



Report to: C&F Scrutiny Board

Report from: LSCP Executive

Title of report: Actions From C&F Scrutiny Board

Date: 4th October 2023

1.0 Purpose of report

On 8th of March 2023, the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Executive attended a meeting of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board.

The purpose of this meeting was to provide an update of the review undertaken by the LSCP Executive on the notification process in relation to Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents (SCSI)

The LCC Scrutiny Committee have requested that the LSCP Executive attend a meeting on the 4th of October 2023 to update them on progress on the seven actions contained within the minutes of that meeting.

2.0 7 Actions from the minutes

1) The findings from the LSCP Executive's twelve-month review of its revised notification processes, which will be undertaken in July 2023.

The previous Independent Chair, who initiated the review of the notification process has expressed their assurance to the LSCP Executive that the new system for notification and decision making is now robust. A formal review of the notification process has not yet been undertaken however, this has not precluded robust, open, and transparent discussion amongst partners that has enhanced the process and relationships between LSCP partners. The LSCP have now recruited a new Independent Scrutineer whose role it will be to examine the LSCP arrangements and provide rigorous challenge of the safeguarding system. This will provide an opportunity for the Independent Scrutineer to formally review the notification process from their independent perspective.

The development and continual monitoring of the LSCP notification process has ensured that agencies represented on the LSCP know how and when to report to the LSCP Review Advisory Group (RAG) any case which may meet the threshold for notification to National Panel.

The threshold for notification can be found in Chapter 4 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. All cases which may meet this threshold are notified to the LSCP Business Unit, Independent Chair, and the RAG.

A Partnership Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Notification Form (Appendix 2) was developed to allow all partner agencies to refer cases to the RAG which may meet the criteria for notification in a consistent way. The form, which is submitted to the LSCP Business Unit or a RAG member, ensures that cases which are raised are done so in line with the notification criteria and that partners can provide their rationale for referral. The form allows identification that the referral has been undertaken in discussion and agreement with the referrer's agency safeguarding lead (or RAG representative where applicable).



Since April 2023, this form has been used to refer three cases to RAG. Two cases were notified to the National Panel and a rapid review was initiated and the third case, after further investigation, was found to be an accidental injury. The RAG reached a unanimous decision on all cases that were considered and have expressed full confidence in this process.

Furthermore, the LSCP Independent Chair provides independent scrutiny within both the RAG and the LSCP Executive where the decision to notify, or not, are considered. The LSCP Legal representative also provides legal advice on these decisions.

Further examples of where serious child safeguarding incidents may also be identified and referred for further consideration by the RAG are:

- Multi-agency strategy discussions: Children's Social Work Services are duty bound to hold a strategy discussion whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm whether or not a criminal offence against a child has been committed. A strategy meeting/discussion is an opportunity to share information between agencies and to consider if a case should be referred to RAG.
- Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Childhood (SUDIC) which must be undertaken within 7 days of a child death. This multi-agency meeting follows the unexpected death of any child. The LSCP Manager attends these meetings to consider if a death may need to be referred to the RAG.
- The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP): another statutory function under Working together to Safeguarding Children 2018, this is an opportunity to apply further scrutiny on the deaths of all children in Leeds, how agencies worked together and whether a case should be retrospectively referred to the RAG for further consideration.

2) Progress on the work being undertaken around practitioner escalation and resolution of concerns.

The Concerns Resolution Process (CRP) found [here](#) provides practitioners with a step by step process on why, when and how to use it. The CRP is also reiterated through our LSCP Pt 1 and Pt 2 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' training and our LSCP refresher training. This training is accessed annually by over 2500 practitioners across Leeds. The CRP is also promoted through our LSCP Bulletins which have over three thousand subscribers.

At the LSCP Bi-Annual meeting in March 2023 the CRP was discussed with front line practitioners in Leeds and again, the CRP was reiterated. Further promotion of this process was undertaken through LSCP Third Sector Safeguarding Group in September 2023.

The LSCP have also published this process on the West Yorkshire Consortium Procedures allowing agencies that provide services over more than one local authority area to be aware of the CRP in Leeds and can be found [here](#).

3) Capturing the voice of the child and evidencing how the learning stemming from reviews is being disseminated and is improving outcomes for children and young people.

Leeds child friendly city vision is promoted and encouraged throughout the LSCP safeguarding arrangements. Within the LSCP notification process the LSCP



Partnership Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Notification Form-Section 3 requests that the voice of the child is captured. Where notifications become a rapid review, again, the child's lived experience will be discussed and considered.

In addition, the LSCP Executive commission independent authors to undertake Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR's) to ensure the integrity and transparency of investigations. Independent authors will reach out and offer to meet with families, children and young people to explore what day-to-day life was like for them, their experience of agencies supporting them and what children's experience of living in the family environment was like. Families are always offered the opportunity to read the final draft of the report to ensure it reflects their views prior to publication.

To ensure learning is disseminated across the partnership the LSCP use:

- Learning from review sheets which are used across the partnership in team meetings and staff briefings to highlight learning.
- Bulletins sent out to practitioners with learning from reviews highlighted.
- Briefing Sessions for professionals.
- LSCP Website hosts specific sections highlighting learning from reviews.
- Learning is incorporated into our LSCP Training programme.

Action plans that are developed following all our reviews clearly demonstrate changes to safeguarding systems and processes across the city and these are monitored by the RAG.

