



Leeds Safeguarding
Children Partnership



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



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FOREWORD

Welcome to the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for the period covering the 1st of April 2023 to 31st of March 2024, which is produced on behalf of the partnership by the Delegated Safeguarding Partners in Leeds.

We would like to start with taking the opportunity to thank all our front-line practitioners and managers, who work tirelessly to improve outcomes for children across the city. It is the commitment, dedication, and care that they give to children and families, on a daily basis, that keeps children safe.

Over the last year we have taken the time to review and refresh our safeguarding arrangements. This work will continue into 2024-25 and further information will be published on our website, in line with the requirements of Working Together 2023.

During the review of the safeguarding arrangements, several of the subgroups have not met on a regular basis in their usual format, to allow a review of functions and outcomes. However, the work has continued across the partnership, and this is evident within the report. We are particularly proud of the findings of the recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection and feel that this demonstrates the strong commitment in Leeds to safeguarding children at all levels. Strategic partnerships in Leeds were described as well embedded and mature and strategic leaders, across all agencies invested in the partnership and in reducing the risks to children to make Leeds a safer city.

This year has also seen the introduction of an Independent Scrutineer, David Derbyshire, who joined Leeds in September 2023. We want to take this opportunity to thank David for his work to date in supporting the partnership to strengthen our safeguarding arrangements and look forward to utilising his expertise further in the coming year.

Work has continued throughout the year in relation to our safeguarding priorities and this report demonstrates the developments that have taken place and the opportunities for further work in the coming year.

As a partnership, we are committed to continually improving safeguarding practice in the city, and in the coming year we want to strengthen the voice and influence of children and young people and be able to clearly evidence the impact of the work of the partnership on the outcomes for children and families.

This year we have made the decision that our annual report should be more accessible and have made a commitment to produce a video with key messages.

Director of Nursing & Quality, Leeds Office,
NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

Director, Children & Families,
Leeds City Council

Chief Superintendent, Leeds District
Commander, West Yorkshire Police



INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER STATEMENT

It is right to say at the outset of these comments that multi-agency arrangements for the safeguarding of children in Leeds are strong. There is strong commitment to safeguarding children at senior levels in all agencies. There is an ability and willingness on the part of the statutory partners and other agencies to sort out any difficulties and grapple with some of the more testing issues facing Leeds and other locations in the country.

In 2023, the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) took the decision to replace the role of Independent Chair of the partnership with the new role of Independent Scrutineer to further strengthen the LSCP's resilience in the future.

This new role commenced on 27 September 2023. Since that date, the Government's revised national guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 was published, which includes the continued requirement for independent scrutiny and requires full implementation by December 2024.

The new Government guidance built on research conducted by the University of Bedfordshire and others in 2022, about what makes for effective independent scrutiny. The functions of the Independent Scrutineer in Leeds are therefore to:

- provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multiagency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- ensure that the voice of children and families is considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

The Independent Scrutineer in Leeds commenced work on the above areas immediately and agreed with the LSCP a plan of scrutiny for 2024-25 based on this guidance.

The focus of attention in 2023-24 was to assist, support and advise the LSCP on its review of structures, considering local needs and the requirements of new Government guidance.

The Independent Scrutineer provided input to the establishment of a new Audit and Review sub-group whose purpose was to enhance the level of assurance about the quality of safeguarding activities in Leeds to inform the Executive group in future about areas requiring deeper dives, improvement or replication of excellent practice. This group agreed the first multi-agency review and audit to take place in 2024-25 and the need for a future annual plan of multi-agency review and audit.

The Independent Scrutineer also supported partner agencies in recruitment of a new LSCP Business Unit manager who assumed post in January 2024 and will provide the leadership and drive needed.

The Independent Scrutineer has also supported and challenged as required the discussions of the Review Advisory Group about cases where children have suffered serious harm because of child abuse or neglect. This group agreed measures to build on its successes in learning relevant lessons to focus on high quality reviews taking place as quickly as possible and the Independent Scrutineer was able to take part in high quality analytical discussions about these cases where managers from different agencies came together to discuss openly means by which to overcome challenges. The partnership in Leeds experiences very similar key practice challenges to those experienced by other local safeguarding partnerships, namely ensuring that practitioners are able to balance the need to support vulnerable parents and carers with an inquisitive approach which ensures safeguarding of children, the difficulties in working with frightened survivors of domestic abuse and those responsible for carrying out domestic abuse and the challenges and time needed to form effective working relationships with teenagers who are risk of exploitation and/or involvement in violent acts against others.

The Independent Scrutineer met with a range of managers and staff in different organisations working in Leeds. These meeting established common themes regardless of the role of the staff concerned. Resources are very tight and do not always permit practitioners to do as much as they know is needed and not as early as would be effective. The critical issues facing agencies were domestic abuse, serious youth violence and exploitation of teenagers and dealing effectively with cases of suspected neglect. The Independent Scrutineer was able to discuss these issues with lead managers in the LSCP and the LSCP agreed these areas as their priorities for 2024-25 with the issue of neglect being focused on ensuring that arrangements to offer early family help dealt effectively with concerns of neglect.

It is very positive that the LSCP has set itself some highly challenging questions to answer about seeking to take steps to resolve further a range of safeguarding issues which can all be intractable across the country. It is positive that agencies in Leeds can build on their strengths to focus on these questions while continuing to devote attention to ensuring the here-and-now is working effectively.

The Independent Scrutineer also reported that all staff in varied settings have a positive regard for working in Leeds and all are proud of how their individual employers in the local



authority, NHS or police service encourage them to achieve the highest standards possible. The Scrutineer also noted the high level of commitment among all agencies at managerial and frontline levels to the Leeds Approach, involving an understanding of the impact of life trauma on individuals and how they behave as a result to focus energy on support and assistance wherever possible.

There is also clear leadership and priority given to safeguarding in each of the statutory agencies (local authority, NHS and police) but also in schools and the voluntary and community sector groups working in the city. The senior leaders of the statutory agencies meet at least monthly and often more frequently and demonstrate both an ability to work well together but also to challenge one another and resolve disagreements with or without the need for the Independent Scrutineer's involvement.

There are and will continue to be challenges in a large city with several areas made up of people living in poverty. Furthermore, Leeds is also host to regional and national services such as paediatric services at Leeds General Infirmary, a secure children's home and a Young Offender's Institute (YOI) at HMP Wetherby.

The latter received an inspection report published in March 2024 which contained a number of areas for improvement. Some of these related to the continued detention at Wetherby of young female offenders in provision built and set up for young male offenders. The LSCP has rightly committed to work alongside the new Governor at the YOI to support the necessary improvements for all young people who are detained there.

Leeds was also host to a Joint Targeted Area Inspection undertaken by multiple inspectorates and led by Ofsted about arrangements to safeguard children at risk of

involvement in or affected by serious youth violence. The report of this inspection has since been published and confirms the high quality of practice based on trauma-informed principles in work with a challenging group of young people at substantial risk of harm in Leeds. The Independent Scrutineer met with the Lead Inspector and was able to share thoughts and respond to queries to assist this process.

The most significant work for the LSCP in 2024-25 will be to consolidate on the work undertaken to date to ensure the continuation of a strong response to safeguarding issues in Leeds:

- Ensuring that the revised structure of sub-groups and priorities agreed by the LSCP work to full effect at a time when each of the three statutory partners faces challenges over resources with each having also needed to reduce financial contribution to the LSCP for 2024-25.
- Improving the multi-agency assurance of safeguarding service quality through a range of different review and audit approaches. This will strengthen the LSCP's ability to direct attention and resources quickly.
- Ensuring implementation of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 in respect of learning and development activity, governance arrangements and a revised protocol relating to working with Children in Need as required by the guidance.
- Enhancing working relationships with other strategic and planning groups in Leeds working with issues affecting the safeguarding of children, especially the Safer Leeds Executive, the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership and the Family Help Board.
- Enhancing current arrangements to ensure that the voice of children and young people influence safeguarding arrangements so that there is direct input from children and young people and especially those with experience of safeguarding systems.
- Improving the linkages between frontline staff and those making decisions in the LSCP so that the visibility of the LSCP for frontline staff is enhanced. The Independent Scrutineer will continue meeting with frontline staff and managers in the city to support this aim and ensure that there is a shared understanding of needs and issues wherever possible.

In sum, the multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children in Leeds are strong and this strength will enhance ability to meet future challenges in terms of safeguarding children.

The welcoming of the new role of independent scrutiny, in place of the independent chair function, will further strengthen the LSCP's resilience in the future.

David Derbyshire



ABOUT LEEDS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

Leeds is the second largest city council in England in terms of both population and geographical area, and has the ambition to be the best city in the UK for children and young people to grow up in.

There are 174,133 children and young people aged under 18 in Leeds as estimated by the Office for National Statistics for 2023 (mid-year estimates published July 2024). This is of an overall population of 829,413. The under 25 population is 275,469, Leeds has a higher student population than the national average for local authorities.

The Leeds child population grew 10.9% in the last decade with around 10,000 children born each year in the decade up to 2018 (ONS), since then the birth rate has fallen 15%. The high birth years are now progressing through teenage years. 24% of Leeds communities (Index of Multiple Deprivation) are considered amongst the 10% most deprived nationally. 33% of the Leeds under-18 population live in those communities.

The January (2024) school census shows that 32.3% of children in reception to year 11 are from ethnically diverse backgrounds. 58.9% are from white British backgrounds and 3.5% from white European backgrounds. The younger the population the greater the diversity. 25.1% of children in primary school and 27.4 in secondary are eligible from free school meals (January 2024).

Safeguarding systems remain strong across the city, with feedback given at a recent JTAI inspection that, “strategic partnerships in Leeds are well embedded and mature, with leaders across all agencies being invested in the partnership and in reducing the risks to children to make Leeds a safer city.”

In December 2023 the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance set out the updated legislative safeguarding requirements that applies to individuals, organisations and agencies. It set out the framework for the three local safeguarding partners (the local authority, Integrated Care Board and local police force) to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. It also provided the framework for the two child death review partners (the local authority and ICB) to make arrangements for reviewing all deaths of children normally resident in the local area, and if they considered it appropriate, for those not normally resident in the area.

In preparation for the new guidance and as a response to its publication, the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) in Leeds have spent the year further developing the safeguarding arrangements for the city. A 7 point plan was initially developed, to ensure readiness for the publication of the updated guidance. This plan was then updated in January 2024, as a response to the publication, and was enhanced further by a development plan, which is overseen by the DSPs, collectively known as the LSCP Executive in Leeds. This plan will ensure the implementation of the new Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance and ensures that the partnership can monitor progress.

The new arrangements will be published on the [LSCP website](#), in line with the requirements of [Working Together 2023](#) and the current arrangements are described in this report.



LSCP Executive

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 sets out the responsibilities of the three safeguarding statutory partners, and within that those of the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs), who are named as the Chief Officer of Police, the Chief Executive of the Local Authority and the Chief Executive of the local Integrated Care Board (ICB)

The joint functions of the lead safeguarding partners are to:

- Set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.
- Lead their organisation's individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms to hold their delegates to account for the delivery of agency commitments.
- Review and sign off key partnership documents: published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget, yearly report, and local threshold document.
- Provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews, ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable impact on practice (as set out in the yearly report).
- Ensure multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data set providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.
- Ensure all relevant agencies, including education settings, are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Each LSP should appoint a delegated safeguarding partner (DSP) for its agency who should be named in the arrangements. The DSPs should be sufficiently senior to be able to speak with authority, take decisions on behalf of the LSP and hold their sectors to account. The DSPs should have the authority to carry out these functions, while ultimate accountability remains with the LSP as the individual responsible for the delivery of the statutory duties of the safeguarding partners.

