

SCRUTINY BOARD (ADULTS, HEALTH & ACTIVE LIFESTYLES)

TUESDAY, 7TH NOVEMBER, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor A Scopes in the Chair

Councillors P Alderson, C Anderson,
L Farley, M France-Mir, C Hart-Brooke,
W Kidger, K Renshaw, K Ritchie and
E Thomson

Co-opted Member present – Dr J Beal

51 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

52 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

53 Late Items

There were no late items.

54 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

55 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies had been received from Councillor J Gibson, Councillor M Iqbal and Councillor E Taylor.

Councillor K Renshaw attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor M Iqbal and Councillor E Thomson attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor E Taylor.

56 Minutes - 10th October 2023

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2023, be approved as an accurate record.

57 Matters Arising

Minute 45 – With regard to the Board's earlier discussions around access to General Practice in Leeds, it was noted that Board Members had been provided with further additional information categorising those GP appointments made outside of the 14 day timeframe.

Minute 46 - In noting the key indicators and areas of progress that were set out in the briefing paper provided by the Leeds Health and Care Academy, a request was made to illustrate the trajectory of progress over the last 6 months in the form of graphs/charts. It was confirmed that this information had been provided to Board Members and will also feature in future updates.

An update was also provided in relation to an earlier minute (*Minute no 21*) regarding the Board's request to receive a briefing paper from the Drug and Alcohol Team on the issue of cannabis use. It was noted that this had been received by the Chair and would now be shared with Board Members following the meeting.

58 Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board - Progress Report

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report which presented a progress report produced on behalf of the Independent Chair of the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB). The report reflected upon the LSAB Annual Report 2022/2023 and LSAB Strategic Plans for 2023/24 and provided an account of the progress being achieved to safeguard adults at risk of abuse and neglect. Safeguarding performance data had also been provided by the Adults and Health Directorate as additional information for the Board's consideration.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships
- Caroline Baria, Interim Director of Adults and Health
- Victoria Eaton, Director of Public Health
- Shona McFarlane, Deputy Director Social Work and Social Care Service
- Rob Wood, Intelligence & Policy Manager
- Richard Jones CBE, Independent Chair of the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board

The Chair welcomed the attendance of the Independent Chair of the LSAB and invited him to briefly introduce the LSAB report. The LSAB Chair began by explaining that while the LSAB does not deliver any frontline safeguarding services, it does work strategically to coordinate the work of its members and other agencies and ensures the effectiveness of what each of its members does. Linked to this, Safeguarding Adults Boards have specific duties which relate to producing Annual Reports, Strategic Plans and the undertaking of Safeguarding Adults Reviews. The LSAB Chair then took the opportunity to formally relay his thanks to all frontline staff across the statutory agencies and also those from Third Sector organisations for their ongoing commitment and valuable contribution to the safeguarding agenda.

Within the report, the Board's attention was drawn to the seven key areas of priority and the LSAB Chair elaborated on 3 areas in particular. The first area related to the work undertaken to promote awareness of safeguarding services and increasing confidence to reach out to statutory agencies

amongst ethnically diverse communities. The second area was around building on existing multi-agency working to continue improving the effectiveness and coordination of this approach. The third area was around the development and implementation of the Leeds Self Neglect Strategy and the ambition to embed a citywide culture of support and understanding of self-neglect across the city that will lead to improved outcomes of people at risk.

The following areas were also discussed during the Board's consideration of the report:

- *Increasing numbers of safeguarding concerns being raised* – In consideration of the safeguarding performance data provided by the Adults and Health directorate, attention was drawn to the increasing numbers of safeguarding concerns being raised. The LSAB Chair explained that this increasing trend was being mirrored nationally given the context of Covid and the current cost of living crisis creating more vulnerable individuals as well as impacting those already considered vulnerable. It was also considered a reflection of the proactive efforts that have been made across statutory agencies and Third Sector organisations to generate greater awareness of adult safeguarding and how to seek support when someone has concerns for a person's safety and wellbeing.
- *A citywide approach and understanding around self-neglect* – In recognition of an increasing trend in safeguarding referrals linked to self-neglect, Members welcomed the move to embed a citywide culture of support and understanding of self-neglect across the city that will lead to improved outcomes of people at risk. Members also recognised the close links between self-neglect risks and suicide and noted that the Scrutiny Board will have the opportunity to consider the new Suicide Prevention Action Plan during its February meeting.
- *Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)* – the LSAB Chair explained the processes linked to undertaking SARs and highlighted the key purpose of SARs in terms of identifying learning that can be used to improve outcomes for others. It was also reported that the new approach adopted by the LSAB is to consider the need to seek agency assurances in relation to any SAR referral, irrespective of whether this meets the SAR criteria. This approach has been trailed since the beginning of the year and is proving to be beneficial in identifying learning and improving practice in a far wider range of cases than previously.
- *Staffing capacity* – The Interim Director of Adults and Health explained that while the directorate continues to face challenges in recruiting to social worker posts, which is reflective of the national picture, the safeguarding agenda will always remain the directorate's number one priority. When dealing with referrals, Members were also assured that whenever a safeguarding enquiry is not deemed to be required, other forms of support, advice, information or signposting to other services will still be undertaken dependent upon the nature of the risks, the specific concerns and the person's particular needs.

