughout the year); location of play streets (with a particular focus on deprivation).

Through the Play Streets Enablement project, third sector partners will support in reporting on progress in priority wards e.g., number of new and regular play streets; occurrence of play streets; evaluation and impact (with a focus on the voice of children and young people); case studies.

Leeds University will collect and analyse air quality data from streets/play streets and will report on key findings. There will be a focus on priority wards.

Play Strategy Officer (Child Friendly Leeds) is also beginning to deliver training sessions to key Leeds City Council services based on the Urban95 learning.

Where the Urban95 Academy strategy is piloted, a case study will be produced to evaluate and monitor impact.

Next steps

As part of the Urban95 Academy, the Leeds Team submitted the local challenge and outline strategy (referenced above: How to positively introduce low traffic/active travel type initiatives through the lens of play). Ten cities are selected to attend a residence week in London where they are matched with a technical partner (e.g., Arup; Gehl; NACTO etc.) who can work intensively with the Local Authority to develop the outline strategy and have it ready for delivery. Due to the strength of Leeds' outline strategy, the Leeds team are now an alternate city. Should any city not be able to attend the residence week, then the Leeds Team will attend.

The Child Friendly Leeds team are pushing ahead with the outline strategy – having received high recommendation from the Urban95 Academy team – and are currently in the process of sourcing funding to pilot this work in Lincoln Green (as well as Meanwood, which is not in a priority ward).

Partnership working to progress the play streets and air quality monitoring projects will continue to develop. These projects will be ongoing from September 2023. Third Sector partners have been identified and are currently going through the commissioning process.

Priority 4 – Lincoln Green

Update on recent activities

Roxby Community Garden (former disused play area) was completed in May 2023 and Mafwa Theatre (community theatre company working mainly with women from migrant backgrounds) have held several community events in the space including theatre performance, live music, dance, art, gardening and craft activities for children and adults.

The Lincoln Greeners gardening group continue to meet every Tuesday and are growing a range of fruit, vegetables and flowers.

Urban Trails are being designed across Burmantofts, Richmond Hill, Harehills as part of a Department for Transport funded walking, cycling, wheeling project and Lincoln Green has been identified as a pilot area for a play-focused trail. A series of design workshops and a site visit were held in August and September 2023, and consultation days were held in Lincoln Green and Richmond Hill in April 2024 to find out what residents think of the trail ideas. Detailed proposals are now being designed by the project team for further discussion with community stakeholders.

Plans for a Playbox are at the very early stages. Play Sufficiency research highlighted that there were very limited opportunities for children to play in their local area. The Playbox – a corrugated shipping container – provides a prompt for children's play, as well as holding a space for community conversations. The design and content of the Playbox is unique to each space it inhabits and can be developed by the local community and key partners. Currently, the idea of a partnership with Mafwa Theatre is being explored.

A Neighbourhood Plan for Mabgate, Lincoln Green and Burmantofts is under development by local groups supported by the Council. In partnership with Leeds City Council's Planning and Housing teams and East Street Arts, the future play box has been identified as a useful tool to engage with children, young people and families (as well as the wider community) in developing the Neighbourhood Plan, influencing the design of their neighbourhood and responding to the strategic priorities from the Play Sufficiency Assessment

Outcomes and outputs

Success of completed and developing green space and play improvement projects to be measured through ongoing engagement with Shakespeare Primary School, Mafwa Theatre and the Lincoln Greeners.

Next steps

Design development of the Urban Trails and play box and ongoing partnership working with Neighbourhood Plan team, Housing team and third sector partners.



Child Poverty Strategy 2024 - 2027

Our goal: Leeds is a city that reduces the impact of poverty and helps families who need it.

Children, young people and families experiencing the impact of poverty feel they are supported and receive the help they need. They have their basic rights and needs met.



Welcome

Welcome to our refreshed Child Poverty Strategy for 2024-2027! As the Executive Member with responsibility for Children and Families, I'm proud that this strategy incorporates the voices and experiences of children and young people, aligning with our Best City Ambition and our work to build a Child Friendly Leeds.

Poverty has a profound impact on children, young people, and families. Poverty isn't merely a lack of essentials but a daily struggle, shaped by societal and political failures.

Our latest consultation highlighted crucial priorities identified by children and young people; the need to reduce the stigma and shame associated with poverty, ensure the fulfilment of basic needs, and enhance access to activities for children living in poverty. These priorities will help guide the work of the child poverty impact board over the next three years.

Our strategy is based around mitigating the impact of poverty and working with organisations to reduce the barriers that children, young people and families who live in poverty may experience. However, substantial, long-term change requires a government in power who prioritises resources, time and policies to tackle child poverty. We will continue to lobby the government to more accurately align benefits with living costs.

Leeds faces a rising number of children living in deprived areas, compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. As inflation persists, families face escalating costs for necessities like food, housing and childcare. The price of everyday children's essentials like winter coats and nappies are still going up.

This all adds up to an urgent and compelling need to address child poverty. National research indicates that Britain is facing the deepest living standards squeeze in a century, projecting child poverty levels not seen since the 1990s. About 19% of households with children, an estimated 1.5 million, are facing severe financial strain. Distressingly, approximately one million children are now living in destitution, nearly tripling since 2017.

The renowned academic, researcher and campaigner Sir Michael Marmot has underlined the gravity of the situation, warning of a potential humanitarian crisis impacting children's health, development, and educational opportunities. Leeds has partnered with Sir Michael Marmot to become a Marmot City, to accelerate work to reduce health inequalities. This work compliments our child poverty strategy, and has started with a specific focus on giving children the best start in life.

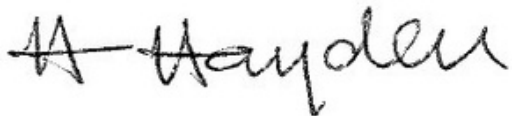
This refreshed child poverty strategy unifies efforts across the city, championing existing initiatives, and aligning all stakeholders toward a common goal of addressing child poverty.

The Child Poverty Impact Board, the citywide governance body which I chair, continues to sustain collaborative work, focusing on identified areas and developing new approaches. Notably, the importance of play now forms a workstream within the strategy, as a result of children lacking access to green spaces being highlighted during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Our commitment involves partnering with the third sector, public and private sectors, educational institutions, families and communities to alleviate the impact of poverty on children's lives, and I am immensely proud of the ongoing efforts across Leeds. I would like to thank everyone contributing to this work and look forward to collaborating with both current and new partners to take this Child Poverty Strategy forward.

Councillor Helen Hayden

Executive Member for Children and Families

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H Hayden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

How do we define poverty?

Poverty relates to having insufficient resources to meet essential/basic needs.

The term 'resources' generally relates to income such as earnings, benefits and savings, which all impact day to day living and access to 'Needs' such as food, housing, and other necessities such as healthcare, education and transport. It is important to recognise that needs vary by society, community and on an individual level.

Sociologist Peter Townsend, defined poverty in 1979 as: "Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies in which they belong."

Child Poverty Action Group state: 'Poverty is about more than just money, but a lack of money is the defining feature of being poor ... A child can have three meals a day, warm clothes and go to school, but still be poor because her parents don't have enough money to ensure she can live in a warm home, have access to a computer to do her homework, or go on the same school trips as her classmates.'

Households are considered to be below the UK poverty line if their income is 60% below the median household income after housing costs for that year.