In Leeds there is work ongoing in relation to the full implementation of Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 and the LSP roles, with the DSPs forming an Executive Group to ensure that their functions and accountability are addressed.

The LSCP Executive consists of the three statutory agencies that have equal and joint responsibilities for local safeguarding arrangements and ensuring that responsibilities under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 are discharged. They set and lead the strategic safeguarding vision, provide leadership across the city, and identify the LSCP priorities.

The three statutory agencies and representatives for the city are:

- Chief Superintendent - Leeds District Commander, West Yorkshire Police
- Director of Children and Families, Leeds City Council
- Director of Nursing and Quality, Leeds office of NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board.



Currently the Executive also includes:

- LSCP Independent Scrutineer
- LSCP Business Unit Manager
- LSCP Legal Advisor

The LSCP Executive have reviewed and agreed some improvements to the safeguarding arrangements this year, including the purpose, functions and chairing arrangements of all the subgroups and the Children and Young People's Partnership meeting, to ensure that they are aligned to the vision of the partnership, identified learning, and priorities.

This year has seen the introduction of an Audit and Review group, in place of the previous Performance Management group.

The Policy and Procedures group has been revitalised as the Policy and Practice group, to strengthen the focus on improving safeguarding practice, learning and responding to the voice of children, young people and practitioners.

The previous Risk and Vulnerabilities group, which included the arrangements for Silver MACE has been repurposed to ensure a more focused remit on risks that children face outside the home environment.

The LSCP Executive made the decision this year to make the change from the employment of an independent chair to that of a [scrutineer](#).

The LSCP Executive have made a commitment in the coming year to consider how education can be a fourth partner within the Leeds Safeguarding Children arrangements, and this will be implemented within 2024.



SUBGROUPS

During the review of the safeguarding arrangements undertaken by the Executive, several of the subgroups have not met on a regular basis in their usual format, to allow a review of functions and outcomes.

Following the review all the LSCP, subgroups now report directly to the LSCP Executive to ensure appropriate oversight and assurance.

The chairing arrangements for each group have been reviewed to ensure that there is seniority from within partner agencies to deliver the desired outcomes.

The achievements throughout the year, and progress with the priorities are articulated throughout the report.

Review Advisory Group (RAG)

The LSCP RAG is made up of a senior representative from the three statutory partners, the independent scrutineer, a legal advisor and business unit member, with the chairing role rotating between the three statutory partners.

The group has overall responsibility for the serious child safeguarding review process in Leeds, identifying and reviewing cases which, in their opinion, raise issues of importance in relation to Leeds and where appropriate, the commissioning and oversight of the review of those cases in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 Chapter 5](#).

The serious child safeguarding review process in Leeds and relevant learning from this year is outlined in the section [LSCP Reviews 2023 – 2024](#).

The group has a key role in ensuring the identification of good practice and areas of learning with the objective of improving outcomes for children and young people and preventing future harm.

The RAG also considers the learning from national reviews to inform and improve practice in Leeds, and ensures that learning from reviews at all levels are communicated with the other LSCP groups for consideration, including Learning and Development and the Audit and Review groups.

Audit and Review Group

This new group was established this year, after consideration to how we understand and capture the impact of developments in practice. This group oversees the implementation of a multi-agency review and audit plan and receives summaries of key lessons (and fuller details where required) from single agency audits conducted across the LSCP partnership. The group is tasked to review relevant safeguarding data and advise the LSCP Executive of critical trends in respect of needs relevant to safeguarding children.

The group is chaired by the Deputy Director of Nursing and Quality, for NHS West Yorkshire ICB in Leeds, with membership from across the safeguarding partnership. The independent scrutineer is also a member of the group, to ensure that the lens of scrutiny is applied at the earliest opportunity.



The activity of the group has been limited to date as it was only introduced at the end of the year. The focus has been on establishing a representative group, with a clear focus and workplan to ensure that any activity informs practice and offers assurance on safeguarding activity to the LSCP Executive.

There is recognition that more needs to be done to develop an audit framework, however, audits have continued in relation to the JTAI themes.

In the second half of the year the JTAI theme moved to Serious Youth Violence, and an inspection was undertaken in Leeds, see the [External Inspection Section](#).

All learning identified within the JTAI audit process is shared across the partnership and will now form part of the work of the LSCP subgroups.

Audit activity has continued to take place across the partnership and within organisations, with this work identifying strengths and opportunities in safeguarding practice, as well as offering a level of assurance.

Within the Children and Families Service there is an established Quality Assurance Framework which was revised and implemented in early 2023. The Quality Assurance Framework includes the aim to undertake a schedule of auditing activity, which includes Interactive Learning Audits, Audit Participation Groups, and thematic audits.

The weekly referral review meeting forms part of Leeds Children's Services quality assurance framework. The meeting is attended by a representative from the 3 statutory safeguarding partners and is chaired by the Principal Social Worker. The meetings' purpose is to provide multi agency oversight of safeguarding decision making on contacts to Children's Social Work Service, where the primary factor for referral is abuse or neglect. The meeting is a safeguarding multi-agency check point, ensuring children are safeguarded with proportionate and appropriate responses to risk and need.

During 2023/ 2024 an internal audit of the child safeguarding arrangements within NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, provided significant assurance that the day-to-day operations of safeguarding children was appropriate and compliant with national guidelines and best practice.

The Annual Safeguarding Staff Audit within LTHT, identified that staff know where and how to find safeguarding advice and support, how to make a safeguarding referral, how to escalate serious safeguarding incidents and the location of safeguarding policies and procedures.

A health audit review meeting is held monthly, between health partners and the Duty and Advice manager. This allows agencies to work together to review the standard of referrals into services, offering feedback and identifying areas for improvement, in a timely manner.

Silver MACE

Leeds have developed strong multi-agency arrangements to respond to child exploitation through its Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) arrangements, with the silver MACE group forming part of these arrangements.

The previous risk and vulnerabilities group, this year has been redesigned to ensure a more focused approach to the safeguarding needs within the city, in particular in relation to exploitation, serious youth violence and knife crime. This group is now known as Silver

MACE and feeds any challenges and opportunities into the LSCP Executive, who are the Gold MACE.

The group is chaired by the Head of Crime and Safeguarding, Leeds District, West Yorkshire Police, with membership that includes health, education, third sector, CSWS, youth justice and representative from Safer Leeds.

The Silver Group will seek assurance that there is a focused approach and a robust multi-agency response towards prevention, early identification and intervention of children and young people, and the proactive targeting, disrupting and prosecuting of individuals or groups who seek to exploit, abuse and harm children.

In addition, the group seeks assurance that best practice is undertaken and also takes account of local and national research to continually improve safeguarding arrangements in this area of work.

Learning and Development Group

The Learning and Development Group has been redesigned this year to strengthen the focus on learning from reviews, findings of assurance activity and responding to the voice of children, young people and practitioners.

The group is now chaired by the Head of Quality & Practice Improvement and Principal Social Worker. The membership has been reviewed to ensure that there is representation from senior members of partner organisations.

Due to the review, the Learning and Development group has not met as frequently as in previous years, but the learning from reviews continues to have been progressed and is referred to in the [LSCP Reviews 2023 – 2024 section](#).

The multi-agency training offer has continued throughout the year and is referred to in the [Multiagency Training](#) section.

Learning and Development opportunities continue to be available for staff and can be accessed via the [LSCP website](#) and are promoted within the monthly Newsletter.

Policy and Practice Group

Previously this group was a Policy and Procedures group and met when required in line with the need to update or develop new or existing policies and/or procedures.

Following the review the group has been renamed as the Policy and Practice group, to ensure that a focus is maintained on practice improvement, incorporating policies and procedures. This group will now meet regularly and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Nurse of Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, with senior representation from across partners.

The initial focus of the group has been to identify all policies and procedures that require reviewing, to ensure that practitioners have access to the most up to date resources. This includes the implications to practice and policy of the new revised [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guidance](#).

In addition, the LSCP have arrangements in place with the other five LSCP's in West Yorkshire to ensure there is consistency of policies across this geographical footprint.

Education Safeguarding Group (ESG)

The LSCP Education Reference Group has been renamed this year to the LSCP Education Safeguarding Group, to recognise the vital role that education plays within the safeguarding arrangements in Leeds. The main purpose of the group's work is to support the wider strategic work of the LSCP, and the work of the group has been re-purposed this year to ensure it is able to fulfil its strategic responsibilities.

The group is now chaired by the Executive Principle of a Local Academy Trust with a deputy chair from further education, with membership from a wide range of education establishments and relevant partners.



This year to enable the Education Safeguarding Group to effectively fulfil the remit set out as part of the LSCP the ESG has redefined the membership of the group to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear and support the effective delivery of strategic work as summarised below:

- **The ESG Committee (ESGC):** The committee is a small group of leaders who will provide strategic leadership and oversight of the group's work. The leadership of the group will have representation from Leeds Safeguarding Children's Partnership, The Local Authority Safeguarding team and the Education sector with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- **ESG Core Membership Meetings.** This group has been constituted to ensure strong representation across the education sector to capture their voice and views and membership is drawn from key educational organisations from across the city.
- **Task and Delivery Groups (TDGs):** TDGs will be established to support the completion of key actions and membership will be relevant to the task and include appropriate expertise and knowledge.

A commitment has been made to recognise education as the fourth LSCP Statutory Executive partner in Leeds.

Third Sector Safeguarding Group

Representatives from the vast third sector in Leeds remain significant and active partners within the safeguarding arrangements. The LSCP structure includes a Third Sector Safeguarding Group, which is chaired by the CEO of Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service with the deputy chair from Homestart and support from Voluntary Action Leeds.

The purpose of this group is to ensure that our third sector partners have a strong voice, acting as a conduit to sharing learning from LSCP safeguarding reviews and audit work, highlighting challenges or opportunities, and supporting the development of safeguarding practice.

The group has met quarterly throughout the year with each meeting consisting of updates from both the LSCP and organisations from across the third sector. The meetings are themed to support discussion and sharing of views and ideas. Attendees then share this information with their colleagues and within their own organisations, gaining feedback as appropriate.

Themes this year have included areas of practice development, identified learning and changes in safeguarding practice, including suicide prevention, concerns resolution process, learning from reviews, illegal money leading and the role of the scrutineer.

A further development this year was the formation of a Care Collective (working title) to look at the support/services that are available to Care Experienced, Care Leavers and those at risk of entering the care system. In the current economic climate this is an opportunity to consider how statutory and third sector organisations can work together. This group is in its early stages of development. A Chair and Vice Chair are now in place, and an initial meeting taken place with the first task identified; to map what's happening across the city. Progress will then be reported back to the LSCP Executive.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Operational Group (MASOG)

The purpose of this group is to oversee and ensure the integration of the Specialist Child Protection Medical Service within the pathway of safeguarding assessments of children and young people in Leeds, including ensuring that there are relevant policies and procedures in place and any risks are escalated and addressed.

This group is chaired by the Head of Safeguarding in Leeds, for the West Yorkshire ICB, with Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust (LTHT) providing the deputy chair. The membership includes representatives from West Yorkshire Police, Children and Families Service, and the Child Protection Medical Service (CPMS), safeguarding leads from the ICB, LCH and LTHT and Mountain Health Care who are commissioned to provide sexual abuse medicals throughout West Yorkshire.

This year, due to the review of the subgroups that has taken place and operational issues effecting the membership the MASOG, the group has not met as regularly as it previously would have, however, there has remained in place a process of escalation via the usual process for any operational issues that have been identified.