- *Health and wellbeing support to staff* – Members recognised the importance of staff being able to access support in terms of their own health and wellbeing and the Deputy Director Social Work and Social Care Service explained that mechanisms are in place to ensure there is effective supervision and opportunities to have regular wellbeing conversations with their managers and their peers.
- *Working with wider Safeguarding Partnerships* – It was noted that the LSAB works closely with wider strategic safeguarding partnerships within the city, and across the region. This is supported by regular joint meetings between the respective chairs of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safer Stronger Communities, and close working relationships between the respective business/support units. Members particularly recognised the importance of working closely with the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership as part of the transition process as vulnerable young people move towards accessing adult support services.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and acknowledged the continued hard work and commitment of the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board.

RESOLVED - That the report, along with Members comments, be noted.

59 Street-lives Thematic Review - Progress Update

A joint report from the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment and the Director of Adults and Health was submitted to the Board which presented a high level progress statement against the recommendations in the commissioned Leeds independent thematic review: *Understanding and progressing the city's learning of the experience of people living a street-based life in Leeds*.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships
- Caroline Baria, Interim Director of Adults and Health
- Victoria Eaton, Director of Public Health
- Shona McFarlane, Deputy Director Social Work and Social Care Service
- Richard Jones CBE, Independent Chair of the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board
- Simon Hodgson, Head of Community Safety Services
- Magdalena Boo, Head of Public Health (Drugs, Alcohol, Safer Communities)

The Chair invited the Head of Community Safety Services to introduce the report and in doing so, the following key points were highlighted:

- In the winter of 2019/20, Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board commissioned a thematic review, with the specific intention to understand and progress the city's learning of the experience of people living a street-based life in Leeds.
- Much has been achieved in Leeds during this period, including national recognised innovation, as the city compares favourably with other core cities and is highlighted as good practice relating to homeless prevention and for the action collectively undertaken for new presentations on the street. However, the council is not complacent as there remains significant and emerging challenges, with real pressures in and across the system, some of which are beyond the council's control.
- In July 2023, the Councils Executive Board formally approved the new statutory required, 'Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy' (2023 – 2028).
- September 2023 also saw the 5th year anniversary of the Leeds Street Support Partnership, and reducing the scale, prevalence and impact of rough sleeping remains a priority for the city.
- It is acknowledged that any instances of rough sleeping should be rare, brief, and non-recurrent, so throughout the 'pathways' from street to home, the 'system' needs to work in an integrated way, making every adult matter and making every contact count.
- Those on the street, at risk of and/ or returning to rough sleeping will have unique personal experiences, histories, and circumstances. Many will have experienced trauma, often in their childhood and/ or early adulthood, for example abusive childhoods, family breakdowns, violence, debt and compounded by other known factors of multiple disadvantages.
- For people with 'severe complex needs' and who display 'risky behaviours', they are subjecting themselves, their families and communities to harm, or significant risk of increased harm.
- Many will also have mental health issues, including a high prevalence of self-harm and general poor health is evident.
- The ease and availability of drugs on the street can affect an individual's decision to use drugs and/or reduce the likelihood of them accessing treatment for their physical and mental health.
- For those on the street for the first time, experiencing homelessness can make them extremely vulnerable with increased risk of exploitation, violence and abuse against them, trafficking, and involvement in urban street gangs or organised criminal activity.
- For those who frequently 'fall through the gaps' between services and systems, where people do not fit legislative requirements and/ or numerous organisational criteria/ thresholds, this makes it harder for them to address their personal issues, problems and thereby lead fulfilling lives.
- Operationally, all known people rough sleeping have an identified Lead Professional and assigned Key Workers, adopting a strengths-based approach to create, review, and progress a bespoke Personal Plan. A case study example was shared with the Board in terms of illustrating how support services had positively impacted on an individual's life.
- Additional supported housing and navigator support has been developed significantly since the review and coming out of the pandemic. A particular

example shared with the Board included the development of a women's pathway, through the gender informed and gender responsive 'Somewhere Safe to Stay' and 'Somewhere Safe to Live'.