Poverty is often presented in 'absolute' or 'relative' measures, both before and after housing costs. Relative poverty refers to households with less than 60% of contemporary median income, while absolute poverty refers households with less than 60% of the median income in 2010/11, uprated by inflation.

Who experiences poverty?

Anyone can experience poverty. Someone may be born into poverty, grow up in poverty, live life in poverty and die in poverty. Some people may never experience poverty, and some people will live life going in and out of poverty. Some people may experience poverty just once yet feel the impact for the rest of their life. There are some groups who are more vulnerable than others, such as people who have special educational needs and disabilities, women, and ethnically diverse communities. These groups are overrepresented in poverty statistics. Since the pandemic starting in 2020 there is a new generation of our population that are experiencing poverty. In addition, the cost-of-living crisis has meant that more families are now newly living in poverty and are less experienced in accessing support.

What are the statistics?

Looking at the most recently available data published in March 2023, it can be said that even by the lowest estimate, 1 in 5 children under 16 in Leeds are living in poverty.

The 2022/23 latest published data should be viewed as an estimate for the number of children living in poverty in Leeds and the UK.

A higher number and percentage of all dependent children under 20 in poverty in the UK are from households where at least one adult is in work (3m out of 4.3m children equating to 69% after housing costs)

4.3 million dependent children under 20 were living in relative poverty (after housing costs). This equates to 30% of children in the UK.

In Leeds, 27751 children under 16 were living in absolute poverty (18%) compared to 17% in 2021/22 and a national figure of 16%.

In Leeds, 33482 children under 16 were living in relative poverty before housing costs, equal to 22% (compared to a national figure of 20%).

What are the impacts of poverty?

Children who experience poverty are more likely to face a wide range of difficulties, both now and in the future. There are strong links between experiencing poverty as a child and having worse mental and physical health, a shorter life, lower grades in education, poor financial health and lower paid, insecure work.

Our recent consultation with over 200 children and young people in Leeds identified that stress and worry can be caused by not having access to basic needs, such as toiletries, clothes, shoes, medication and food. Living in food insecure households can result in hunger, malnutrition and obesity. Additionally, lacking basic needs resulting in coming to school cold, tired and hungry was recognised to have a significant impact on a child's ability to focus at school, impacting their academic performance.

The children and young people raised serious concerns about the emotional, physical and mental wellbeing of children experiencing poverty. The voice of the child came through very clearly in the consultation that living in poverty and accessing help (particularly receiving free school meals) can be a cause of shame and stigma for children and young people. The fear of "feeling judged" and being "bullied" was reiterated in the consultation and seen as a barrier to accessing support for children experiencing poverty.

Why is child poverty different to adult poverty?

The ways in which poverty is experienced by children cannot be understood through solely looking at adult poverty. To understand how poverty impacts the lives of children and young people, we need to talk to children and young people. Similarly, we cannot just focus on eradicating adult poverty as the solution to child poverty. We need to focus on mitigating the impact of poverty on children and young people, whilst we work as a city to improve the structures around people who experience, or are at risk of, poverty.



Why is poverty 'everyone's business'?

Child Poverty Action Group published research in March 2023 which estimates that child poverty in the UK costs £39.5 billion a year in lost tax and earnings, unemployment benefit and additional public service spending. This is up from £25 billion in 2008.

However, while research can estimate the huge financial cost to public finances and the economy, it is impossible to estimate the true cost of poverty, in terms of the physical and emotional suffering caused. Our recently consultation with over 200 children and young people from across Leeds identified shame, isolation and anxiety as key descriptors of the experience of children living in poverty. The young people shared concerns around the impact of poverty on crime rates, school grades and the health and wellbeing of children across the city.

If we as a city do not act, the risk is both moral and economical: poverty creates an unequal and inequitable system, which not only brings increased cost to all of our services, it also holds the moral cost of restricting the realities of Leeds citizens.

How does poverty relate to the rights of the child?

Poverty represents a loss of the rights of the child. The UN Convention Rights of the Child details 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life. Six are particularly relevant to child poverty; articles 3, 6, 12, 24, 26 and 27. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has said that all children living in poverty are vulnerable, but some groups are particularly vulnerable. These include younger children, indigenous children immigrant children and children living in single parent households.

What do we want?

We know that being in poverty, being excluded and feeling the shame and stigma associated with poverty can impact a child for the rest of their life. We don't want this in Leeds. We don't want any of our children, young people or families to feel excluded, alone, misunderstood, or ashamed, or lack access to their basic needs. We want to ensure that poverty presents no barriers for our children and young people, and we want all people to have access to the same opportunities, regardless of their background.

We believe that all children and young people should have the freedom to choose their pathway, and that we can work together as a city to tackle limitations that poverty may place on these pathways. So, we are working together, as a city, to reduce the impact of poverty on young people.

What is needed to make a difference?

Our Child Poverty Strategy in Leeds is based on the belief that it is fundamentally important to incorporate the voices of children, young people and their parents into plans, strategies and work. There is fantastic work being done across the city – but there are clear challenges and frustrations across different systems and organisations. So, we need to change those systems and organisations. We need to look at what the children, young people and parents want and need before we look at what organisations historically provide.

Who is needed to make a difference?

To address and improve the issue of poverty, a revolutionary approach is needed. We cannot make meaningful change unless we work together, tying in the intelligence, resources and work that is being done across the city to develop new knowledge and assess what makes the most difference, and why. We need everyone to get on board– children, young people, families, communities, schools, academies, education settings, private sectors, third sectors, public sectors, universities, faith groups, not for profit organisations & any other partners.

Our ambitions

- **We will be innovative, together, to break down the barriers and stigma that poverty creates.**
- **We will be brave, together, to revolutionise the way that Leeds works with children, young people and families who live in poverty.**
- **We will fight together to ensure that every child and young person who experiences poverty can thrive.**
- **We will work together to tackle inequality across services and organisations, to find meaningful solutions for those experiencing poverty.**

What is the Leeds approach?

The Best City Ambition is our overall vision for the future of Leeds. At its heart is our mission to tackle poverty and inequality and improve quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home. Central to achieving this is focusing on improving outcomes across the 3 pillars of the Best City Ambition – Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Zero Carbon. These capture the things that will make the biggest difference to improving peoples lives in Leeds and recognise both the city's achievements and its remaining challenges around poverty and inequalities.

The Children & Young Peoples Plan has tackling the impact of child poverty at the heart of the strategy with the vision for Leeds to be the best city in the UK and the best city for children and young people to grow up in; as well as a Child Friendly city. It aims to improve outcomes for all our children whilst recognising the need for outcomes to improve faster for children and young people from vulnerable and deprived backgrounds.

This Child Poverty Strategy and the governance of the Child Poverty Impact Board are in place to support these strategies and focus on agreed priorities that mitigate the impact of poverty on children and young people in Leeds.

We are creating inclusive, equal partnerships who use their knowledge and expertise to investigate the impact of poverty on a specific area of children's lives, and then work together to create projects that mitigate this impact.

These partnerships incorporate research-based intelligence with policies and projects to assess the most effective low cost, high impact solutions to improving the lives of children and young people in poverty.

The revision of this strategy involved extensive consultation with over 20 groups of young people across Leeds in summer 2023, with the aim of using the voice of children and young people to shed light on the true experience of children in poverty and ensure we are developing effective and meaningful strategies to tackle poverty in our city.