The focus going forward is to review the purpose and functions of the group and a development session is planned to ensure that focus of the group is aligned with the needs and prioritises of the partnership.

Secure Estates Safeguarding Group

The Secure Estates group has only met once this year, due to the review that has taken place, although communication between the services and relevant agencies and escalation of concerns to the executive has been maintained.

The group is to be refreshed as of the start of 2024-25, with a reviewed TOR and a new chair from Leeds Community Healthcare Trust (LCH), membership will continue to include representatives from the secure settings within in Leeds, as well as children and family services, West Yorkshire Police and health services.

The group will continue to monitor the safeguarding arrangements in three secure settings in Leeds (Wetherby Young Offenders Institute, Adel Beck Secure Children's Home and the Police Custody Suite) providing oversight and challenge in relation to safeguarding.

Inspection findings and progress with relevant action plans will continue to be overseen and areas of concern highlighted to the LSCP Executive. The findings of any inspections undertaken this year are reported in External Inspections section.

Restraints

The LSCP has a duty to report on restraints within secure estates and this data is collated annually. A separate annual report from the Secure Settings group will be produced and presented to the LSCP Executive and to other relevant boards.

Wetherby YOI

In Wetherby YOI, 1181 restraints have taken place, including low to high level and planned and unplanned this year. Approximately 80% of the restraints involved young people identify as male and 20% female.

An inspection that took place in Wetherby YOI this year (see [External Inspection section](#)). Following the outcome of the inspection that LSCP Executive wrote to the Governor, met with the leadership team, requested the YOI improvement plan and have agreed to monitor this, providing appropriate support and challenge.

West Yorkshire Police Custody Suite

West Yorkshire Police data indicate that this year, 1176 children and young people had force used on them pre - detention, with 1047 of these recorded as having soft physical force used, which can include restraint or the use of handcuffs.

Over the year, 207 of children and young people received physical force (163 recorded as soft physical force) post detention, within the custody area.

When the data was analysed by WYP it was noted that these numbers are reflective of the type of offence an individual was arrested for. This data will be analysed further and overseen by the secure settings group.

Adel Beck Secure Children's Home

Adel Beck is a secure children's home (SCH) operated by Leeds City Council and is approved by the Department for Education. It accommodates up to 24 children and young people of different genders aged between 10-17 years of age. It provides for up to 14 children and young people placed by the Youth Custody Service and up to 10 children and young people subject to section 25 (welfare) of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by Local Authorities. The admission of children under 13 years of age on welfare grounds under section 25 requires the approval of the Secretary of State for Education.

This year Adel Beck data demonstrates that there were 168 restraints carried out within the year, across the different units. Approximately 43% of these involved a young person who identified as male and 57% female.

More detailed data such as the age of the young people, ethnicity and type of restraint, are provided by the secure settings and analysed in the Secure Setting group and will be included within the Secure Settings annual report.

Children and Young People's Partnership

The Children and Young People's Partnership was developed to provide strategic leadership, vision, and drive delivery of the LSCP Annual Report priorities and the [Leeds Children and Young People's Plan \(CYPP\)](#).

The meeting is now chaired by an Executive member of the LSCP, currently the Director of Children and Families, reporting directly to the executive. Membership includes the chairs of the LSCP subgroups and wider safeguarding partnership, voice and influence, Executive Member for Children, Families & Adult Social Care, LCC, Third Sector, Education, as well as leads related to the CYPP.



This year, the purpose, functions and priorities of the meeting were part of the review of the governance structure carried out by the Executive. An engagement session has been held and views sought regarding the future arrangements for the meeting, wider partnership arrangements and oversight of the CYPP as well as an OBA to develop the safeguarding priorities for 2024-25. There has also been a continued focus on bringing the voice of children and young people into the partnership.

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Child death review partners are the local authority and the ICB. Statutory responsibilities are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. To ensure that these statutory responsibilities are met in Leeds both CDOP and Neonatal Death Overview Panels (NDOP) are held regularly with a standalone annual report published on the [LSCP website](#).

CDOP/NDOP are key to learning from deaths of all children and this year there has been a variety of learning identified and subsequent actions.

In brief the key changes made this year, as a result of the learning in CDOP and NDOP are:

- The Local Resilience Forum have taken forward national recommendations from the Manchester Arena Bombing.
- Bath time duck safety campaign was delivered by Health Visitors and an update was made in the written information given to parents in the "red book".

- Health visitor policy on warning about sleep pods reinforced. Posters about the dangers of sleep pods in wards.
- Health visitors in Leeds have embedded the 'every sleep a safe sleep' campaign into their advice to families with newborns.
- Health visitors in Leeds now share information about risk of suffocation (for example from nappy sacks) at an earlier stage.
- Links strengthened with third sector organisations supporting Gypsy Roma and Traveller families.
- Midwifery colleagues in Leeds have started to use the national Birmingham Symptom Obstetric Tool (BSOT) to help identify which women should be advised to come into the labour ward.
- There is improved liaison between HV service and hospital antenatal team to provide links for babies who are expected to be unwell after birth and require enhanced support.
- Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust have done work to improve advocacy for those young people aged 16 and 17 years old via training on the Mental Capacity Act
- Leeds Community Healthcare NHS trust have done work to prompt promotion of covid vaccination.
- Partners are developing a revised guidelines for SUDI which will include better signposting to senior police to help sensitively manage access to scenes of death.
- Enhanced training has been given to midwifery teams to aid the interpretation of monitoring of mothers and babies in labour.
- Adequate thermal management of very premature infants has been highlighted to maternity and neonatal services and remain under continuous review.
- Improvement in the collection of key demographic information for SUDIC cases has been trialled, to improve data capture.
- Vaping has been added as a section into the analysis proforma.



FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

Working Together 2023, states that the LSCP should agree on the level of funding needed to deliver the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This includes consideration of business and analytical support, independent scrutiny, infrastructure, and core functions including local children safeguarding practice reviews, multi-agency training and learning events. It is the responsibility of the LSP to ensure that adequate funding is allocated and spent in line with agreed priorities.

Funding contributions from the statutory safeguarding partners should be equitable and agreed by the LSP. Funding for the arrangements should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they can meet the financial needs of the arrangements.

The funding partners have continued their commitment to funding the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, as set out below.

Contributions 2023-24

Leeds City Council- Children and Families	£175,000
NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board	£135,135
West Yorkshire Police	£ 26,000
West Yorkshire Probation	£ 6,000
Leeds City Council- Housing	£51,645
Previous DofE funding	£10,000
Training charging	£17,600
Total	£379,422

This funding provides staffing and resources that are managed by the LSCP Business Unit manager as detailed below and regular oversight reports are presented to the Executive.

The majority of the budget, as expected is allocated to the staffing of the business unit, with professional services, including the undertaking of CSPRs which require an independent commissioned author, being the next largest area of spend.

Spending 2023-24

Staffing	£302,201
Professional Services	£35,197
Refreshments	£186
Room Hire	£3,579
Recruitment and Advertising	£484
Membership	£1988
Total	£343,635

This year has seen an underspend, which is mostly due to a reduction of staffing within the business unit. The underspend will go into a reserve budget, which the partnership will utilise in the coming year to address the identified gaps in response to learning from reviews, the LSCP priorities and the findings of the JTAI inspection.



WHAT DO WE KNOW- DATA

The new Audit and Review group has the responsibility for the monitoring, oversight and analysis of data. For the coming year, the audit plan will be responsive to the analysis of data, with a workplan that includes wider data analysis from across the partnership.

The local authority performance team provide a rich source of data for the Audit and Review group to consider and analyse. This reflects the openness of the local authority to have their data considered by agencies with a view to identify challenges and seek opportunities.

There are plans in place to review the data dashboard in line with the LSCP priorities and to include wider partners data.

Child Protection Systems

Child protection data is routinely examined by children's services and findings shared and analysed as required across the partnership, via subgroups.

As of March 2024, there were 690 children with a child protection plan (CPP) in Leeds equating to a rate of 39.6 children and young people with a CPP per 10,000 children aged 0-18. This is an increase from 601 the previous March 2023 a rate of 35.2. The England rate for 2023 was 43.2 per 10,000. At the end of July 2024 there were 670 Leeds children on a child protection plan

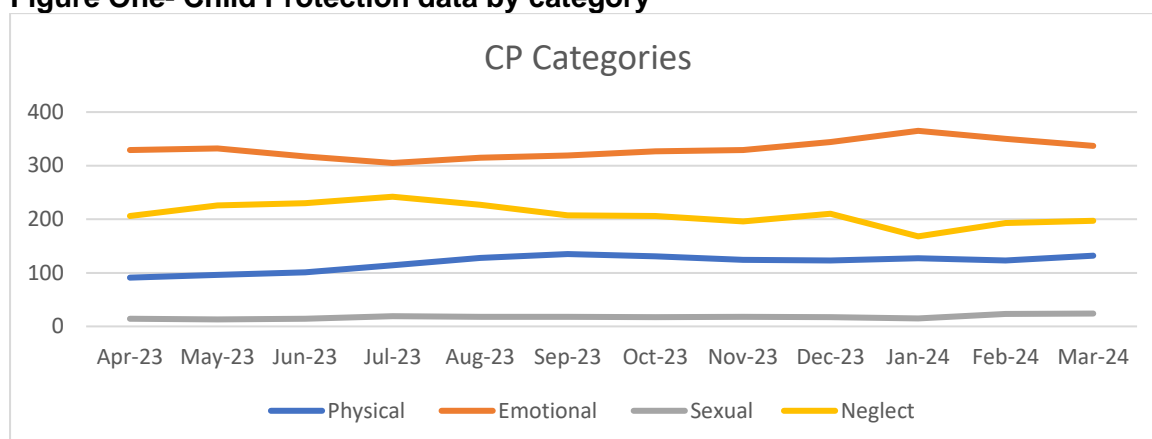
When official data is published later in the year, we anticipate the Leeds rate will remain below national, regional core city and statistical neighbour averages. The comparative rates for children on a child protection plan for March 2023 were:

- Leeds 35.2
- Core cities 47.7
- Statistical neighbours 51.3
- Yorkshire and The Humber 50.8
- England 43.2

July 2024 analysis of children on a child protection plan shows that children from a mixed ethnic background are over-represented when compared to the current reception to Year 11 school population (10.3% compared to 7.5%), children from an Asian background are under-represented (7.0% to 12.1%) with children from a black ethnic background on a child protection plan slightly above the school population (10.2% to 9.2%).



Figure One- Child Protection data by category



In line with previous years, the number of children experiencing emotional abuse remains the key reason of children being subject to a CPP in Leeds.

The age categories of children requiring a CPP have broadly remained the same over the four years of data in Figure Three, although this year has seen a 2% reduction in under 1s having a CPP and slight increases in the other age groups.

Those aged 10-15 years make up the largest category of children with a CPP, followed by those aged 5-9 years old, which has been the picture across the 4 years outlined and is in line with the national trend across England.

Figure Two- Child protection date by age

Age Categories CPP	2020/21	2021/22	22/23	23/24
Percentage of cohort under 1	6.9%	7.6%	8.5%	6.5%
Percentage of cohort 1-4	25.5%	25.5%	21.4%	23.0%
Percentage of cohort 5-9	29.9%	30.5%	31.3%	29.3%
Percentage of cohort 10-15	31.7%	31.5%	32.6%	34.3%
Percentage of cohort 16+	6.0%	4.8%	6.2%	6.8%

To ensure that the needs of children and families who require the support and safety of a child protection plan are addressed as quickly as possible, it is vital that these take place within an appropriate timescale. Last year concerns were highlighted regarding the low levels of initial child protection conferences being held on time. Assurance was provided, in relation to the cause of this low level and that safety and improvement plans were in place.

