



**Report to:** Leeds Children and Families Scrutiny Board  
**Report from:** Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive  
**Title of Report:** LSCP Annual Report Update  
**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023

## 1.0 Purpose of report

This report sets out to update the Children and Families Scrutiny Board, on the key headlines from the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Annual Report. The full report will be published in March 2023.

## 2.0 Summary

The LSCP Annual Report provides an objective analysis of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in the city. The Report considers activity over an 18-month period between 2021-2022 and relates to the LSCP priorities, leadership, progress, and the impact this activity has towards improvements. It also includes identified learning from reviews, including child safeguarding practice reviews, undertaken by the partnership and their impact to support improvements in practice.

The LSCP Executive, in their leadership role have sought opportunities to reflect on the current safeguarding partnership arrangements. It is three years since the last review of the city's Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership infrastructure, and it is recognised how the policy direction is changing. The national facilitators, brought in by the LSCP Executive to support and diagnosis future planning, confirmed that the safeguarding arrangements in Leeds are good and advised against any whole scale change that could destabilise this. As a result, the LSCP Executive have committed to 'reset' some of the safeguarding arrangements in collaboration with the wider partnership and will be finalising the details of this over the next few months.

Child protection systems remain strong despite the challenges of a national pandemic in 2020. Effective Front Door arrangements ensure that children's and family's needs are responded to appropriately. Families are encouraged to lead, own, and contribute to plans with Family Group Conferences offered to families where safe and appropriate to do so. The restorative approach of 'doing with, not to' in Leeds encourages families to remain central in undertaking a pro-active role in contributing better outcomes. Data shows that overall the timeliness of statutory safeguarding functions is good. Qualitative assurance is also explored through a range of multi-agency audits which brings together joint learning experiences.

Two external reviews from Ofsted over the past five years have supported and endorsed the initial findings of the LSCP Annual Report confirming innovative

and outstanding practice and leadership. This year's Annual Report acknowledges the latest OfSTED report in that this continues to be a strong reflection of the effective protection, safety and wellbeing of children and young people by the safeguarding partnership. The Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection undertaken on West Yorkshire Police in 2021 also reflects good standards of protecting vulnerable people such as those experiencing exploitation and families where domestic abuse is a feature.

The LSCP Annual Report highlights ongoing responses within the city to key areas impacting on children's safety and welfare:

- Poverty remains a key area that can impact on outcomes of children and families. The Social Gradient in English Child Welfare Services, a study by Kingston University academics and Ofsted analysts, said that children from the poorest neighbourhoods in England were almost fourteen times more likely to be referred to social care services than those from the richest areas. The latest estimates from HM Revenue and Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions estimate that 36,496 children under 16 were in poverty in 2019/20 with 74% of these children living in a household where one person was in work. In response to this challenge, the city is currently reviewing the 'Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds. Within this strategy is a workstream called 'Empowering Families & Safeguarding' led by Head of Service / Principal Social Worker, Children and Families Service. As well as reviewing the strategy a key area that will contribute to this work is seeking the views of children and families who are experiencing poverty.
- Leeds Early Help approach has ensured that the number of children requiring statutory intervention has remained relatively stable over the years despite increases seen across the country. Some children come to the attention of Social Care in crisis with sometimes little evidence of their need being identified earlier. A review of the city's Early Help system is being undertaken by the Local Authority will be both supported and monitored by the Safeguarding Partnership.
- The city's focus on children experiencing adverse childhood experiences through the development of its Trauma Informed Strategy and the drive to make Leeds a Trauma Informed City is a welcome development in the city. This strategy combines resources from both the Integrated Care Board and the Children and Families Service to reduce the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences as well as respond to trauma that young people may experience. This is a positive step forward in breaking intergenerational cycles of abuse and provide children who have experienced trauma appropriate support.

There is a consistency of approach in responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns by partners across Leeds. Multi-agency policies and

procedures provide professionals with clear guidance on how to protect children and when to report any concerns about their welfare to the appropriate agencies. These policies and procedures are developed and agreed by a range of local safeguarding experts which are then adopted and integrated into practice.

The Chairs of the Childrens Safeguarding Partnership, the Adults Safeguarding Board and Safer Leeds Executive continue to meet throughout the year to identify opportunities for closer strategic partnership working where cross cutting learning is identified. This has included increased focus of the 'Think Family Work Family' way of working, recognition of neglect and self-neglect and domestic abuse.

### **3.0 Key Points going Forward**

Overall, the safeguarding system appears to be strong and senior leaders continue to be fully committed to the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in the city. Stimulating discussions continue to take place when identifying areas for improvement and partners are open and responsive to challenge within their own agencies as well as offering challenge to partner agencies.

New priorities for the LSCP will be developed as part of the reset of the LSCP arrangements and are considering the evidence and learning from the Annual Report. This will allow a focussed approach to the areas of most significance.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care was published on 23rd May 2022 with the government's response consultation (Stable Homes; Built on Love) published in February 2023. The safeguarding partnership will be required to support and monitor the implementation of any recommendations taken forward by the Government.

The LSCP will continue to promote, embed, and monitor the impact of learning from all reviews that are undertaken by the Partnership and be assured that it improves the safety and welfare of children and families