The Child Friendly Leeds 12 Wishes

Through consultations with over 80,000 children and young people over 3 years, we have developed the Child Friendly Leeds 12 Wishes (Child Friendly Leeds 12 Wishes). These wishes summarise what children and young think would make Leeds a better city to grow up in and form the basis of our children and young people’s strategy at Leeds City Council.

Wish 8 states the following:

“Leeds is a city that reduces the impact of poverty and helps families who need it. Children, young people and families experiencing the impact of poverty feel they are supported and receive the help they need. They have their basic rights and needs met.”

The CFL 12 Wishes - and Wish 8 in particular - are central considerations in the child poverty strategy and present to us a clear obligation to address the impact of poverty on children and young people in Leeds.



What does our work look like?

There are two parts to our work: The Child Poverty Impact Board, which is a city-wide governance board that applies robust measures and targets to reduce the negative impact of child poverty, and seven Impact Workstreams. The workstreams focus on improving a specific area of young people's lives that is affected by poverty. Each workstream has a number of priorities that report to the Child Poverty Impact Board, with project plans and impact assessments and forward plans.

Threaded through each workstream will be the voice of the child and the feedback from our recent consultation that has been included below. This includes addressing the stigma of poverty, improving access to food and other basic needs and increasing our communication around available services.



What are the aims of these workstreams?

Removing Barriers to Learning

We want to support schools and settings to ensure that CYP who live in poverty can access learning and improve their educational experiences and outcomes.

Green Spaces and Play

We want to improve access to green spaces and opportunities to play in priority wards by cultivating the time, space and attitudes needed for children's play improving the quality of existing green spaces, and making streets safe, playful spaces for people to connect.

Best Start for Health & Wellbeing

We want every baby in Leeds from conception to age two to have the best start in life, with a focus on families living in the most deprived areas to ensure equitable outcomes for all.

Transitions & Employment

All young people have access to a wide range of work experience, employment and volunteering opportunities.

Financial Health & Inclusion

We want every family to be equipped with the support, guidance and opportunities needed to live financially secure lives.

Family Help

We want to ensure that children, young people and families experiencing poverty are able to access help and support without stigma or prejudice.

Housing & Provision

We want to support every family and young person living in social housing in Leeds to achieve a sustainable tenancy.

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Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being or has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Children & Families	Service area: children and families
Lead person: Julie Devonald	Contact number: 01133786922

1. Title:
Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

 Service / Function

 Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The Child Poverty strategy has been created based on consultation from a wide range of partners. The main report reflects upon the barriers faced by children who live in poverty and looks at how council directorates and a large range of partners can do more for children living in poverty in Leeds. The content of the strategy is being screened to ensure that there are no negative impacts on equality, diversity, cohesion or integration. Executive board requested oversight of monitoring the impact of the actions taken under each priority workstream in the strategy. This will include qualitative and quantitative information reported once a year.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies and policies, service and functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater or lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Also those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being.

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		x
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	x	
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?	x	
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment • Advancing equality of opportunity • Fostering good relations 	x	

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

- **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?** (think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

The Child Poverty Strategy has been developed in consultation with a wide range of partners – including a recent consultation with young people in Summer 2023. Placing prominence on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is key to this work, as it aims to improve the lives of those who experience poverty. A key stakeholder in our work is children and we have ensured that the voices and experiences of children living in Leeds is at the forefront of our strategy. Children and young people will be consulted as we understand the impact of mitigating poverty – the most recent being Summer 2023.

There is a focus on Equality and Diversity & Cohesion and Integration throughout our strategy and this will be highlighted as we report on the impact and outcomes. The Equality and Diversity & Cohesion and Integration section within this report highlights that equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout the work in developing the strategy. We have recognised that disadvantaged children are not a single group; characteristics such as Special Education Need and Disability (SEND), ethnicity and EAL (English as an Additional Language) interact with disadvantage with varying impacts on progress rates, gaps with non-disadvantaged pupils and the long term impact of disadvantage.

Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010.

- **Key findings** (think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

The Child Poverty strategy is focused upon mitigating the impact of experiencing poverty, which has provided the opportunity for partnerships to form between external and internal partners. We recognise the variations in the complexity and breadth of the impacts of poverty and are therefore addressing the impacts of experiencing poverty from a multi-organisational approach, which is based upon inclusive and equal partnerships. The strategy incorporates the formation of strong relationships between children and young people, council directorates, schools, education provisions, academics, third sector, private sector, public sectors, and community representatives to work together on policies and activities which are low cost but provide high impact solutions to improving the lives of children and young people in poverty.

Through this strategy, different partners across the city will work together to share their understanding, knowledge, resources and good practice to help tackle the impact of poverty on children and young people. We want to improve the opportunities and enable better outcomes for children and young people by collectively combatting the challenges that they face. The work will be overseen by the Child Poverty Impact Board, who will analyse key findings and promote these across the city, We will report on the impact the strategy has on the lives of children and young people in the city which has been brought into focus during and post the Covid19 pandemic.

- **Actions**

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)

- We will maintain and continue to develop the work that is already being done to combat child poverty in Leeds
- We will continue to work in partnerships with children, young people, their families and internal and external partners, to ensure our strategy is shaped by the people who are living in poverty and by the partners who are working first-hand with these individuals
- We will also be working in close partnerships with third sector and private sector groups to provide further support to disadvantaged individuals and to collaborate with these partners to see what more can be done to help those living in poverty
- We will continue to monitor the data and trends on poverty in Leeds to ensure that the work we are doing is still effective and targeting the right areas across the region
- We will assess the success of the work being done by the workstreams to ensure that each workstream is producing tangible outcomes and working towards the broader ambition of reducing the impacts of poverty on children. We will also seek to understand the qualitative impact on the lives of children through their lived experience.

The strategic board will assess the learnings of the impact workstreams and promote positive improvements both locally and nationally

5. If you are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you will need to carry out an impact assessment.

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	
Date to complete your impact assessment	
Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

Name	Job title	Date
Julie Devonald	Head of Service Workforce Development and Change	June 2024
Date screening completed		June 2024

7. Publishing

Though **all** key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council **only** publishes those related to **Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions** or a **Significant Operational Decision**.

A copy of this equality screening should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:

- Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council.
- The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions.
- A copy of all other equality screenings that are not to be published should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk for record.

Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached screening was sent:

For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to Governance Services	Date sent:
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk	Date sent:

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Working Group Summary - Children's Transport Policy: Proposed changes to transport assistance for post-16 learners with SEND

Date: 9 October 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

On the 19 June 2024, the Council's Executive Board approved a 4 week public consultation on a range of proposals for post-16 SEND transport assistance. This took place from 24th June – 21st July 2024 and set out four options for possible change.

In order to give the Scrutiny Board the opportunity to comment on and consider the proposed changes it was agreed that a working group would be formed on 24 September 2024 to consider the proposals for change and to take account of feedback from the consultation process to inform the views of the Board and assist in developing any recommendations the Board may wish to make to decision makers. The final proposals are due to be considered at Executive Board at its meeting on 16 October 2024.

Whilst it is recognised that providing transport assistance to Post 16 learners with SEND is an important and valued service, the assistance that is provided by the Council is discretionary with the responsibility for home to school transport falling on parents for this cohort of young people. In the context of rising demand, with recent analysis showing the number of post-16 SEND students in receipt of such support having doubled since 2015, the current arrangements are considered to be financially unsustainable as well as being restrictive and limiting for families who have transport arrangements decided for them.