- In acknowledging that other examples of innovative programmes had been provided within the report, it was highlighted that work is currently being progressed via Task and Finish Group to establish a Leeds Health Inclusion/ People First Board with senior level cross-sector representation, for specific population groups facing multiple disadvantage and who have severe complex needs. The intention is for this Board to move forward in considering and commissioning innovation and breakthrough opportunities, within an agreed governance framework.

The following areas were also discussed during the Board's consideration of the report:

- *Reporting concerns to Street Link* - The Board was informed that anyone concerned about an individual sleeping rough in Leeds are advised to report this to Street Link (thestreetlink.org.uk) as this will send an alert to the local authority or outreach service for the area to help them find the individual and connect them to support.
- *Acknowledging the valuable work of existing support services* – Individual Board Members took the opportunity to relay their thanks and share positive experiences of visiting and working with a number of existing support services, such as the Street Outreach Service, St George's Crypt, St Anne's Resource Centre and York Street Health Practice. The Head of Community Safety Services agreed to provide all Board Members with a list of key contacts for these relevant support schemes and organisations.
- *Comparing Leeds to other core cities* – The Board discussed the data appended to the report which detailed rough sleeping core metrics compared with other core cities. It was noted that Leeds proactively approaches other core cities, such as Birmingham, to explore opportunities for sharing good practice.
- *Emergency/support accommodation* – While acknowledging that the emergency/support accommodation offer in Leeds has improved, it was recognised that more provision was still needed across the city.
- *Training opportunities for staff* – It was noted that organisations offering support services can access training opportunities for their staff. Particular reference was made to safeguarding training and the Board was advised that any organisation signed up to the Leeds Homelessness Charter are required to ensure that their staff have undertaken safeguarding training.
- *Accessing universal NHS services* – The Board discussed the importance of those living street-based lives to still have easy access to vital health care services. Rather than having to commission specialist services, it was felt that such individuals should be able to access support as part of their entitlement to universal NHS services.
- *Supporting individuals with pets* – It was acknowledged that many people experiencing homelessness rely on their dogs for warmth, comfort and companionship and that pets can also aid positive recovery. It was highlighted that while support offered to individuals with pets has improved over the last few years, there does remain a gap in provision.

- *Intelligence mapping across the city* – It was noted that while the council does undertake intelligence mapping to help identify particular issues across the city, it remains vitally important for anyone concerned about an individual sleeping rough in Leeds to make a referral to Street Link.
- *Cross boundary collaboration* – For individuals who may not be originally from Leeds but have opted to remain in the city, it was noted that the Council will work in collaboration with relevant local authorities and particularly neighbouring authorities, when seeking to identify and provide support and accommodation for that individual.

In conclusion, the Board acknowledged and welcomed the level of progress that has been made since the thematic review was commissioned in 2019/20 and the Chair thanked everyone for their valuable contribution to the Board's discussion.

RESOLVED - That the report, along with Members comments, be noted.

60 Work Schedule

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented the Board's latest work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

The Chair highlighted that a summary of the key points raised during the Board's working group meeting on 23rd October 2023 around children's neurodiversity had been set out within the report for Members information.

Board Members also acknowledged the appended letter from the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust which provided an update to all Councillors on its mortuary service after undertaking a review of its out of hours bereavement arrangements. It was noted that the Board will also be receiving a report from the Trust during its January 2024 meeting, which will include an updated position surrounding the introduction of a new statutory Medical Examiner System.

The Chair also proposed that the Board uses its February 2024 meeting to discuss the Leeds Drug and Alcohol Strategy. In supporting this suggestion, the Director of Public Health also advised the Board that the Strategy was in the process of being refreshed.

RESOLVED –

- That the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2023/24 municipal year be noted.
- That the summary of key points raised during the Scrutiny Board's working group meeting on 23rd October 2023 around children's neurodiversity, as set out within the report, be noted.
- That the Board considers the Leeds Drug and Alcohol Strategy as part of its February 2024 meeting.

61 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the next meeting of the Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board is scheduled for Tuesday, 16th January 2024 at 1:30pm (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 1:00pm)