Throughout the year further developments and improvements have been made and sustained, by the end of the year there was significant improvements with 80.3% of conferences being held in time.

Timescales for review child protection conferences were not impacted in the same way, with 85.3% held in time as of March 2024.

The Audit and Review group will continue to monitor this performance measure.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The latest official statistics are from the **903 Children in Care data** for 2023. Consistent with authorities across England Leeds is seeing growth in the child in care population. While Leeds compares well in terms of long-term trends in recent years 2019-23 the Leeds rate of increase is marginally above comparators (7 children per 10,000 compared to 5 or 6 children for comparator groups). Leeds 2023 rate of children in care of 84 per 10,000 ranks 6th of 11



with statistical neighbours, rates range from 57 to 144. Leeds rate is 4th of 8 core cities with a range from 57 to 156 children in care per 10,000.

The age profile of the Leeds children in care population is similar to England. Children aged 10-17 make up 62% of our Looked After population from 44% of our child population. Ages 16 and 17 make up 22% of the Leeds care population and 10% of the child population.

Children from mixed ethnic backgrounds are over-represented in the care population and those from Asian backgrounds under-represented relative to the Leeds population. Nationally published (March 24 for 2022/23) data identifies that 60% of Leeds Children Looked After of statutory school age have an identified SEN similar to 58.1 percent in England.

Care starters by reason for care entry Abuse or Neglect is the main reason why a child starts care, consistently over 60% of cases. While the proportion is consistent the number of cases has grown by 32% or 88 children between 2019/20 to 2023/24. In 2019/20 there were 111 cases with starting care reasons of absent parenting, family dysfunction and family in distress, in 2023/24 there were 186 cases with one of these reasons.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Between 2018 and 2020, numbers fluctuated between 50 and 60. From 2021/22 to 2022/23, numbers rose to mid-70s. In 2023/24 the number rose to around 100 by December 2023 and was then stable to March 2024. Since March 2024, a further increase has been seen to 120. Under the National Transfer Scheme Leeds' current 'threshold' is 172. In 2023/24 these children represented 27 per cent of the overall CLA cohort growth.





LSCP REVIEWS 2023 – 2024

The LSCP Review Advisory Group (RAG) is responsible for identifying learning in relation to the most serious cases, including Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents (SCSIs), identifying good practice and areas of learning and improvement.

The fundamental purpose of reviewing incidents where children who have either died because of abuse or neglect, or where children have been seriously harmed, is to learn from those cases to help make improvements to systems that protect children and to prevent other children from being harmed.

A central role is to seek assurance related to actions taken following local learning activities, Rapid Reviews, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) or National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. The RAG requests support from other LSCP subgroups to disseminate learning, undertake quality assurance work to measure impact and to seek assurance that partner agencies use their own internal structures to implement recommendations.

The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the panel) and at a local level with the safeguarding partners.

Leeds has a robust review process in place which ensures that cases are considered in a timely manner in line with the requirements of the guidance, considers the views of the three safeguarding strategic partners and is overseen by a clear governance process, which is published on the website.

Notifications of SCSIs

The legislative framework of the Children Act 2004, places a duty on local authorities in England, to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the 'Panel'), of incidences of death or serious harm where it is known or suspected that a child has been abused or neglected. This includes those children that maybe temporarily outside the local authority's area in which they usually reside.

The revised Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 states that the local authority performs this duty on behalf of the safeguarding partners.

The local authority should notify the Panel of any incident that meets the above criteria via the Child Safeguarding Online Notification System. It should do so within five working days of becoming aware it has occurred.

In Leeds the LSCP has in place a process for discussing and agreeing those incidents which may meet the criteria for making a notification (the SCSi Notification Process). This process has oversight from its Executive and legal advice is provided, and in this reporting period all decisions have been unanimously agreed.

The local authority has a separate duty to notify the DfE and Ofsted when a looked after child dies, up to and including the age of 24 (in accordance with its leaving care duties). There is no automatic requirement for a local child safeguarding practice review, unless the criteria are met. However local partners may convene a local review if they think learning may be gained.

In Leeds the Review Process has been reviewed and updated in line with the requirements of Working Together 2023.

The LSCP RAG collectively considers whether an incident meets the criteria for a SCSi notification, with the relevant partner agencies providing information and professional opinions to support the decision making. Following the notification of a SCSi by the local authority to the National Safeguarding Panel the LSCP through the LSCP RAG will promptly undertake a Rapid Review.

Cases for consideration are raised to the RAG via partner agencies using the SCSi notification and discussion form.

When an agency other than the local authority becomes aware of an incident that appears to meet the criteria for notification, the relevant partners discuss this with their agency's safeguarding lead (or RAG member) and if appropriate refers this to the LSCP RAG for a discussion in relation to a potential notification.

In 2023-24 the RAG considered four cases for notifications where the decision was made that they did not meet the criteria for notification. In these cases, feedback was given to the partner agency who raised the concern and the rationale for the decision made.



Rapid Reviews

A Rapid Review is a multi-agency process which considers the circumstances of a SCSi. The purpose of the Rapid Review is to identify and act upon immediate learning and consider if there is additional learning which could be identified through a wider Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR).

The Rapid Review enables safeguarding partners to:

- Gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time
- Discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately
- Identify immediate learning and consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Decide what steps they should take next, including whether to undertake a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR).

Once the Rapid Review responses have been received, RAG members meet, alongside the Rapid Review individual report authors, to consider the information, key learning points and areas for further consideration. This allows authors to share their information in a responsive way and ensure that the process is not remote.

RAG members then meet separately to consider if the criteria to undertake a review is met.

Minutes of all meetings are produced alongside the Rapid Review form, capturing the rationale for any recommendations made and shared with the LSCP Executive, who make the final decision, prior to submission to the Panel.

In 2023-24, in Leeds there were four Rapid Review processes completed and sent to the Panel, which related to five children.

The first case followed the death of a child. A Rapid Review was undertaken with a recommendation not to proceed with a CSPR, the Panel agreed with this decision.

The second, was originally discussed in relation to the abuse of three children, and the decision made for a single agency review - this was agreed by Panel. However, they advised if any further children were identified through the police investigation, then a CSPR ought to be considered.

Two further children were identified to be linked, and a subsequent Rapid Review was completed which recommended a CSPR.

A fourth Rapid Review related to the death of a baby and recommended that a CSPR be completed.

CSPRs

In 2023-24, one CSPR was completed; this was considered to be an exceptional case with reasons not to publish, including the potential adverse impact that publication could have on the subjects; this decision was supported by the Panel.

There are three ongoing CSPRs which have progressed this year and are at varying points of completion. Two further new CSPRs were agreed this year, one being a joint review with a neighbouring authority.

Progress with all the CSPRs in Leeds is overseen by the RAG and regular reports received by the Executive.

Some CSPRs have been delayed due to the availability of suitable authors, with local and wider partnerships expressing similar difficulties.



LEARNING THEMES

The implementation of learning from all cases, either for individual agencies or the partnership, irrespective of the decision to proceed to a CSPR, is overseen by the RAG with regular updates given to the LSCP Executive and incorporated in training.

From the cases this year there have been several themes identified, which will be considered in the appropriate subgroups in terms of implementation of learning and evaluation of impact. This is ongoing work throughout the year and will continue into 2024-25.

Professional curiosity – This has been a reoccurring theme in reviews and an area where work has already taken place across the partnership, including joint work with the Leeds Safeguarding Adult Board and Safer Leeds, to develop and disseminate consistent resources.

Discussions have taken place as to why this remains a recurring theme from reviews and how we evidence the impact of any work on practice and outcomes. In 2024-25 alongside Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board and Safer Leeds, a video will be developed to support practitioner understanding of professional curiosity. A decision has been made that further work is required to embed the learning in practice and in the coming year a national lead will be commissioned to support Leeds with this work.

A multi-agency learning event was held in February 2023, which focused on themes that emerged from a Rapid Review and a CSPR including professional curiosity, alongside cumulative risk assessing, disguised compliance, public protection and guarding against 'normalisation' of abuse within generations of families.

Throughout the year, partners have actively developed resources to support practitioners in relation to professional curiosity. Several partners have developed briefings for staff and to further enhance the existing professional curiosity partnership work across the city, the ICB safeguarding team has coordinated and developed an additional resource and training package with collaboration from colleagues from the health economy. The training will be advertised in 2024/2025 on the Leeds health and care academy platform www.leedshealthandcareacademy.org as this will allow the training to be accessible to a wide range of colleagues in the health and care sector.

Resources developed by individual partners are shared where appropriate across the partnership.

Leeds Children and Families continue to provide training for front line practitioners on professional curiosity. In particular for those working in safeguarding roles. This is incorporated into the broader workforce development offer.

Domestic Abuse- This is again a reoccurring theme, either current or historic, with concerns regarding how the impact upon children is recognised, understood and responded to.

Domestic Abuse remains a priority of the LSCP and the developments this year are included in the Priority section below.

In view of the need to continue with practice developments in this area, the data related to occurrences and children and the significant and long terms impact upon the wellbeing of children and outcomes, domestic abuse will remain a priority for the coming year. The LSCP will work with the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership (DALP) to improve practice.



The impact of bereavement- Several reviews have noted that there has been a bereavement or significant loss within the family, and this is not always been recognised or understood in terms of the impact on the child/children, parenting and the wider family.

As a result, guidance for schools: Response following a suspected suicide has been developed and as bereavement and loss continues to be a learning theme, it has been agreed that further work is required to ensure that practitioners are able to ensure that any loss is considered within work with child, young people and families. The partnership has approached a nationally recognised bereavement charity to support this work.

Leeds is working towards being a Trauma Informed city, which is reflected in all our actions, activities and interactions. Our strategy, Compassionate Leeds: Trauma awareness, prevention and response strategy for children, young people and families, sets out how we plan to create that change by taking a public health approach to the problem. This will focus on preventing childhood trauma and reducing its impact for children and young people across Leeds. Bereavement and loss are significant traumatic experiences for a child or young person and the partnership will support the Trauma Informed work of the city.

Neglect- continues to be evident in some cases, whether this is persistent and pervasive or as a response to a situation or event.

Leeds has a neglect strategy and tools to support practitioners available on the LSCP website, which are regularly accessed. Since their development there have been significant changes in practice and socio-economic circumstances, which means that it is timely to review the strategy and the underpinning tools, which will be undertaken in the coming year.

National Reviews- all learning from national reviews have also been considered by the RAG and appropriate actions developed. The findings and the response in Leeds, for the national review of safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings is being overseen by the SEND Partnership with oversight and assurance sought by the LSCP Executive.

Taking Learning from Reviews Forward

Following the identification of learning and/or the completion of a review, an action plan is collated and agreed by all the relevant partners. Progress against this is monitored by and assurance sought by the LSCP RAG. The key messages and themes are also considered in the relevant subgroups to ensure that learning is incorporated into training opportunities, policies, procedures and embedded in practice.

The dissemination of learning is achieved through:

- The production of learning sheets which summarise the incident which has been reviewed and the key good practice and learning – this is also provided to partner agency training leads to support them in reflecting lessons within single agency training.
- Updating training to reflect learning, including a section in relation to learning from reviews within the LSCP Refresher Training
- Presentation to the CYPP meeting including requests for partners to disseminate and embed learning internally.
- Practitioner presentations based on the review and identified learning – consideration is also undertaken with regards to capacity in relation to the number of sessions required to reach the workforce within Leeds.
- Inclusion within LSCP communications via the newsletter and website.

This year, consideration has been given to how we can share learning themes from Safeguarding Adults Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews and this work will be strengthened in the coming year.

