

Notification of Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents Review - Update

Date: 11th May 2022

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

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- During its meeting on 16th February 2022, the Children and Families Scrutiny Board received a report from the Head of Democratic Services introducing an urgent matter of business relating to an issue which had been brought to the attention of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board Chair in respect of the processes supporting the Notification of Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents.
- The Chair advised the Board that he had been made aware of instances where differing views were evident within the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership in relation to whether or not to categorise a case as a notifiable Serious Child Safeguarding Incident. Arising from that, a local review of notification arrangements had commenced in December 2021 with the intention of reporting back to the Partnership once concluded. The Chair expressed his view that the current review of notification arrangements, and the background to it, should reasonably have been brought to the attention of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board at an earlier stage; and because of the seriousness of the issue, he had requested this issue be considered as a matter of urgency as part of the Board's February meeting.
- The Director and Deputy Director of Children and Families; the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Chair; and the Executive Member for Adult and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships had attended the Board's February meeting to provide further contextual information. The legal adviser to the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership was also in attendance and advised the Board on the legal framework within which Notification arrangements are managed.
- It was agreed that once available, the findings of the local review work would be brought back to the Scrutiny Board for consideration. The purpose of today's meeting is to update the Board on the current position with the review work. This is being provided in the form of a briefing note from the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Recommendations

Members are requested to consider the content of the briefing note by the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership and determine appropriate next steps.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. During the Children and Families Scrutiny Board meeting on 16th February 2022, it was agreed that, once available, the findings of the local review of notification arrangements would be brought back to the Scrutiny Board for consideration. The purpose of today's meeting is to update the Board on the current position with this review work. This is being provided in the form of a briefing note from the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership which will be circulated to Board Members in advance of today's meeting.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

2. The information presented to the Scrutiny Board will assist Members in determining appropriate next steps.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

3. The Director and Deputy Director of Children and Families; the Chair of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP); the Executive Member for Adult and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships; and the legal adviser to the LSCP had attended the Scrutiny Board's February meeting to contribute to the discussion and address any questions from Board Members.
4. In addition to the above, other partner members of the LSCP who are party to the Notification process have also been invited to contribute to today's meeting.

What are the resource implications?

5. This report has no specific resource implications.

What are the legal implications?

6. The Wood Review of 2016, led to an amendment of The Children's Act 2004, resulting in the removal of the statutory requirement of local authorities to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board and placed the responsibility for safeguarding equally with local authorities namely children and family services, police and health (Clinical Commissioning Groups).
7. The Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017), the associated regulations and statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' set out the duties placed on the three agencies to work in partnership and to define the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It also places a duty on other partner agencies to co-operate with the new arrangements albeit the local authority is designated as the accountable body for the Notification arrangements.
8. Given the legal restrictions it will not be appropriate for there to be any discussion of individual cases which fall within the notification arrangements.
9. Legal advice will be provided as necessary during the Board's deliberations.

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

10. Details of associated risk management implications will be reflected as part of the updated position being presented during today's meeting.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

11. One of the eleven priorities set out with the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan is ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected.

Appendices

12. Appendix 1 (*to follow*) - A briefing paper by the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership updating the Children and Families Scrutiny Board on the Notification of Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents review.

Background papers

13. None.