Appendix 1 to this report provides a summary of the Working Group and the key issues raised during the meeting for approval at today's board meeting. Members should note that due to publication deadlines and the confidential nature of information considered at the working group, Appendix 1 will be provided as supplementary information on Tuesday 8 October following publication of the Executive Board agenda pack.

Recommendations

Children and Families Scrutiny Board is asked to:

- a) Note and approve the summary note of the Working Group into the proposed changes to transport assistance for post-16 learners with SEND held on 24 September 2024.

What is this report about?

- 1 Local authorities are currently facing significant financial pressures and an increasing number of councils are reporting ongoing pressures in the current financial year and considerable estimated budget gaps in future financial years which provide a challenge to financial sustainability.
- 2 In the last financial year (2023/24), the Council's outturn position for the General Fund was a balanced budget. However, this was achieved through the use of reserves to meet the legal obligation to have a balanced budget at the end of the financial year. The Children and Families directorate budget had an overspend of £38.129m at the end of the 2023/24 financial year which was principally driven by pressures within external residential placement costs in Children Looked After Budgets but was also impacted by an overspend of £5.147m in transport costs.
- 3 The pressure within transport budgets is driven by demand with unit costs per young person now at their lowest level in recent years at £5,937. There are currently 3506 (March 2024) children and young people accessing transport support which has surpassed the forecasted end of year figure of 3380 (a forecasted increase of 6%). In school-year applications have increased by 18% year on year, and an overall 15% year on year forecast is now anticipated. There has also been a 25% increase in transport awards with a passenger assistant due to a significant increase in complex behavioural and/or medical issues.
- 4 These pressures from the last financial year have continued into 2024/25 with the latest financial health monitoring report considered at Executive Board on 18 September showing a Children and Families directorate projected overspend at £18.847m with transport accounting for £3.749m of that pressure.
- 5 In addition to the financial context the policy proposals also reflect a desire from the authority to encourage and empower more families and young people to find their own lasting transport solutions as an alternative to the council doing it for them. This approach is highlighted by recent expansion of the Independent Travel Training (ITT) programme.
- 6 Any changes would be implemented for young people newly entering post-16 education in September 2025 and onwards with the final decision on any changes expected to be taken at Executive Board on 16 October 2024.
- 7 This report provides an update to the full Board meeting on the Working Group meeting, in line with scrutiny board procedure rules which state that '*A summary of issues considered by a Working group must be considered by a Scrutiny Board prior to recommendations being made.*' In this case this is being done at the earliest opportunity.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 8 The Council's Vision for Scrutiny contained in Article 6 of the Constitution sets out the nationally agreed four principles of good scrutiny. Within these are a commitment to promote scrutiny as a means to ensure the voice and concerns of the public can be heard and to improve public services by ensuring that reviews of policy and service performance are focused. Consideration of this issue in a focussed working group considering views from Leeds residents addresses both of those points.
- 9 It is hoped that this working group will facilitate scrutiny board input into the Post 16 SEND Transport proposals.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth
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Zero Carbon

10 The terms of reference of Scrutiny Boards in Leeds promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the priorities of the Best City Ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

11 The Working Group specifically considered feedback from Leeds residents on the proposed changes to transport assistance for post-16 learners with SEND. This feedback was provided with the intention of informing the views of the Board.

12 The Working Group proposal was developed in consultation with the Chair, Board and senior officers in the Children and Families directorate.

What are the resource implications?

13 The Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council, recognises that like all other Council services, resources to support the Scrutiny function are under considerable pressure and that requests from Scrutiny Boards cannot always be met. Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:

- a) Seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources;
- b) Avoid duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue;
- c) Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

14 There are no specific risk implications associated with this report.

What are the legal implications?

15 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Working Group Summary - Children’s Transport Policy: Proposed changes to transport assistance for post-16 learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – To follow as supplementary information on 8 October 2024.

Background papers

- None

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Work Programme

Date: 9 October 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

- All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work programme for the municipal year. In doing so, the work programme should not be considered as fixed and rigid, it should be recognised as a document that can be adapted and changed to reflect any new and emerging issues throughout the year; and also reflect any timetable issues that might occur from time to time.
- The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules also state that, where appropriate, all terms of reference for work undertaken by Scrutiny Boards will include 'to review how and to what effect consideration has been given to the impact of a service or policy on all equality areas, as set out in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.'
- Reflecting on the information in this report, members are requested to consider and discuss the Board's work programme for this municipal year.

Recommendations

Members are requested to consider the Board's work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

What is this report about?

1. A draft work programme for the Children and Families Scrutiny Board is presented at Appendix 1 for consideration and discussion. Reflected in the document are known items of scrutiny activity, such as performance and budget monitoring, as well as other areas of work identified by the Board at its meeting held on 10 June 2024.
2. The latest Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 18 September 2024 are also attached as Appendix 2. The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider and note the Executive Board minutes, insofar as they relate to the remit of the Scrutiny Board; and consider any matter where specific scrutiny activity may also be warranted.
3. In terms of changes to the work programme since the Board's last meeting on 4 September, members will note that today's agenda has been adjusted with items on the Leeds Child Poverty Strategy and the Working group summary on Post 16 SEND Transport added.
4. There have been further changes for the meetings in March and April reflecting discussion at Board meetings so far in the 2024/25 municipal year. This includes further update on the impact of asylum changes on children and young people in Leeds and a progress review on the EHCP work undertaken by the Board in the last municipal year.
5. Previous discussion on bringing an item on Youth Services is also reflected through a possible working group in February.
6. Members should note that a working group has been scheduled on the 16 December at 1.30PM to consider the proposed budget for 2025/26 in line with the annual approach to the budget undertaken by all scrutiny boards.

What impact will this proposal have?

7. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work programme for the municipal year.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

8. The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the Best City Ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

9. To enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, it is recognised that each Scrutiny Board needs to maintain dialogue with the Directors and Executive Board Members holding the relevant portfolios. The Vision for Scrutiny also states that Scrutiny Boards should seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources prior to agreeing items of work.

What are the resource implications?

10. Experience has shown that the Scrutiny process is more effective and adds greater value if the Board seeks to minimise the number of substantial inquiries running at one time and focus its resources on one key issue at a time.
11. The Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council also recognises that like all other Council functions, resources to support the Scrutiny function are under considerable pressure and that requests from Scrutiny Boards cannot always be met.
12. Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:
 - Seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources;
 - Avoid duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue;
 - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

13. There are no risk management implications relevant to this report.

What are the legal implications?

14. This report has no specific legal implications.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft work programme of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board for the 2024/25 municipal year.
- Appendix 2 – Minutes of the Executive Board meeting on 18 September 2024.