MULTI-AGENCY TRAINING

Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that all staff and volunteers have access to the appropriate level of safeguarding training to undertake their safeguarding responsibilities. Agencies in Leeds are expected to ensure that any training which they deliver meets the standards as set out in the LSCP Safeguarding Introductory Training, Minimum Content Requirements.

The DSPs have the responsibility to ensure the provision of appropriate multi-agency safeguarding professional development and training. This is achieved in Leeds by a blended approach, which consists of on-line self-directed learning opportunities, taught on-line training sessions and wider learning and development opportunities which can be accessed via the LSCP webpage.

The core safeguarding training, which includes Introduction to Working Together safeguarding training, Refresher training, Working Together training and Child Exploitation training, are provided by the partnership and/or an appropriate commissioned service. All LSCP training has been updated in line with Working Together 2023.

Alongside the core offer, subject experts from across the city are utilised to provide multi-agency topic specific training/briefings. Topics that have been offered this year include, County Lines, Modern Slavery, Harmful Sexual Behaviours, Child Protection, Managing Allegations and Prevent.

The LSCP works alongside the other safeguarding partnerships in Leeds to ensure that wider safeguarding learning and development opportunities are developed and promoted, in areas of joint responsibility, such as domestic abuse.

Evaluation is part of all training opportunities which are offered via the LSCP, with the feedback utilised to improve training delivery, content and opportunities, as well as offering a level of assurance regarding the effectiveness of the training.

Figure three- Training Evaluations

Title of Training	Training increased confidence	Met learning outcomes to a great or some extent	Increased knowledge, understanding and skills
Introductory	100%*	100%	98.5%
Refresher	99%*	99%	98%
Working Together	100%*	99.5%	96.4%
Child Exploitation	100%	100%	100%

*includes individuals who rated their confidence at the highest rating at the beginning of the training.

Overall multi-agency training across the year has evaluated positively as outlined in Figure Three, increasing knowledge and confidence, which is consistent with previous years.

In the coming year the Learning and Development group will consider how the impact on practice and outcomes of multiagency learning and development opportunities, which includes training, can be evidenced.

PRIORITIES 2023-24

The LSCP Executive in consultation with safeguarding partners set the priorities for the LSCP. The expectation is for sub-groups to drive the agreed priorities, explore opportunities for development and provide assurance of the effectiveness of the safeguarding system.

Following consideration and with the understanding of the improvements still required the decision was made to maintain the previous priorities into 2023-24.

- Domestic abuse and the impact on children
- Vulnerable learners
- Exploitation.

Extensive developments have taken place across the partnership and within organisations throughout the year and provide a level of assurance to the LSCP Executive regarding safeguarding practice. Some key areas are outlined within the report, but more extensive information has been received as part of our assurance model and will shape and influence future works, identification of opportunities and assurance regarding safeguarding practice.

Priority one - Children and Young People Experiencing Domestic Abuse

West Yorkshire Police (WYP) report that domestic abuse, and its impact on children, as one of their top priorities due to the significant numbers involved. In Leeds each 24 hours sees an average of 60 domestic incidents reported to WYP which equates to over 21,000 in the year, with 24.4% of these noted to involve a child or children.

Overall police data demonstrates that domestic incidents reported to the police are down 12% on the previous year but those involving children rose slightly by 0.6%. Stalking and harassment remains the largest crime category, which is consistent with the previous year.

The Front Door Safeguarding Hub continues to support victims-survivors and families through Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the Daily Risk Assessment Management Meeting (DRAMM). Over the past 12 months from April 2023 to March 2024 these arrangements have supported 4672 victims with safety plans.

In 2023-24, 18.8% of referrals accepted by CSWS were recorded as having a feature of domestic abuse, this is a reduction from 21.3% (2022-23) and 22.3% (2021-22).

The data demonstrates that although there are some reductions in the cases of DA recorded across police and CSWS in Leeds, domestic abuse remains a significant issue in the city.

As a response, during 2023/ 2024 there have been extensive developments in safeguarding practice across the partnerships in Leeds with a responsibility for domestic abuse and safeguarding children, with just some of these detailed within the report.

The [Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy for 2023-28](#), has been launched in Leeds this year, setting out the overall vision to end the harm caused by domestic abuse. The new strategy covers four main themes:

- Awareness, prevention, and early intervention

- Responding to risk and harm
- People causing harm (perpetrators)
- Children and young people.

The role of the Domestic Violence Co-ordinators (delivered by Behind Closed Doors) within the Early Help Hubs continues to support practitioners and families. This is an integral part of the wider response from children's services to support children affected by domestic violence and abuse and has been agreed to be delivered until 2025.

Leeds Women's Aid has continued to deliver the Elevate Project that provides support to children and young people in refuge and the community who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. Additional funding has been given to this project as part of the Voices Project so that those workers can also capture the views of children and young people to inform the work of the board.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) funding for an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) to work with young people (16–18-year-olds) at the Front Door is on-going with funding having been extended to 2025. This allows for the continuation of this resource to work with this group.

Operation Encompass is a process that allows for notifications to be made to schools where there has been an incident of domestic violence and abuse reported to the police where children are present in the previous 24 hours. This allows schools to provide a welfare or safeguarding response in the immediate aftermath of the incident. Alongside West Yorkshire Police an IT based solutions is being explored to improve the process of notifications, so they can be made directly to schools and further education establishments through a fully automated process.

NHS West Yorkshire ICB in Leeds have delivered a train the trainer programme aimed at practitioners working within primary care to support with undertaking Routine and Triggered Enquiry. Following this a Routine Enquiry Survey has been completed, to determine Primary Care practitioners use and knowledge of Routine Enquiry. The findings suggest that there is an increase in clinicians asking Routine and Triggered Enquiry questions and evidence of a more knowledgeable and responsive workforce in relation to recognising and responding to DVA, which is being embedded in practice.

Children at risk of domestic abuse are now flagged on GP records across Leeds, to ensure that practitioners are informed of any risk to the child.

Leeds and York Partnership NHS Trust (LYPFT) in November 2023 undertook an audit in relation to if practitioners are referring children at risk of domestic abuse to children social care services and documenting outcome. Learning was noted in terms of documentation and all safeguarding concerns are now recorded on a new Trust safeguarding contact form which is embedded within a service user electronic record. A further audit is planned to establish if there is evidence of sustained improvements.

This year West Yorkshire Police report that one significant key change in relation to the management of domestic abuse, is the greater utilisation of charge and remand of domestic abuse suspects, rather than bail, which can be subsequently breached by an offender committing further offences against the same victim. Remanding a suspect to court to await trial can vitally protect victims and children from harmful offenders, and this year WYP are on course to remand a third more suspects than two years ago.

The e-child and family assessment within Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust (LTHT) now includes a section on asking the child or young person if they feel safe at home, what makes them happy or sad, if they are ok and if there is anything we can help them with. Children, young people and babies who are identified at high risk of domestic abuse in MARAC are flagged on LTHT systems.

An electronic version of the Young Persons DASH has been developed within LTHT patient records, to support staff to assess risks and safety plan and Routine Enquiry is now firmly embedded in the Emergency Department assessment.

In response to recognised and persistence high rate of domestic abuse in the city CSWS have begun to review the training offered to practitioners, including updated Masterclasses being delivered by prominent leads in the area focusing on Domestic Violence and Abuse and legislative and learning updates.

HMYOI Wetherby have employed a full-time family therapist whose focus is to support families to repair damaged relationships to support stronger links for when the child is released. A Time Out for Dads course is also offered to children, this course promotes positive parenting and the impact of domestic violence on the child.

Promoted but not delivered by the LSCP as part of the training offer, practitioners have had access to appropriate training via the Safer Leeds offer. This is a modular approach to training and 2,107 places have been delivered to practitioners across Leeds, during the year.

The partnership also supported the 16 Days of Action Campaign, led by the Safer Stronger Communities, which included supporting a 16 day social media campaign, which reached over 38,000 people across Facebook and Instagram, promoting a variety of support services and safety initiatives such as Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS), Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL), Ask for Angela Leeds and WalkSafe Leeds.

The ambition in Leeds is that families experiencing parental conflict are supported at the right time, by the right practitioner to prevent any impact of this conflict on children. The aim is to increase awareness of parental conflict and the impact it can have on children and young people and their outcomes. Leeds is taking a practice approach through providing workforce development opportunities. Leeds is working with thirteen other local authorities within Yorkshire and Humberside to jointly commission a regional website and digital campaign for practitioners and members of the public to support this work.

Priority Two: Vulnerable Learners

Children's involvement in learning in addition to supporting lifelong outcomes aids safeguarding. One of the five outcomes within the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan is that all children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life.

Children and especially those in secondary schools continue to be less engaged in learning than they were pre-Covid, this is a national issue. There were challenges pre- Covid secondary unauthorised absence levels being an example, these have been amplified.

Published data for the 2022/23 school year highlights school attendance as 94.1% in primary schools and 90.3% in secondary schools. In that year 17% of children in primary schools and 27.2% in secondary schools were persistently absent, missing over 10% of their learning. Severe absence is missing more than 50% of learning, 4.8% of secondary pupils were severely absent in 2022/23. DFE collects regular in-year attendance data from schools. As of 24 June 2024, based on 267 of 280 schools, overall academic year attendance to date was 92.1% with 30,048 pupils recorded as persistently absent (22.8%)

and 3,705 pupils were recorded as severely absent, missing at least 50% of all possible sessions. This is unofficial in year information.

Suspensions have also increased post pandemic, accepting there are termly variations. Again, using unofficial but recent in-year data there were 5368 suspensions in the spring term of 2024 a rate 4.1 suspensions per 100 children. These suspensions involved 2861 children who on average experienced 8 sessions (half days) or 4 schools' days of suspension, 22944 sessions (half days) were lost. This level of suspensions is 2.4 times greater than spring 2018/19.

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. This could be for a range of reasons including children who are awaiting a school place and children in receipt of unsuitable education. The DfE started to collect information from LAs in England during 2022/23, these statistics are developmental with more to do on definitions and data capture to be assured of consistency. However, this does not diminish the importance of children in being in education, with 1510 children in Leeds recorded as missing education, a rate per population of 1.3 per 1000.

A growing number of children are being educated at home. The local authority is notified of a child or young person becoming Electively Home Educated (EHE) by either the parent or school. The number of notifications almost doubled in the academic year following the beginning of the COVID-19 and have remained high. In June 2024 1,420 children were being electively home educated, an increase from 1,080 in October 2023. Reasons for home education include philosophical reasons, health-based reasons and dissatisfaction with local schools. Local authorities have no formal duty to monitor the provision of education at home, however, under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, they do have a duty to make arrangements to identify children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. This duty applies to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll.

The number of pupils with special educational needs is growing faster than the pupil population. 25,199 pupils had a special educational need in 2023/24, 33 percent higher than 18, 944 pupils in 2018/19. Over the same period the pupil population grew by 6 percent from 129,591 to 136,799. 18.4 percent of the pupil population now has SEN, broadly in-line with DfE statistical neighbours and England and lower than the Core Cities average of 19.4 percent. This cohort comprises children with an Education Health and Care Plan and those identified by schools for SEND Support. The numbers here reference children in a Leeds school, the children in a Leeds school with an EHCP will include children who live in neighbouring authorities and is only part of the overall EHCP cohort in Leeds aged 0-24.

