

Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023-2024

Date: 9th October 2024

Report of: The Director of Children & Families

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children & Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Annual Report 2023-2024 covers the period from 1st April 2023 to the 31st of March 2024, in line with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance 2023.

A statutory safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as:

- (a) the local authority
- (b) an integrated care board for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area
- (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area

Safeguarding partners must jointly report on the activity they have undertaken in a 12-month period with the focus of the report being progress with the multi-agency priorities, learning, impact, evidence, and improvement as well as the multiagency safeguarding arrangements.

The report includes the activity in relation to statutory functions, scrutiny, as well as the outcomes from reviews, audits and inspections.

To ensure effective partnership working to safeguard children, families and communities in Leeds, the LSCP arrangements are aligned and work closely with the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board and Safer Leeds. The nature of work undertaken in all three Partnership/ Boards, is such that there are several cross-cutting themes and appropriate working arrangements have been implemented to ensure the necessary leadership and coordination of work.

Recommendations

- a) For the Scrutiny Board to endorse the work undertaken to further strengthen the safeguarding children arrangements in Leeds.

What is this report about?

- 1 The report outlines the activity that has taken place across the year in relation to the Safeguarding Partners' statutory duties to work together in exercising their functions of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes developments in practice, progress with priorities, learning, scrutiny, inspections and statutory responsibilities.
- 2 The report provides assurance in relation to effectiveness of safeguarding practice and the multiagency safeguarding arrangements in Leeds.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 3 The report is intended to provide assurance and feedback to Scrutiny Board on the way in which the LSCP have carried out their statutory duties and the effectiveness of the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Leeds.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 4 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is paramount to their health and wellbeing and the longer term impact on their outcomes.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 5 This is a report produced through a process of engagement and consultation with partners that make up the LSCP.
- 6 Young people are also consulted through quality assurance work and the Leeds Voice and Influence Team provides a young person's perspective on the safeguarding system.
- 7 Consultation has taken place with Scrutiny Board (Children & Families)

What are the resource implications?

- 8 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, states that the LSCP should agree on the level of funding needed to deliver the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements with funding reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they can meet the financial needs of the arrangements.
- 9 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 of safeguarding services.
- 10 The Business unit manager has oversight of the LSCP budget and regular reports are given the LSCP Executive.

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

- 11 The LSCP has a statutory responsibility under the Children Act 2004, underpinned by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 to hold partners to account to ensure all children at risk of, or experiencing harm are appropriately protected. The LSCP has a governance and accountability structure in place which includes seeking assurance regarding the current risks and oversees how these will be reduced.

- 12 There is a “Risk of harm, accident or death to a child linked to failure of the Council to act appropriately according to safeguarding arrangements”. The arrangements for managing the risk include regular reporting to Corporate Leadership Team (as part of the corporate risk register).
- 13 The development of services across Children’s and Families has been informed by challenge and scrutiny from external experts and leading practitioners and the extensive use of research to inform practice and service design. Leeds role as a Partner in Practice has strengthened cooperation with national government and other leading local authorities.

What are the legal implications?

- 14 The Children Act 2004, associated regulations and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, set out the requirements for all Safeguarding Children Partnership to produce, publish and submit to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel a yearly report.
- 15 The 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 and Families consider any implications for the work of Leeds City Council.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 16 The annual report is a statutory requirement of the LSCP, and it is required for assurance and governance purposes.

How will success be measured?

- 17 The safeguarding children arrangements include systems and governance to monitor the success and impact of the partnership and safeguarding practice, in keeping children safe.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 18 The full report was published on the LSCP website at the end of September 2024, in line with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Alongside this a video and child friendly version are in development to support accessibility.

Appendices

- Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023-24

Background papers

- None