Background papers

- None

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Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2024/25 Municipal Year

June	July	August
Meeting Agenda for 10 June 2024 at 10.30 am	Meeting Agenda for 18 July 2024 at 2.00 pm	No Scrutiny Board meeting
Co-opted Members (DB)	Changes to Funding for Inclusion (PSR)	
Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference (DB)	CLA Sufficiency Strategy (PSR)	
Potential Sources of Work (DB)	Annual Standards Report (PDS)	
Performance Update (PM)	SACRE Annual Report (PM)	
Youth Justice Plan (PDS)		
Youth Vaping Update (PSR)		
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

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Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2024/25 Municipal Year

September	October	November
Meeting Agenda for 4 September 2024 at 10.00 am	Meeting Agenda for 9 October 2024 at 10.00 am	Meeting Agenda for 11 November 2024 at 1.30 pm
Impact of Asylum Changes on Children and Young People in Leeds (PSR) EHCP and SEND Services Review – Update (PDS) Joint Targeted Area Inspection on Serious Youth Violence - Action Plan (PM)	Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Update (PSR) Early Help Themed Approach – School Attendance (PDS) Youth Poverty Strategy (PSR) Post 16 Transport Review – Working Group Summary (PDS)	The Leeds 3As Strategy (PDS) Little Owls Nurseries Review (PSR) Work Experience Accessibility (PM)
Working Group Meetings		
24 September 2024 @ 1.30PM – Post 16 Transport Review 25 September 2024 @ 4.30PM – Budget Working Group		

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2024/25 Municipal Year

December	January	February
No Scrutiny Board meeting.	Meeting Agenda for 29 January 2025 at 10.00 am	No Scrutiny Board meeting.
	Performance report (PM) 2025/26 Initial Budget Proposals & Financial Health Monitoring 2024/25 (PDS/PSR) Youth Vaping Update (PSR) Further Education (PSR)	
Working Group Meetings		
2025/26 Initial Budget Proposals 2025/26 Remote Working Group – 16 December @ 1.30PM		Youth Services Working Group - TBC
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2024/25 Municipal Year

March	April	May
Meeting Agenda for 19 March 2025 at 10.00 am	Meeting Agenda for 28 April 2025 at 1.30 pm	No Scrutiny Board meeting
Early Years and Best Start Programme (PM) School Support Staff Overview (PSR) EHCP and SEND Services Review – Update (PDS) The independent review of children’s social care (Macalister Review) – Implementation Update (PM)	Children and Families Scrutiny Board End of Year Summary Statement (DB) Annual Standards Report (PDS) Impact of Asylum Changes on Children and Young People in Leeds – Update (PSR)	
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring

EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor J Lewis in the Chair

Councillors S Arif, D Coupar, M Harland,
H Hayden, A Lamb, J Lennox, J Pryor,
M Rafique and F Venner

34 Chair's Opening Remarks

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair highlighted that this was the first Executive Board meeting since Mariana Pexton's recent appointment as the Council's Interim Chief Executive and welcomed Mariana in her new role.

Also, the Chair noted that this would be the final Executive Board meeting attended by Martin Farrington, the Director of City Development, prior to his retirement. The Chair paid tribute to Martin for his efforts and achievements throughout his time at Leeds City Council.

35 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no information contained within the agenda which was designated as being exempt from publication.

36 Late Items

There were no late items of business submitted to the Board for consideration.

37 Declaration of Interests

Regarding the report entitled, 'Leeds City Council's Response to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Mass Rapid Transit Public Consultation', Councillors Lamb and Lewis, in the interests of transparency, both respectively drew the Board's attention to their positions on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Board. However, both Members confirmed that it did not preclude them from taking part in the discussion at today's meeting in their capacity as Executive Board Members (Agenda Item 18, Minute No. 51 refers).

38 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

COMMUNITIES, CUSTOMER SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

39 Safer Leeds Annual Update

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report presenting the annual update from the Safer Leeds Community Safety Partnership, which in Leeds is the Safer Leeds Executive. The report highlighted the progress which had been made over the past 12 months on

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 16th October, 2024

the key deliverable actions arising from the 9 priority areas as included within the Safer, Stronger Communities: Leeds Plan 2021 – 2024.

The Board welcomed Chief Inspector Jonathan McNiff, West Yorkshire Police to the meeting, who was in attendance for the consideration of this item.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member highlighted the progress being made together with the developments in relation to the key priority areas. Emphasis was also placed upon the leading role played by the Safer Leeds Executive in the partnership working undertaken in this area. The Executive Member highlighted how this report should be considered alongside the respective Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board and Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership annual reports on today's agenda, given the significant partnership work being undertaken across those bodies.

The Executive Member thanked all Council officers involved in this service area, partner organisations for the key role they played and also Councillor D Coupar for her leadership throughout her time as Executive Member with responsibility for community safety.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, an update was provided on the work being undertaken following the disorder experienced in Harehills on 18th July 2024. Emphasis was placed on the significant short, medium and long term actions being taken to support the Roma community together with the wider community of Harehills. The ongoing citywide approach being taken towards the promotion of community cohesion was also highlighted. The key role played by local Ward Councillors, Council staff and partner organisations both on the evening of the disorder and following that was highlighted, with thanks being extended to all of those parties for their continued efforts in this area. Further to this, Councillor S Arif highlighted the positive relationship established between the Council and the Romanian consulate. In conclusion, it was noted that the Council would work with West Yorkshire Police on a formal debrief of the incident, with any findings being shared appropriately.

In response to a Member's enquiry, an update was provided on the effectiveness of the community safety policies and procedures in place in Leeds. Emphasis was placed on the need to strike the correct balance between improving residents' confidence in services in order to encourage them to report issues when they are experienced, whilst at the same time working to reduce the prevalence of incidents taking place. The work of the performance and analytical team was highlighted, which produced the relevant data sets that sat behind the policies. It was highlighted that such data had illustrated that the procedures in place were effective. It was undertaken that further detail could be provided separately to the Member in question through Council officers, the Executive Member and Chief Inspector McNiff.

Chief Inspector McNiff and Councillor Coupar reiterated the strong partnership working regarding community safety which was established in Leeds.

In response to a Member's enquiry, further detail was provided on the scrutiny of the Mayoral Policing function. It was noted that the Council worked closely with the Mayor's office, with there being an effective and strong working relationship in place, and whilst there were challenges, these were no different to other partnerships of this nature. Specific examples of effective partnership working in this area were provided. It was undertaken that if the Member in question had any specific enquiries on such matters, then these could be responded to in more detail separately.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the submitted Safer Leeds annual update report, together with the full overview document, as presented at Appendix 1, be noted.

40 Leeds Community Safety Strategy 2024-2027

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report presenting the proposed Leeds Community Safety Strategy for the period 2024-2027. The report highlighted how the strategy would provide strategic direction for the Leeds Community Safety Partnership (CSP), which in Leeds is the Safer Leeds Executive. The report sought the Board's endorsement of the Strategy with the recommendation that it is referred to Full Council for approval and formal adoption as part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

The Board welcomed Chief Inspector Jonathan McNiff, West Yorkshire Police to the meeting, who was in attendance for the consideration of this item.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member highlighted that the proposed strategy would replace the Safer, Stronger Communities: Leeds Plan (2021-24) and that it had been informed by strategic intelligence assessment and through a wide-ranging consultation exercise. An overview of the strategy's key priorities was provided. It was also noted that Leeds had been awarded £600,000 from the Government's Community Recovery Fund.

Members were supportive of the proposed strategy.

The Executive Member and the Chief Officer (Safer, Stronger Communities) extended their thanks to all involved in the compilation of the strategy and the associated consultation exercise.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Leeds Community Safety Strategy 2024-2027, as presented at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be endorsed, with the Board's agreement that this Strategy be referred to Full Council with a recommendation that it be formally adopted;
- (b) That it be noted that the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment will lead and implement the Strategy, which will supersede the Leeds Community Strategy 2021 – 2024;

- (c) That it be noted that this Strategy forms part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework and therefore the above resolutions are not eligible for Call In.