Leeds has had a Funding for Inclusion (FFI) model that has historically provided schools in Leeds with additional funding without the requirement of a pupil having an EHC Plan. This model is changing, potentially leading to more school age children with EHC Plans bringing Leeds more aligned with other authorities EHCP rates. In 2023/24, of all children and young people in Leeds schools with SEN:

- 3864 pupils in Leeds schools' have an education, health and care plan, 2.8 percent of all pupils in Leeds, lower than England (4.8 percent), Core Cities (4.3 percent) and DfE Statistical Neighbours (5 percent).
- 21,335 pupils in Leeds schools' have SEN support, 15.6 percent of all pupils in

Leeds, a similar proportion to the Core Cities average of 15.6 and higher than England and Statistical Neighbours (13.6 percent in England, 13.7 percent Statistical Neighbours).

SEND represents a range of needs that are grouped into categories called primary need. The most prevalent primary needs are speech, language and communication (SLCN), social

emotional and mental health (SEMH) and moderate learning difficulty (MLD). Notably, the primary need of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) has tripled since 2018, from 902 children in 2018 to 3299 in 2024. There are differences in the prevalence of need by phase of education, with SLCN the most prevalent in primary schools, SEMH in secondary schools and ASD in special schools.

This year has seen developments in relation to the identification of and support to vulnerable learners across the partnership and they have also been considered throughout the work related to the other two priorities.

The Dynamic Risk Register is a tool used by practitioners across agencies to dynamically assess the risk, of a child or young person with a learning disability and or Autism, at risk of admission to hospital or placement breakdown. Children and young people are risk assessed using a traffic light system. Where a child or young person is assessed at being at greatest risk (red) the lead practitioner will be asked to complete a CETR referral form which will trigger the CETR process within the complex needs business unit of the ICB. Where lower-level risks are identified practitioners work together to ensure the child or young person is able to access appropriate services across health, education and social care in a coordinated way. The DSR enables partners to work more effectively together to support this group of children and young people, meaning their needs are met in the community and the number of children admitted into tier four CAMHs inpatient provision is reduced.

In HMYOI Wetherby there are now two new function leads in positions as head of education, skills and work, this position is funded by YCS but is a qualified teacher to support the activities for children. With a Neurodiversity support manager to support the needs of those who need adjustments while in custody and the supporting of staff around understanding their needs.

The Leeds Deaf CAMHs team, as part of LYPFT, have worked to strengthen processes and support to ensure that any children identified with hearing impairment can access appropriate education and support.

In Leeds, all children who attend the Emergency Department are asked which school/college or nursery they attend to identify those who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), which is recorded, and appropriate sign posting can take place.

LTHT has a specialist LD and Autism Team who support staff to complete a Learning Disabilities Passport with the person and the Trust has a series of 'Easy Read' leaflets, posters etc to support both children and adults with additional needs.

Priority Three: Exploitation of Children and Young People

Significant work has taken place across the partnership to improve practice and the identification and reduction of risks.

The work that has been undertaken this year, has been to develop a more integrated approach to our citywide work to better respond to the violence and exploitation agenda. Work has been undertaken to better understand the cohort of young people involved; the size, the extent and the diversity of those affected. This ongoing work has informed the systems and services that have been developed.

A consistent approach to responding to serious youth violence and exploitation across the city has been embedded, including the streamlining of assessment and referral pathways. A whole family approach to issues of exploitation, assessments and plans continue to address

and respond to the needs and difficulties for all members of families as well as focusing on existing strengths.

There has been a real enthusiasm across the partnership to do things differently, with a focus on thinking about harm outside the home, thinking about the contexts that harm happens in, developing effective welfare responses and learning about what works, working with parents as 'protective partners' and building trusting relationships with third sector partners and non-traditional agencies.

Leeds continues to work as a partner with Durham University (Prof Carlene Firmin) to further develop the contextual approach to exploitation and the Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) ICPC (Initial Child Protection Conference) pathway, which is a pathway for young people who are felt to be at significant risk of harm beyond their families. The pathway has been developed to consider contextual approaches to safeguarding, the parents as protective partner agencies and bringing in non-traditional partner agencies.

An online safety campaign, 'start the conversation' (described in the [Campaigns section](#)) has been developed in response to concerns regarding the risk of on-line exploitation.

Exploitation has been key to learning and development opportunities across the partnership this year, with LYPFT having child exploitation as one of their themes for their Trust conference, WYP having a focused on upskilling their safeguarding officers with the provision of bespoke training, including the victims lived experience, bespoke training to education providers which is supported by the SAFE project, and LTHT developing and launching "Introduction to Child Exploitation" training.

WYP have carried out operations during the year, to test the responses in the city in relation to exploitation, including the responses from hotels and taxi companies.

LTHT have a risk assessment in place for young people aged 16-17 attending ED to ensure they could self-identify areas of concern and know staff would be able to support them to keep safe. This year this is being developed further to be a digital e-assessment for 12–18-year-olds.

A safeguarding nurse advisor has now joined the Navigator Service as part of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) plan to reduce violence and exploitation. A&E Navigator Service accepts referrals from any service within Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust. They aim to support young people between the ages of 11-25 who have been victim of serious youth violence, or who are vulnerable due to risk of CSE/CCE/NEET substance misuse or multiple ACE's.

LTHT has also produced of an educational learning video called 'Trauma call' which depicts the journey of a 16-year-old who victim of knife crime, including an assessment in Emergency Department Resus, breaking news to relatives and support provided by the MDT and A&E Navigators. It is designed to be used alongside a lesson plan in schools to educate young people and their families.

All under 18's who are booked for pregnancy have a mandatory child exploitation risk assessment completed.

The head of resettlement at HMYOI Wetherby, has developed a well-attended public protection meeting. This meeting discusses the work done by Wetherby, police, social workers, and community teams planning any relevant monitoring in custody and release. The social work team continue to support children in reporting historic abuse and support them if they need to attend police interviews around this.

MACE Arrangements

Leeds has developed strong multi-agency arrangements to respond to child exploitation through its Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) arrangements.

The MACE framework in Leeds has four interrelated steps: Partnership Intelligence Management (PIM); Bronze Group; Silver Group; and Gold Group.

The PIM is an information and intelligence sharing process between the Police and Children's Social Work Service (CSWS). All information, intelligence and concerns about children missing and at risk of exploitation are shared electronically with CSWS and the Youth Justice Service (YJS) by the Police. The information is reviewed by allocated workers and Team Managers who then coordinate timely and proportionate responses to vulnerable children and young people, including ensuring that referrals to the children's social work service are made where there is known or suspected significant harm. The PIM reports to the Bronze Group.

There are two distinct MACE meetings that take place and make up the Bronze MACE, these are the child-focused MACE meeting and the Contextual MACE meeting, both are embedded practice and are well attended and referred to from partner agencies.

Child-focused MACE meetings take place every two weeks and focus on children where there is either a low/ emerging risk of exploitation, or where there is a high risk because the vulnerability and risk management plan (VRMP) for the child is not having the desired effect. The purpose of the MACE meeting is to: analyse risk; share information; consider connectivity and push and pull factors; and to enable further actions in relation to each child or young person to be decided. The meeting also identifies themes, trends and suspected/ known perpetrators.

Through these meetings, recommendations are made to ensure that the needs of children at risk of exploitation are responded to. The meeting does not and replace statutory planning processes such as strategy meetings, child protection conferences or care planning reviews for children looked after.

Contextual MACE meetings are held every four weeks, focusing on themes, trends, places, spaces, peer groups and suspected/ known perpetrators linked to exploitation concerns. They take a contextual approach to identifying, responding to and disrupting child exploitation.

In the last 12 months issues which have been identified have included:

- Several derelict buildings where there have been concerns that children have been entering and at risk of exploitation
- Several specific 'issues' such as drill music and under representation of girls in our data – the latter resulting in a 'girls and gangs' task and finish group
- Focus on specific business premises where children were being exploited
- Work on some properties where young people were moving into independent living and being targeted and exploited.

Both meetings are chaired by a senior Children and Families manager, with membership including lead practitioners and managers from: Early Help; Children's Social Work; Police Child Exploitation Leads; Adults and Health; Youth Justice; Health; Education; CAMHS; Youth Offer, Safer Leeds; third sector partners, accommodation providers and others.

The Bronze MACE meetings report to the LSCP Silver Group, with the Gold Group being the three Statutory partners, who make up the LSCP Executive and reports from the Silver MACE are received by the Gold MACE on a quarterly basis as part of the Executive meetings.

The purpose of the group is to enable senior leaders to have a line of sight about the most vulnerable children and young people, in addition to a clear understanding of the scale of child exploitation in the city.

Additionally, and in response to the identified concerns of Serious Youth Violence, meetings have now been set up in all three areas, West, South and East area of the city of Leeds. These are attended by statutory, voluntary and third sector organisations. There is also a daily youth violence meeting – project shield that takes place each morning at the Front Door. This is attended by Police (Sgt at the Front Door), Early Help, Youth Justice Service, Liaison and Diversion and CSWS (The Safe Project).

Serious Youth Violence

Serious youth violence is a subset of the wider statutory duty to tackle Serious Violence. The definition of Serious Violence is broad but specific focus on knife crime and young people and violence.

The findings of the recent JTAI in Leeds, recognises the significant work that has taken place across the city in response to Serious Youth Violence, outlined in the External Inspections section, they is ongoing work taking place with both Safer Leeds and the Violence Reduction Partnership.

An action plan will now be developed as a response to the findings of the inspection and work will continue throughout the coming year to improve practice and evidence impact.



The Knife Angel came to Leeds in February 2024 at the Royal Armouries where Project Shield was launched by Cllr Coupar.

Project Shield is about enabling a more positive, hopeful conversation with young people and delivering a co-ordinated response to tackling serious youth violence and protecting young people in Leeds.

The aim is to reduce instances of Serious Youth Violence in Leeds, specifically:

- A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or a sharp object, especially amongst those victims under 25.
- A reduction in knife enabled serious violence, especially in those victims aged under 25.
- A reduction in all non- domestic homicides involving knives, especially among those victims aged under 25.

VOICE AND INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In Leeds, it is recognised as one of the five outcomes within the Children and Young People's Plan that all children and young people are active citizens who feel that they have a voice and influence.

The voice and influence strategy includes ensuring that children can participate, feel empowered, and actively engage to produce better outcomes and resilience. This is given at an individual, family, service, and strategic level, this assists to identify how best to support and engage children and young people and involve them at all levels.

The voice and influence of children and young people should not be a standalone entity but embedded within the culture, discussions, decisions, and actions. Hearing and responding to the voice of children and young people is paramount to the work of the safeguarding partnership in Leeds. Below are just some of the ways that the safeguarding partnership have endeavoured to include the voice and influence of children and young people during 2023-24.

The LSCP is keen to ensure that there is a culture of hearing and responding to the voice of young people across its work and therefore, this year set out 5 key commitments to ensure that the voice of young people influences the work of the partnership. These include undertaking a "Deep Dive" from the Organisational Self-Assessment in relation to the Voice of children, developing a common understanding of what is meant by meaningful voice and influence, embedding the voice of the child throughout the governance processes, the co-production of campaigns and analysis of the My Health My School data.

There is recognition that further work needs to take place to hear the voice of those children and young people who have experience of the safeguarding system through Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection and this will be explored further in the coming year.

The Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) requested that the Voice, Influence and Change (VIC) team facilitate an annual takeover for the opportunity to meet directly with young people from youth voice groups across the city and listen and respond to the issues they feel are the most important. The VIC team invited youth voice groups from their VIC network to participate in planning and running the takeover. Between May 2023 and January 2024, the VIC team facilitated meetings with lead staff representing 12 groups. In November 2023 they met with young people representing 5 of the groups so they could input into the event, with 32 young people from across 11 youth groups attending and facilitating the event.

