

Report of: The Director of Children & Families

Report to: Leeds City Council Executive Board

Date: 7th January 2020

Subject: Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report (2018/19) Evaluating the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Arrangements in Leeds



Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Annual Report (2018/19) Evaluating the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Arrangements in Leeds identifies that:

- Leeds is a city that continues to demonstrate robust safeguarding arrangements which reflects its strong safeguarding partnerships and the commitment to protecting children from harm and promoting their welfare.
- The LSCP (formally the LSCB) has published its plans under the new guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'.

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

- The LSCP contributes to the cities strategic planning and holds partners to account to be assured that the most vulnerable children of Leeds are safe from harm. Children and Young People are a key priority for the city and the LSCP promotes and supports the Child Friendly City Initiative, the Children and Young Peoples Plan and the Best Council Plan so that the children and young people of Leeds have the best start in life, are safe, and feel safe.

3. Resource Implications

- LSCP annual budgets, which come from a range of partner agencies such as Health, Police and the Local Authority, reflect the Board's Independent statutory multi-agency responsibilities and agreed priorities. Expenditure is monitored through regular reports to the LSCP Executive Board. 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.

Recommendations

The LCC Executive Board is asked to consider and endorse:

- The contents of the LSCP's Annual Report,
- The safeguarding priorities for the city identified in the LSCP Annual report

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report introduces the key learning from the LSCP Annual Report (2018/19) and highlights both the areas of strength and progress as well as areas for development across the safeguarding structures (report attached at appendix 1).

2. Background information

- 2.1 In March 2016 the Government accepted the recommendations of the Wood Report 2015 which summarised the findings of a national review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). The recommendations in the report led to a change in legislation to the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WTSC), removing the statutory requirement of local authorities to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 2.2 The LSCP annual report covers the year 2018/19 prior to the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements being in place.

3. Main issues

- 3.1.1 The Report notes the continued effectiveness of the Safeguarding Partnership to support children, young people and families in Leeds. Central to this is a partnership agreement that the children's safeguarding system needs to be 'rebalanced' in order to improve outcomes for children and young people by intervening earlier and more effectively in the life of a problem.
- 3.1.2 The Safeguarding Partnership continues to be ambitious and sets high expectations of its partners. This has been met with good support and contribution from agencies across Leeds.
- 3.1.3 External inspection findings (OfSTED, CQC etc.) and judgements provide further independent assurance of the progress being made by the children's partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- 3.1.4 Strong leadership has improved the safeguarding culture and practice within Leeds. A restorative approach to working with families is contributing to the reduction of children requiring statutory intervention.

- 3.1.5 Leeds has developed a robust response to the exploitation of children and young people by developing safeguarding structures to both the early response to children at risk of exploitation and those who are experiencing exploitation.
- 3.1.6 Whilst the overall picture in relation to safeguarding remains strong the LSCP ensures that it seeks assurance on any issues that emerge during the year either locally or nationally ensuring that there is no complacency across the system in Leeds.

4. Corporate considerations

Whilst the LSCP is a stand-alone Partnership which sits outside the direct corporate structure or governance of the system, much of what it does impacts directly on the corporate responsibilities and accountabilities of Leeds City Council.

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 This is a report produced through a process of engagement and consultation with partners that make up the LSCP. Active interest and support from Childrens Leadership Team and Corporate Leaders in the work of the LSCP has made a significant contribution to the safety and welfare of children.
- 4.1.2 Young people and families are also consulted through quality assurance work and the Student LSCP provides a young person's perspective on the safeguarding system

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The LSCP has made significant progress in 2018/19 to engage with a range of communities in the City, including the faith communities, and with a range of local third sector and voluntary organisations in partnership with Young Lives Leeds. There is much still to do to engage more extensively to support the development of safe cohesive communities that promote the welfare of their children, and protect them from harm. 2018 has been a year of strengthening partnerships between the LSCP, the Adult Safeguarding Board and Safer Leeds Executive through joint working and identifying shared priorities to ensure all families in Leeds receive appropriate support in protecting their children.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 Leeds LSCP contributes to the cities strategic planning and holding partners to account to ensure that the most vulnerable children of Leeds are safe from harm. Children and Young People are a key priority for the city and the LSCP promotes and supports the Child Friendly City Initiative, the Children and Young Peoples Plan and the Best Council Plan so that the children and young people of Leeds have the best start in life, are safe, and feel safe in their communities.

4.4 Climate Emergency

- 4.4.1 The Leeds approach to safeguarding ensures that wherever safe and appropriate, children are cared for by their own family and community network. This is achieved

by providing help and support to families as early as possible and locally through cluster arrangements.

- 4.4.2 A localised approach reduces impact on the environment by reducing the need to travel larger distances across the city compared to when services were more centralised. This local approach combined with our commitment to effective early help has also helped reduce the need for children to become looked after. In turn this has reduced the number of placements made outside of Leeds by almost half since 2012. This reduction means significantly reduced impact on the environment through reduced social work visits, independent review meetings and arrangements for family time for looked after children's relatives.

4.5 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.5.1 LSCP annual budgets, which come from a range of partner agencies such as Health, Police and the Local Authority, reflect the partnerships shared multi-agency responsibilities and agreed priorities to protect children. Expenditure is monitored through regular reports to the LSCP Executive Board. 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 and contributing to broader planning, commissioning and delivery.

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

- 4.6.1 The Executive 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 & Families consider any implications for the work of Leeds City Council.

4.7 Risk management

- 4.7.1 The LSCP had a statutory responsibility under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 to hold partners to account to ensure all children at risk of, or experiencing harm are appropriately protected. This responsibility is in line with LCC Corporate Risk Management Framework for safeguarding children and young people and ensures LCC is challenged and supported in ensuring that the relevant safeguarding governance, quality of front line practice, training, clarity of staff roles and responsibilities and the voice of the child is of the highest standard.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1.1 This report presents a summary of the work of Leeds Safeguarding Partnership in 2018/19. It also sets out its key priorities and challenges for the Council and partners to the Board in 2019/20.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The LCC Executive Board is asked to consider and endorse:

- The contents of the LSCP's Annual Report,
- The safeguarding priorities for the city identified in the LSCP Annual report

7. Background documents¹

7.1 None

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