There are further opportunities for 'testing' impact as part of the LSCP Executive reset plan and this will pave the way for further scrutiny and rigorous approach to measuring the impact of reviews on children and families. The Performance Management Subgroup (PMSG) and Learning and Development Subgroup (LDSG) will be directly accountable to the LSCP Executive. This will allow the LSCP Executive to seek direct assurance of impact of reviews through:

- 1) Commissioning the PMSG to undertake audits that relate to learning and impact. This will track learning from our reviews right through to front line practice to evidence demonstratable outcomes for families.
- 2) Our learning strategy which includes our training and development offer. This will continue to embed learning across the partnership and seek opportunities to explore further creative ways of disseminating learning.

4) Addressing the use of language and jargon and understanding the use of definitions used in the sector.

Multi-agency training developed and delivered by the LSCP explores how different language and terminology may be used by different professionals. Working Together to Safeguard Children training outcomes are:

- Greater awareness of their own role and that of others in safeguarding children and young people and the prevention of abuse
- Develop skills in undertaking effective assessments, along with understanding their own individual responsibilities for assessing risk.
- Improved knowledge of the legislation, guidance and local procedures that exist to safeguard children.
- An understanding of individual roles and responsibilities within multi-agency working and the associated skills around this.



- Better understanding of, and development of skills to increase effective professional practice when safeguarding children.

The way that our training is delivered means that practitioners from different agencies come together to share learning together. Language is explored in these sessions to support common standards regarding language used in risk assessments. All LSCP training is delivered in line with the standards set out in the Yorkshire and Humber Multi-Agency Safeguarding Trainers Training Standards.

The LSCP multi-agency policy and procedures are developed with a range of agencies to ensure there is a common approach to language and safeguarding procedures. This is also reflected in the West Yorkshire policies and procedures covering a wider geographical area.

Leeds conversation model of assessments within the Front Door provides opportunities to discuss safeguarding assessments allowing professionals to explore any language/jargon contained within agencies risk assessments.

5) The work being undertaken to ensure the use of accurate and timely risk assessments and improving awareness and understanding amongst practitioners around differing risk assessment processes.

Safeguarding children and young people is a complex, challenging and multi-factorial activity. It is often undertaken in a rapidly changing multi-agency context of relative uncertainty. Dynamic risk assessments are those which recognise that the level of risk is not static, it can fluctuate over time and therefore has the potential to change and take this into consideration within the assessment. Dynamic risk assessments are promoted throughout the safeguarding system through its training offer.

It was identified within CSPR A that different agencies use different assessment tools, when assessing adults who pose a risk to children. New guidance for all practitioners have been developed and is promoted on the [LSCP Website](#) and included in LSCP training.

When a child or young person is identified as requiring help, support, or protection all professionals can access advice and guidance through the Front Door Safeguarding Hub. The Front Door is accessible to all who work with children and families and support strong assessments and responses to safeguarding and child protection. This co-location of agencies supports an understanding of differing risk assessments that may be used within different agencies.

It is also of note that following the LSCP Executive attendance at Scrutiny in March 2023, Cllr Venner sent a cross party letter to the Child Protection Ministerial Group drawing national attention to risk assessments across different agencies. The Minister's response references the commitment to an evaluation of multi-agency safeguarding hubs through its Children's Social Care Reform, 'Stable Homes Built on Love.' The DfE references that they are happy to include feedback from Leeds in this work.

6) The Leeds input into the review of the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance, with an update on progress dependent upon the timing of the national review process.

The national consultation of Working Together to Safeguard Children closed on the



6th of September 2023 and the LSCP have promoted and encouraged all members of the LSCP to participate in this consultation.

The LSCP Executive fed their experience and views into the update of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

Once the new guidance is published, the LSCP will consider any changes made and embed this into its safeguarding arrangements.

7) Clarification of the levels of oversight, including democratic oversight, which surrounds those Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews that are notified to the National Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

Scrutiny and oversight on cases that may or may not become a notification to the National Panel is well embedded within the LSCP arrangements. The RAG along with the Independent Chair and Business Manager are informed of all serious child safeguarding incidents that may have reached the threshold for notification to the National Panel. When cases are notified, the RAG will hold an initial meeting to jointly consider if it meets the criteria for notification to National Panel.

Once a decision has been made that the criteria for notification to National Panel has been met, the RAG partners enter a 15-day rapid review Process. This requires them to gather and analyse detailed information about multi-agency involvement with the child/family and to consider the criteria and guidance under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, to determine whether to recommend to the LSCP Executive that:

- A national or a local CSPR should be undertaken.
- Another type of learning process would be more appropriate e.g., a single agency review or,
- No further action is required.

At every stage of a rapid review, multi-agency meetings are held to ensure all partners within the RAG have an equal opportunity to share their professional opinion and contribute to any decisions. Minutes of these meetings are used to capture the rationale for any recommendations made.

The LSCP Executive oversee the recommendations made by the RAG and these are then sent to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. The rationale for these decisions must be provided to the National Panel who will then either agree with the decision, make a recommendation for the LSCP to reconsider its decision and may also provide additional feedback.

Information regarding the number cases considered for a notification, those cases that are notified, and those cases that become CSPRs are published within the LSCP Annual Report and published on its website.

In addition, all CSPRs, when complete, are published locally on the LSCP Website unless it may put the anonymity of the child/family at risk. Any CSPR not published requires agreement from the National Panel.

LCC Scrutiny have provided democratic oversight of the notification process in receiving and considering the report into notifications discussed at its meeting on the



8th March 2023 and again in consideration of this update report.