The event was co-produced and held in January 2024 with the main aims being:

- To learn about and meet the different youth voice groups from across the city
- To share and learn about key issues for young people
- To discuss possible solutions surrounding key issues raised by young people

The attendees engaged in two discussion-based workshops surrounding four priority themes. The themes were identified by young people and are linked to the Child Friendly Leeds 12 wishes.

All decisions makers, senior leaders and Elected Members were asked to make a pledge detailing the support that they could provide to address the issues that were discussed in the workshops.



Young people were asked to provide feedback based on their experience of the event. They commented that *'it was perfect'*, they felt *'real change was made'* and that it was *'a valuable opportunity for young people to share their voice in Leeds'*. Requests were made to *'do this more'*, to have *'more time to talk about issues and experiences'* and have *'more time to speak with decision makers'*.

Feedback from the event was given to the CYPP meeting and it was agreed that decisions makers who attended the event, provide an update summary in 6 months, detailing actions and progress. Work with the youth groups would continue and a further event will be planned.

Young people were consulted on various campaigns, including to provide insight to the development of the "start the conversation" campaign, the Leeds Youth Council were asked for their opinions on online safety. The group provided valuable feedback on their own experiences and in particular the terminology and phrases that they used when online. All of this information was used to ensure that the campaign was on message and relevant to young people's experiences.

The My Health, My School Annual School (MHMS) Survey, is a well-recognised method of hearing the views of children and young people from across the city. In the academic year 2022-23, a record-breaking number of responses were received, with a total of **25,648** pupil responses from **202** Leeds schools representing the largest ever number of responses since the survey began over 16 years ago!

This is a free on-line survey for pupils in Years 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11 as well as pupils attending any Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) and post-16 settings in Leeds. The survey gathers important pupil perception data and measures health behaviours and contributes to school improvement.

The survey includes various areas which related to safeguarding, such as feeling safe at home, gangs, knife crime, exploitation, on-line safety and where to go for support.

The safeguarding partnerships have analysed this year's data in-line with previous years in the areas related to safeguarding and those that reflect the LSCP priorities. The information is then shared with the relevant subgroups as well as the CYPP to inform decision making and the work of the safeguarding partnership.

Partners see the voice of young people as key to the procurement and review of services in Leeds, as an example they were involved in the procurement process for the new Social, Emotional and Mental Health Service. Young people from Mind Mate Ambassador team and YouthWatch formed a panel and interviewed provider organisations for the suitability to carry out the city wide contract. They took into account feedback from 6 youth groups (below) to inform their questioning

- Leeds GATE (Gypsy and Traveller exchange)
- Care Leavers council
- Out 2 18 group (LGBT+)
- PAFRAS (asylum seeker youth group)
- YouthWatch

Several partners also have Youth Forums or equivalents, which they actively consulted on to ensure the voice of the child is recognised and included in service development work. There is a dedicated sibling group within the Safe Project, which provides a rich opportunity to gather feedback directly from children who may not be directly experiencing harm but indirectly will have an impact within their families. Their views help establish themes that can then be fed into plans around service development to ensure that issues that are evolving

are continually understood and acted upon. The “clear approach” at HMOI Wetherby, allows discussions for looked after children to share their voice, and the youth council have recently recorded a podcast to share their personal thought and feelings.

These are just some of the Voice and Influence activities with children and young people that have taken place across the partnership within 2023-24. Although there is recognition that there is also a vast amount of work that takes place within the third sector and educational establishments that is not routinely received by the LSCP.

SAFEGUARDING IN FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS

Voluntary Action Leeds has been working in partnership with LCSP to deliver support around safeguarding in faith communities. This project follows on from a research project undertaken by VAL to explore perceptions of safeguarding and statutory services within culturally diverse communities, which showed a disparity between different cultural understandings of abuse and neglect, and a lack of trust between some communities and statutory partners. These findings are mirrored in VAL’s work to engage with smaller third sector organisations, which are often culturally specific, around concepts of safeguarding. Although faith is just one aspect of a person’s culture, this can have a considerable impact on a person’s understanding of keeping people safe.

This project involves working closely with faith-based organisations to co-produce versions of VAL’s popular Safeguarding BASICS training, to produce faith-specific versions of the training which reference relevant scripture and use culturally specific examples. The faith-based organisations are then supported through ‘Train the Trainer’ sessions to deliver this faith-specific training with smaller groups which they are associated with. For example, Leeds Grand Mosque have co-produced a package of Safeguarding training specific to Islam, completed ‘Train the Trainer’ and have now delivered this training to 37 volunteers across LGM Foodbank, Baraka Playgroup and LGM Qu’ran School. All faith-based organisations receive payment for their time developing the training packages, and for delivering the training.

Other organisations involved in this project include Strings of Life, a Chinese Gospel Church, Guru Nanak Sikh Temple (Tong Road) and Roscoe Methodist Church (which supports a number of other churches serving African diaspora communities).

A report detailing the learnings from this project will be shared in September 2024.

The Safeguarding in Faith project worker has developed successful partnerships to actively engage faith organisations in various faith focused initiatives, including Leeds City Council Public Health to promote key health messages and with the Violence Reduction Partnership, offering faith communities the opportunity to play a key role in preventing serious violence by being involved in a working group to develop a Faith and Belief Toolkit to tackle serious violence and broader safeguarding topics. This toolkit will be built upon a sustainable, multi-agency, community led network of faith communities aiming to maximise the powerful position faith communities occupy to prevent and reduce violence. From the work undertaken by the project worker in the last year, it is evident there is a lot of fantastic work being undertaken across the city by faith and organisations, however often organisations are working in isolation or within their own network or faith. It is hoped that these partnerships create opportunities and forge networks for faith organisations and representatives to connect with faith focused initiatives across the city and region, to avoid duplication and strengthen links.

The safeguarding project has promoted its work through various forums, including the Leeds Faith Forum, The Religion and Belief Hub and Concorde Interfaith Fellowship.

In addition, The LSCP in Leeds and Birmingham have linked up with 24 safeguarding adult and children partnerships across the country to develop a Faith Based Toolkit in partnership with Faith Associates. Faith Associates are experts and pioneers in the development of faith institutions for many years and have had an impact in many areas of governance and sustainability. The goal is to provide faith institutions with a customised, user-friendly safeguarding guide that reflects the cultural sensitivities of their respective faiths in West Yorkshire and the wider West Midlands regions. It will be written in six versions each tailored to specific faith traditions. This will be available online by autumn 2024.

SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT

It is widely recognised that taking part in sport is positive for the health and wellbeing of children and young people but is also an area until recently where the safeguarding system were not always robust. With Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 highlighting the importance of seeing sports as a partner when safeguarding children and young people, work has begun in Leeds to strengthen these links.

The LSCP Business Unit are working with the Leeds Sport Welfare Officer from Yorkshire Sport Foundation and Active Leeds, on strengthening the approach to safeguarding within sports across the city. Regular reports will be presented to the LSCP Executive and the group meet regularly and will work collaboratively on campaigns and projects to raise the profile of safeguarding, wellbeing and welfare within physical activity.

In the coming year this work will be progressed further, and consideration will be given to how the safeguarding reach can be broadened and sports organisations in the city be more active within the safeguarding partnership.



CAMPAIGNS

As a response to learning which has taken place in the city, several campaigns have been developed this year, highlighting key messages for families, parents, carers, children and professionals.

Bath Time Duck

Bath time can be a fun time for both babies and young children, and parents and carers alike. It's an opportunity for bonding, exploration, and play, however water can be dangerous, especially so for babies and young children who require constant and appropriate supervision during bath time.

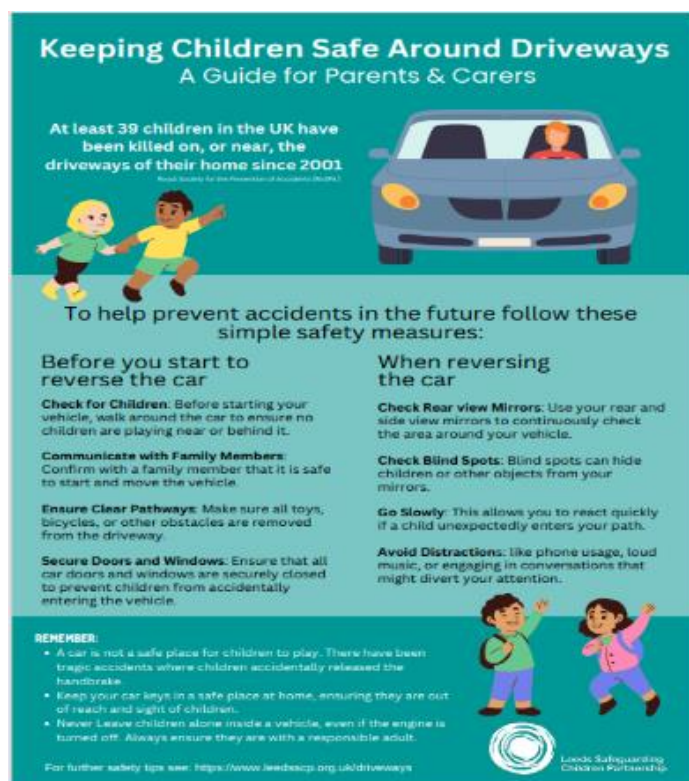
To support practitioners the LSCP developed the [Bath Time Duck](#) to help parents and carers remember the essential safety advice that they need to know to keep their baby or child safe at bath time.

Practitioners can use the Bath Time Duck as part of their usual interaction with parents and carers where safe bathing is discussed.



A [variety of resources](#) were created to support the campaign, as well as social media messages.

The Bath Time safety campaign ran from 1st- 30th June via social media advertising using Facebook and Instagram. In total the advert had a reach of reach of 15,969 profile pages.

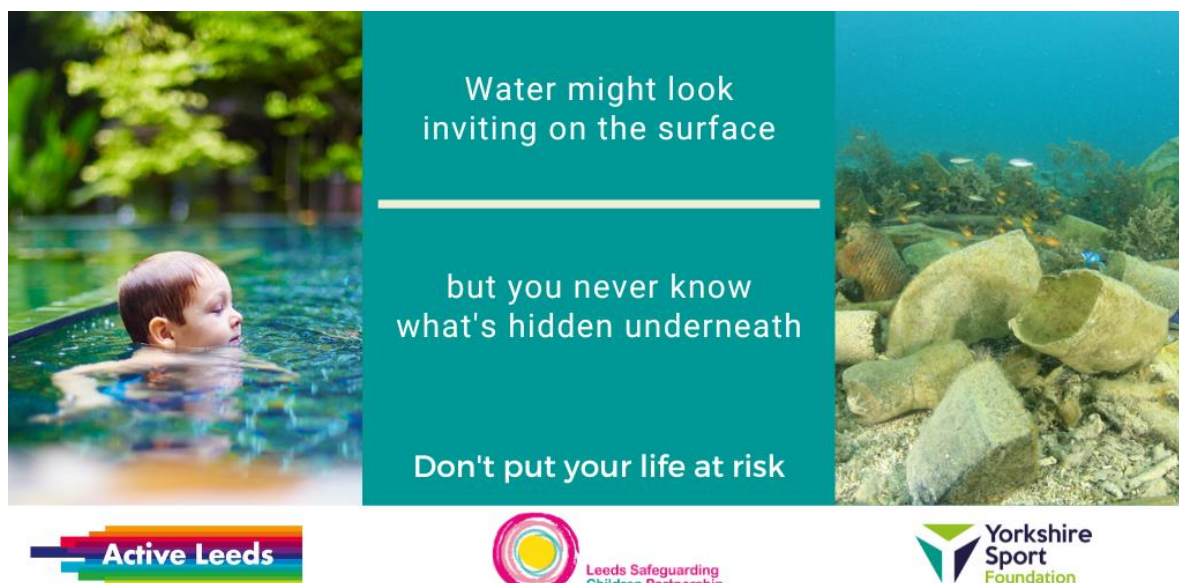


Driveway safety

As a response to the tragic death of a young child, a poster for children's centres was designed and distributed to all centres via the Leeds for Learning website.