(As indicated in resolution (c) above, given that the above decisions were being made in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, they were not eligible for Call In)

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, ACTIVE LIFESTYLES AND CULTURE

41 Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board - Annual report 2023/24

The Director of Adults and Health submitted a report presenting the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) annual report for 2023/24 together with the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board's Strategic Plan. The annual report provided an update on the work of the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board, the steps taken to implement the Board's strategy, together with an outline of the findings of any Safeguarding Adults Reviews held during 2023/24.

In presenting the report the Executive Member advised that whilst the Independent Chair of the LSAB, Richard Jones CBE, could not be present at the meeting, it was noted that two key themes that he would have raised were the collaborative working which had taken place to embed safeguarding across partner organisations, and also the invaluable work of the city's frontline staff in this area.

The Executive Member provided an overview of the Board's key ambitions, with the range of actions being taken around the citizen led approach towards safeguarding being specifically highlighted. The Independent Chair of the Board, together with all of the Board Members were thanked for their role in this important area.

The importance of the LSAB Strategic Plan (April 2023 – March 2026), which was also appended to the report, was highlighted. It was noted that the strategic plan presented all related objectives and actions that respective agencies were contributing to.

Responding to a Member's specific request, it was undertaken that periodic meetings would be arranged between that Member and the Independent Chair.

In response to a Member's enquiry, the Board was provided with further detail regarding the statistic that 32% of safeguarding concerns arose from care home settings, with information being provided on the sources of those concerns, together with the actions which were being taken to address such matters and to ensure that people were being cared for in the most appropriate way. It was also noted that it was common for care home settings to have a higher number of referrals. An update was also provided on the work being undertaken with the whole range of care providers in Leeds, including home care providers, in relation to the reporting of safeguarding concerns.

Also in response to a Member's enquiry, the Board received an update on the work which continued to be undertaken to review data around referral levels of safeguarding concerns. It was identified that there were lower levels of referrals experienced in certain geographical areas with ethnically diverse communities. The range of work being undertaken as a result to increase awareness and share information across all communities was noted.

In conclusion, the Chair extended his thanks to Richard Jones CBE, Independent Chair of the LSAB, together with the other Board Members for the role they played in this important area.

RESOLVED – That the contents and recommendations of the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2023/24, as submitted to the Board, be noted.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

42 Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership - Annual Report 2023/24

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report presenting the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for 2023/24. The report outlined the activity that had taken place during the year in relation to the Safeguarding Partners' statutory duties to work together in exercising their functions of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Included within the update were details regarding developments in practice, and the progress made in relation to priorities, learning, scrutiny, inspections and statutory responsibilities.

The Board welcomed David Derbyshire (Independent Scrutineer), Gill Marchant (Head of Safeguarding/Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Adults, NHS) and Superintendent Dan Wood (West Yorkshire Police) to the meeting for the consideration of this item.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member highlighted how the LSCP annual report provided an overview of the city's arrangements for safeguarding children during 2023/24. It was noted that such arrangements had been reviewed over the past year, a process supported by the new Independent Scrutineer, David Derbyshire. The positive outcomes from the recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) into serious youth violence were highlighted, including the strong multi-agency relationships of the LSCP partners.

The Director of Children and Families highlighted that the submission of the annual report was in line with the reporting requirements as set out in the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 statutory guidance. It was also noted that the report provided an update on the progress made against the agreed priorities during 2023/24 and also on the work undertaken to review safeguarding arrangements to ensure that they were in line with statutory guidance. The commitment to continued improvement in this area was reiterated.

Thanks was extended to all those involved in the crucial work of safeguarding children throughout the city, including frontline practitioners and their managers.

David Derbyshire, Independent Scrutineer, addressed the Board, providing an overview of his experiences since taking up this role nearly one year ago and highlighting the key points arising from his statement as included within the LSCP annual report.

A Member highlighted the progress which had been over the past year, the work which had been undertaken and the positive way in which challenges had been responded to.

Responding to an enquiry regarding unregulated care homes in Leeds, it was undertaken that the Director would meet with the Member in question on this issue to provide further detail. However, assurance was provided that the Council did work closely with Ofsted on such matters.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the work undertaken to further strengthen the safeguarding children arrangements in Leeds, as set out within the submitted report, be endorsed;
- (b) That the Board provide its continued support for the city's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children and young people.

43 Youth Justice Service Plan - 2024-2027

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report presenting the refreshed Leeds Youth Justice Service Plan for the period 2024-27 and provided an update on the work undertaken and progress made in respect of the previous plan which covered 2021-24. The report sought the Board's endorsement of the plan with the recommendation that it is referred to Full Council in November 2024 for approval and formal adoption as part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member highlighted that the plan had a strong commitment to a 'child first' principle. The impact of poverty and deepening inequalities were highlighted as key issues, with the report setting out the work being undertaken to address such matters.

Responding to a Member's request, the Director undertook to provide the Member in question with a briefing on the issues covered in the submitted report.

In response to a Member's enquiries regarding the re-offending rates and also first time offender rates presented, further information and context was provided on those statistics, together with details on the range of actions and interventions being taken in this area in order to reduce offending behaviours in children across the city.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Leeds Youth Justice Service Plan, as submitted to the Board, be endorsed, with the Board's agreement that the Plan be referred to Full Council in November 2024 with a recommendation of approval and formal adoption as part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework;
- (b) That it be noted that the responsible officers for the implementation of such matters are the Service Delivery Manager, Leeds Youth Justice Service; and the Head of Service, Children Looked After and Youth Justice Service. That it also be noted that the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board has statutory responsibility to monitor performance, ensuring the delivery of service improvements and the meeting of local priorities.

(Given that the above decisions were being made in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, they were not eligible for Call In)

44 Outcome of consultation on proposals to expand Broomfield South SILC by 100 places, as part of a school rebuild, and the establishment of a permanent satellite site for post-16 provision

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report presenting proposals to expand Broomfield South Special Inclusion Learning Centre (SILC) by 100 places, as part of a school rebuild, and through the establishment of a permanent satellite site for post-16 provision. Specifically, the report provided details of the outcome from the public consultation undertaken and sought the Board's approval to publish a Statutory Notice on the proposals.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member highlighted the key aspects of the proposal. It was noted that whilst the Council had established 450 specialist learning places across the city since 2020, the need for specialist education in Leeds continued to increase.

Members highlighted their support for this proposal.

In response to a Member's enquiry, an update was provided on the arrangements in place regarding associated consultation, and it was confirmed that local Ward Councillors were supportive of the proposals.

Also, responding to an enquiry regarding how the proposals may impact upon post-16 transport costs, it was noted that any impact would be dependent upon where children and young people using the facility lived. However, it was felt that the benefits which would be realised by the new provision would significantly outweigh any potential risks caused by potential increased transport costs in the future. It was thought that in terms of post-16 transport costs, the proposals were likely to be cost neutral.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the outcome of the public consultation undertaken for the proposals, as presented within the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That the publication of a Statutory Notice on the proposals to expand Broomfield South SILC by 100 places, as part of a school rebuild, and establish a permanent satellite site of Broomfield South SILC for post-16 provision at Arlington Business Centre, White Rose, be approved;
- (c) That it be noted that the implementation of the proposals will be subject to the outcome of the proposed Statutory Notice and future decisions by Executive Board;
- (d) That the intention for a further report to be presented to the December 2024 Executive Board meeting detailing the outcome of the Statutory Notice, be noted;
- (e) That it be noted that the implementation of the rebuild and expansion of Broomfield South SILC will be subject to the outcome of further detailed design work and planning applications, as indicated in paragraphs 26- 29 of the submitted report;
- (f) That it be noted that the responsible officer for the implementation of such matters is the Deputy Director for Learning.

45 The Child Poverty Strategy For Leeds

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report which provided an overview of, and a further update on the Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds and the work undertaken as part of the strategy, including the actions being taken in response to ongoing post pandemic and cost of living priorities.

The Executive Member provided an overview of the key aspects within the report, highlighting the consultation work undertaken as part of the refresh process, and noting the Government's establishment of a task force on child poverty and its plans to publish a national Child Poverty Strategy.

Members supported the proposals and the need to focus on the actions to eradicate child poverty in the city.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the refreshed and ongoing strategic framework in place to mitigate the impact of child poverty, and the work being undertaken by the Council and other partners in the key areas of activity, as detailed within the submitted report, be endorsed;
- (b) That the need to promote the work of the Child Poverty Strategy across the city and across Council directorates, and also through our wider city partnerships in order to highlight the impact of poverty on children and their families, be acknowledged;

- (c) That it be noted that the responsible officer for the implementation of such matters is the Deputy Director, Social Care, Children and Families.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

46 Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment 2024

The Director of Strategy and Resources submitted a report presenting the Leeds Joint Strategic (Needs) Assessment (JSA) 2024 report, following Health and Wellbeing Board's consideration of the JSA in July 2024. The report noted that the Council and the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board have an equal and joint statutory requirement to work through the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board to produce a JSA, with the purpose being to assess current and future health and social care needs in Leeds in order to inform the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, shape priorities and guide the use of resources.

The Leader introduced the report, highlighting how the data within the JSA would be used to inform decision making moving forward, with the aim of addressing the challenges which have been identified as part of the process.

The Executive Member for Equality, Health and Wellbeing highlighted how the JSA had been considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board and would be used throughout the Assessment's lifespan, as it allowed the city's health needs and challenges to be clearly identified. As such, it was reiterated that the JSA would be used to inform priorities with the aim of addressing identified challenges and needs. It was noted that the report also provided details of work undertaken across the city to address the policy implications arising from the previous JSA published in 2021.

A Member highlighted the importance of the JSA, the need for it to be integrated into the work of the Council moving forward and the value of Scrutiny Boards considering it. It was noted that Scrutiny Board Strategy and Resources had considered the JSA on 16 September 2024, and that other Scrutiny Board chairs had been in attendance at that Scrutiny Board meeting.

In conclusion, the Board's thanks was extended to all partners who had been involved in the co-production of the JSA.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Joint Strategic (Needs) Assessment 2024 report, as presented at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, including the policy implications drawn from the analysis, be noted;
- (b) That the areas for further exploration and integration into future JSAs, as set out in paragraph 9 of the submitted report, be agreed;
- (c) That the comments made during the Board's discussion on such matters, be noted.

RESOURCES

47 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 - 2029/30

The Chief Officer, Financial Services submitted a report presenting an update on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2025/26 – 2029/30, and which provided details of both the context and the factors that influence the shape of the strategy. The report noted that the intention was to submit budget savings proposals to future Executive Board meetings in advance of the proposed 2025/26 budget being submitted to the Board in December 2024.

The Executive Member introduced the report, highlighting the currently estimated General Fund budget gap which existed over the 5-year period that the Strategy covered, including the budget gap relating to 2025/26. Further details were provided on the context and the associated challenges that the Council faced, including inflationary pressures and also increased demand regarding adult and children's social care. It was noted that the Strategy also covered the Council's Capital Programme, Housing Revenue Account and Dedicated Schools' Grant.

Members discussed the budget gap detailed within the report relating to 2025/26 and the liaison taking place with Government regarding Local Government finances.

Responding to a Member's specific comments regarding the high costs of external residential placements for children looked after, the Board received an update on the current position in Leeds in relation to demographic and demand pressures, with it being highlighted that this continued to be a significant national issue. Further detail was provided on the Council's sufficiency strategy and the work that continued in Leeds to develop in-house residential care provision. It was noted that the Council continued to work closely with Ofsted on such matters. Members also received an update on the recent announcements made by the Government aimed at tackling national issues regarding children's external residential placement provision.

Members noted the actions that continued to be taken to reduce associated pressures where possible and to address the General Fund budget gap detailed with the report. Whilst it was noted that proposals to contribute towards addressing this position would continue to be submitted to Members for consideration, the significant scale of the challenge faced was emphasised. With regard to related proposals being brought forward, it was noted that there was a clear timetable in place for Member engagement and Scrutiny consideration.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2025/26 to 2029/30, as presented in the submitted report and appendices, be noted;

- (b) That it be noted that budget savings proposals will be received at future Executive Board meetings in advance of the Proposed Budget for 2025/26 being received by Executive Board in December 2024.

48 Financial Health Monitoring 2024/25 - July (Month 4)

The Chief Officer Financial Services submitted a report presenting the Council's financial performance against the 2024/25 revenue budget, as at month 4 of the financial year. The report also provided an update on the month 4 position in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) and the Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund.

In presenting the report the Executive Member provided an overview of the key points in which it was noted that as at month 4 of the financial year, the Council was forecasting a General Fund overspend of £22.2m. The key areas of overspend were noted together with the reasons for those. The Executive Member also highlighted the range of mitigating measures being taken to address the overspend.

The scale of the challenge being faced in terms of addressing the General Fund budget gap, as discussed under the previous report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy was reiterated, with it being highlighted that nationally Local Authorities continued to experience similar challenges.

In considering this matter, the Board acknowledged that a number of matters linked to the information within this report had already been discussed as part of the previous agenda item on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That it be noted that at July 2024 (Month 4 of the financial year), the Authority's General Fund revenue budget is reporting an overspend of £22.2m for 2024/25 (3.6% of the approved net revenue budget) after the application of reserves and within a challenging national context. That it also be noted that a range of actions are being taken to address the position as detailed within the submitted report;
- (b) That it be noted that at July 2024 (Month 4 of the financial year) the Authority's Housing Revenue Account is reporting a balanced position;
- (c) That it be noted that known inflationary increases, including demand and demographic pressures in Social Care and known impacts of the rising cost of living have been incorporated into the reported financial position. The position assumes a pay settlement of 3.5%, with the final pay award for 2024/25 yet to be agreed. That it also be noted that these pressures will continue to be reviewed during the year and reported to future Executive Board meetings as more information becomes available, and that proposals would need to be identified to absorb any additional pressures;

- (d) That it be noted that where an overspend is projected, directorates, including the Housing Revenue Account, are required to present action plans to mitigate their reported pressures and those of the Council's wider financial challenge where possible, in line with the Revenue Principles as agreed by Executive Board in February 2024 through the annual Revenue Budget report;
- (e) That it be noted that the reported position reflects that the budgeted contribution to the General Reserve of £3m will be reduced to £1.5m and that the budgeted contribution of £3m to the Strategic Resilience Reserve will not be made in 2024/25, with it also being noted that these planned contributions have been applied to the in-year position to reduce the overspend due to the significant financial pressures that the Council is facing. That it also be noted that provision is made in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for a base budget contribution of £3m to each reserve from 2026/27.

49 Core Business Transformation Programme - Progress Update

The Chief Officer, Financial Services submitted a report which provided an update on the progress of the Core Business Transformation Programme - a programme aimed at transforming and modernising 'back office' services and underpinned by a technology refresh. The update report looked to provide the Board with the latest position and assurance in respect of the programme delivery framework, programme and workstream management and governance arrangements.

The Executive Member presented the report, providing an overview of the programme's objectives and an update on the progress being made. It was highlighted that the programme was not only about introducing new digital solutions, but also about refreshing the Council's approach to become more efficient in its delivery of its core business.

Responding to a Member's specific enquiry regarding the implementation of the Council's new payroll system, the Board received assurance that the delivery of this system was on track and, whilst some contingency had been used, it was also on budget. It was noted that whilst delivery was slightly later than originally planned, this was due to the processes in place to learn from others and also to ensure a robust testing process was completed prior to implementation, given the significance of introducing such a critical system. It was also highlighted that this matter had been considered by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and is scheduled to be considered by the relevant Scrutiny Board also.

The Member in question was offered a further briefing on such matters, if required.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the submitted report, together with the details provided in the progress report as presented at Appendix 1, be noted, with it also being noted that a further update will be provided in 6 months.

50 **Recognition of Inspirational Women**

The Director of Strategy and Resources submitted a report which sought approval for the installation of panels within the Civic Hall Council Chamber commemorating six inspirational women from the city's past. The report outlined the outcomes from the consultation undertaken on this proposal and also recommended that consideration be given to how more women could be recognised in the future, and that moving forward such recognition be increasingly reflective of the city's diversity.

The names proposed to be initially installed on the plaques in order to recognise their contributions to the city were:

- The Barnbow Lasses;
- Leonora Cohen OBE;
- Gertrude Paul;
- Alice Bacon CBE;
- Beryl Burton OBE; and
- Ivy Benson.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member thanked all Members of Council for the cross-party support for, and engagement in the development of the proposals. Thanks was also extended to all officers involved, with specific reference to Tom Riordan, outgoing Chief Executive, for their roles in this initiative.

The importance of recognising the inspirational women of Leeds in this way was highlighted, together with the overwhelmingly positive response to the public consultation which had been received. The Board confirmed its support for the proposals and welcomed that further work would be undertaken on a cross-party basis so that the role of more inspirational women could be recognised moving forward, in order to further reflect the diversity of the city, and which it was hoped would prove to be inspirational to future generations.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the results of the consultation undertaken, as detailed within the submitted report and appendix 1, be noted;
- (b) That the proposals within the submitted report for plaques to be installed within the Civic Hall Council Chamber, be approved, subject to listed planning consent being received;
- (c) That the proposals within the submitted report for further work to be undertaken in order to recognise further inspirational women in future years, be approved, with approval also being given for this recognition to be increasingly reflective of the diverse nature of the city.

ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

51 Leeds City Council's Response to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Mass Rapid Transit Public Consultation

The Director of City Development submitted a report providing an update on the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) proposals for West Yorkshire and which sought the Board's endorsement of the Council's proposed response to the consultation exercise being undertaken by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) on the proposed routes for phase one of the MRT scheme.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member highlighted the Council's support for WYCA's plans to bring mass transit to West Yorkshire and provided an overview of the proposals set out in the report together with details of the Council's proposed response to the consultation.

The significant importance of introducing mass transit to the city was emphasised, together with the with economic impact and associated opportunities in areas such as housing growth it would generate.

In supporting the development of an MRT network, a Member highlighted that whilst the lines initially established as part of this scheme would not run directly through all areas, there was a need to ensure that the wider benefits arising from the establishment of an MRT system were effectively communicated to all communities in Leeds and West Yorkshire. The Member then suggested that this aspect be included within any response provided to WYCA.

Responding to the comments made, Members discussed the approach being taken by WYCA on the current public consultation exercise. Further to this, the following was highlighted:-

- that the proposals currently being consulted upon were seen as the beginning of an MRT network for West Yorkshire and not the end;
- in respect of mass transit, it was acknowledged that West Yorkshire had a lot of progress to make when compared with other areas of the country;
- that the establishment of an MRT network would be alongside other initiatives, such as the delivery of bus franchising in West Yorkshire;
- in terms of public engagement, in addition to WYCA's public consultation on MRT, the Board's attention was drawn to the consultation exercise being undertaken on the Local Transport Plan which was wider in scope.

In response to a concern raised regarding the capacity of WYCA in delivering this initiative alongside other ongoing projects, it was highlighted that the Council, through the Highways and Transportation team was providing its full support to WYCA on this matter.

Responding to a Member's specific enquiry, it was undertaken that the Member in question would receive further information outside of the meeting

on the current position regarding the White Rose Railway Station, Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway and Thorpe Park Railway Station.

In conclusion, the Chair acknowledged the comments which had been made during the discussion.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Council's overall support for the proposals as outlined within the submitted report, be noted, with it being recognised that this is early consultation. That the key points in the submitted report regarding areas where the Council will need greater clarity as the MRT scheme is developed, be noted;
- (b) That Leeds City Council's preference of route option L1 via Calverley Street and Infirmary Street and L6 via Elland Road, Elland Road Stadium and Ring Road Beeston in the Leeds Line corridor, be endorsed;
- (c) That the Leeds City Council response that further discussions are required with WYCA in respect of the route options on the Bradford Line in order for Leeds City Council to state a preference, be endorsed;
- (d) That Leeds City Council's broad support of the Sustainability and Placemaking strategies, be endorsed, whilst noting that further discussion is required with WYCA to develop the detail, and how it will be implemented through the design;
- (e) That the response to WYCA's public consultation on the MRT scheme (being undertaken by WYCA in its role as sole promoter), which is presented at Appendix A to the submitted report, be endorsed.

CLIMATE, ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACES

52 Leeds Food Strategy - Report on Progress

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report providing an update on the delivery of the Leeds Food Strategy, which was a long-term vision for the sustained provision of healthy and affordable food in the city. Through the strategy delivery plan, the report drew Members' attention to several key areas, with the report also seeking the Board's approval of the governance, delivery and key performance indicators relating to the strategy, together with amendments to both the objectives and action plan.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member provided an overview of the key elements within the strategy and the key actions being delivered, highlighting how the strategy closely aligned with the three strategic pillars of the Best City Ambition. The cross-directorate approach being taken in this area, together with the partnership working with the third sector was noted.

Responding to a Member's comments about the resource implications arising from the strategy and whether the aims and outcomes could be achieved in a more efficient way, it was clarified that there were no additional costs to the Council arising from delivering the strategy. It was also noted that the aim was to deliver outcomes through existing Council services and external organisations and helping them to work more collaboratively and towards the strategy's objectives. The importance of promoting the strategy's aims within communities was also highlighted.

In response to a further enquiry about how outcomes would be measured, one specific example was given regarding the routine data which was now received around the proportion of adults reporting to eat 5 fruit or vegetables a day.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the governance, delivery and key performance indicators of the Leeds Food Strategy, as detailed within the submitted report and appendices, be approved;
- (b) That the progress made against the actions in the strategy, as presented in the submitted report / appendices be noted, and that the amendments to both the objectives and action plan, as detailed, be approved.

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**LAST DATE FOR CALL IN
OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS:** 5.00PM, FRIDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER 2024