A web page was also developed in the Families section of the LSCP website with helpful information on how to keep your child safe around driveways.

Drowning Prevention Week – 17th June 2023



Working in partnership with Active Leeds and the Yorkshire Sport Foundation, the LSCP posted water safety messages during Drowning Prevention Week via their social media channels. These messages continued during the summer holidays when the risk to young people, through accidental drowning increases significantly. Messages included; When the weather is hot young people can be tempted to go for a dip in the local river or reservoir, but swimming in open waters is extremely dangerous.

Online safety campaign – start the conversation

A campaign to inform parents about how to keep children safe online and prevent them becoming a victim of child exploitation was developed this year. The campaign equipped parents and carers with the knowledge and confidence to talk to young people about their online activity and the potential dangers.

The campaign was developed with the LSCP working in partnership with West Yorkshire Police, Basis Yorkshire, WYCA and the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP).

The campaign launched on Monday 30th October 2023 and materials were shared across the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Communications Group, which is made up of representatives from each of the five local authorities as well as NHS, charities, WYCA and VRP. Details of the campaign were also shared with West Yorkshire Police's Community Engagement and School Liaison Teams.

The overall intention was that the campaign would help parents become aware of potential risks earlier, so that they can prevent any inappropriate online activity escalating into cases of child sexual or criminal exploitation.

Focus group activity took place to gauge insight from young people across West Yorkshire.

The 'Start the conversation' campaign aimed to encourage parents and carers to have conversations with their children about their online activity. Creating an open dialogue means that a child will be more likely to tell a trusted adult if they have concerns. Parents are then in a better position to protect their child and help prevent any inappropriate online activity escalating into cases of child sexual or criminal exploitation.

The launch included:

- Dedicated web pages on the LSCP website and WY Police website
- A press release - [Parents Urged to 'Start the Conversation' as Part of New Campaign | West Yorkshire Police](#)
- Facebook adverts targeting adults in West Yorkshire which ran from 30th October to 31st December
- Adverts on Pulse radio
- Digital radio ads targeting adults across West Yorkshire
- Outdoor digital display ads.

Evaluation

The campaign continues to be shared regularly on the West Yorkshire Police and LSCP Facebook and X (Twitter) pages.

The paid for Facebook ads received 8,335 clicks and reached 280,380 people. The digital ads were played 300,000 times.



Legacy and future plans

A leaflet for parents is in development which will be circulated through the school network and via Leeds for Learning to education staff.

A series of short videos are also being developed which show adults and children having conversations about the games and apps that children use, with children explaining how they work to the adults.

Response following a suspected suicide: guidance for Leeds schools.

Following several cases in Leeds, discussions took place regarding the need for guidance for schools following a suspected suicide of a child or staff member within their settings. A task group took this work forward which included the LSCP, Public Health, Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service and The Samaritans, as well as input from the Educational Psychology team.

Consultation with school staff was completed via the LSCP Education Safeguarding group and the Healthy Schools Steering Group.

The guidance for Leeds schools is aimed to be used as a reference if a death does sadly occur and can also to be used to develop a critical incident plan.

The guidance is published on the Leeds for Learning website: [Response following a suspected suicide: guidance for Leeds schools | Leeds for Learning](#)

EXTERNAL INSPECTIONS

Inspections make sure our statutory services meet basic standards of quality and safety ensuring the best possible support for those that require the use of those services. All inspections operate under an inspection framework to ensure a consistent approach.

Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

This year a JTAI, evaluating the effectiveness of the multi-agency response to children aged 10 and over who are at risk of or affected by serious youth violence and/or criminal exploitation, took place in Leeds.

This onsite inspection took place from 4 to 8 March 2024. It was carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

Since the end of the financial year the report has been [published](#) and overall, the findings were very positive, demonstrating strong safeguarding practice and partnership working.

The inspection found that most children in Leeds who are affected by serious youth violence and/or criminal exploitation benefit from an effective and well-coordinated multi-agency response. Strategic partnerships in Leeds are well embedded and mature. Strategic leaders across all agencies are invested in the partnership and in reducing the risks to children to make Leeds a safer city. Leaders have driven a clear, tiered response to address serious youth violence at strategic, tactical and operational levels.

There is a strong and coherent culture, based on a relational approach, trauma-informed work and the Leeds model of practice, underpins the partnership. Strategic and operational partners share the same principles, vision and values. There is a clear and mutually agreed focus on locally based early intervention and prevention. This includes a high level of engagement and consultation with children and families. This helps develop tailored and effective services and interventions informed by the communities and children throughout Leeds.

Numerous interventions and projects have been developed to support children at risk of serious youth violence and/or criminal exploitation and their families. Practitioners are astute and committed and many work relentlessly and passionately with children and families to reduce risks and inspire and divert children away from serious youth violence. Children's diverse needs are considered, and services are designed to address the disproportionality of black and ethnic minority children involved in the criminal justice system, and additional vulnerability factors.

Areas of improvement are identified as part of any inspection. For Leeds, the JTAI reported only recognised three areas to improve. These were related to consistent and timely sharing of police protection notifications (PPNs) when police officers identify risks to children, waiting times for children to receive CAMHS assessments and therapeutic treatment, which is an issue at a national level and the frequency of multi-agency partnership auditing of children affected by serious youth violence, to inform a partnership learning and development.

The partnership is currently developing an action plan to address any the areas of learning, which will include the areas of improvement identified in the inspection report.

Inspection of Custody Facilities



In September 2023, an inspection of West Yorkshire Police custody facilities was undertaken jointly by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), as part of the programme of inspections covering every police custody suite in England and Wales. The inspection included all five areas of the force, of which Leeds is one.

The inspection assessed the effectiveness of custody services and outcomes for detained people throughout the different stages of detention. It examined the force's approach to custody provision in relation to detaining people safely and respectfully, with a particular focus on children and vulnerable adults.

The findings noted that the force has suitable arrangements in place to safeguard children and there are clear processes for frontline officers and custody personnel to make safeguarding referrals. If they have concerns about a child's welfare, they use their professional judgment to submit public protection notice referrals to children's social care.

There were some areas for improvement and recommendations, which related to Children and young people:

Custody officers should complete juvenile detention certificates when arranging local authority accommodation for children remanded in custody. In response A new joint protocol has been written and agreed between WYP, WYCA and the 5 Local Authorities. Audit work will be undertaken to measure compliance and any additional learning to support implementation.

The force should make sure children and vulnerable adults in custody receive prompt support from appropriate adults and record arrival times on custody records. This has been re-briefed to all custody inspectors and the central team will undertake audit work to ensure compliance.

The force should make sure it always completes public protection notice safeguarding referrals when required for children and vulnerable adults. As a response Leeds District are trialling a process where a PPN is submitted for every arrested child. This will be dip sampled and reviewed ahead of any full implementation across the police force.

PEEL Inspection (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy)

The findings of the Peel 2023 – 2024 inspection for West Yorkshire police as yet to be published.

On a National police level, there are several inspections that have taken place which impact upon the police practice of safeguarding children and young people, with areas for improvement and recommendations that all forces must achieve.

An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales recommended that by 31 December 2024, all chief constables should make sure that their forces have problem profiles for child sexual exploitation, each of which should include an assessment of the nature and extent of group-based child sexual exploitation. This should include relevant data from local partner agencies and should be updated frequently, at least annually.

In West Yorkshire it has been noted that there are good processes in place, however as work progresses opportunities for further improvements are identified, with progress continuing to be made in this area but the force and partnerships data is used to inform the quarterly threat assessment.

An inspection of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making recommended that by 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that information from the Youth Justice Board summary disproportionality toolkit relevant to the force area is included in their force's analysis of police criminal justice disparity. West Yorkshire police are engaged in embedding the race action plan, and work is ongoing to include the level of detail required.

An inspection of how well the police and National Crime Agency tackle the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children had several relevant recommendations.

By 31 October 2023, chief constables in England should satisfy themselves that their forces' work with schools is consistent with the national curriculum and National Crime Agency educational products on online child sexual abuse and exploitation. They should also make sure this work is targeted based on joint analysis with their safeguarding partners. Work as already taken place in West Yorkshire and the force is reviewing the NCA products to view if there are any gaps or additional details which would be beneficial to include.

By 31 October 2023, chief constables and police and crime commissioners should make sure their commissioned services for children, and the process for referring them for support or therapeutic services, are available for children affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation. In West Yorkshire the Mayor's office commission services to support those affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation.

By 31 July 2023, chief constables should satisfy themselves that they are correctly sharing information and making referrals to their statutory safeguarding partners in cases of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. This is to make sure they are fulfilling their statutory obligations, placing the protection of children at the centre of their approach, and agreeing joint plans to better protect children who are at risk. In Leeds there are robust information sharing processes in place with partners participating in strategy meetings to share information and support those affected. However, West Yorkshire police report that there is further work is ongoing in this area to further develop and safeguard those at risk.

Alternative provision in local areas in England: a thematic review

As part of a thematic review in England of alternative provision in local areas, an inspection in Leeds was undertaken in September 2023, under the framework devised jointly by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for use from 2023 and as part of a wider review.

The focus of the inspection was on alternative school provision and the working arrangements between the ICB and local authority, including the feedback of a survey of parents, young people and professionals.

The inspection was undertaken over a three week period, with inspectors onsite for 4 days, where they met with practitioners and groups of parents and undertook a deep dive on three cases.

The findings of the Leeds inspection were not published individually but an overall report was published in November 2023, based on the findings from all of the authorities who were part of the review. Overall, the findings were in line with Leeds self-assessment and the learning from the review is progressed through the SEND Partnership Board, with feedback to the LSCP Executive as required or requested.

[Alternative provision in local areas in England: a thematic review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review)

Inspection of HMYOI Wetherby

An unannounced inspection of HMYOI Wetherby by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons took place between November and 7 December 2023.

The report noted that Wetherby is a complex young offender institution, housing children with a range of needs, including a Unit which is a national resource for the most vulnerable children, as well as a provision for a small number of girls.

Nationally there is not a coherent plan for caring for these girls and the accommodation of girls at Wetherby was only planned to be temporary. The report noted that the result has been pressure on staff who, while doing their best, have not had the training or do not possess the expertise to care for these girls, most of whom require specialist provision.

In terms of safeguarding, the HMIP section was recorded as “good”, where the expected outcome is: *The establishment promotes the welfare of children, particularly those most at risk, and protects them from all kinds of harm and neglect.*

It was noted that there is a dedicated team of staff making sure that good child safeguarding processes were in place, with joint triage by the child protection coordinator and designated social worker, to ensure that appropriate referrals were sent to the local authority designated officer (DO) within 24 hours.

The head of safeguarding held weekly meetings with the social work manager, who was also a member of the senior management team, and other internal managers to allocate actions. With scrutiny of referrals noted to be good, including a weekly meeting with the governor and quality assurance every two months by the DO who checked that the triage system was working appropriately.

Although processes were noted to be good, children were reported to have little confidence in them. In the survey undertaken as part of the inspection, only 37% said they would report victimisation by other children and 57% said they would report victimisation by staff. Eleven per cent said that they had felt too scared to make a complaint.

It was noted that since the last inspection there had been progress on the majority of the recommendations, however, there were still improvements to be made and the report outlined a number of priority concerns that were in need of urgent attention. An action plan has been developed by the leadership to progress the improvements required.

In view of the number and significance of the concerns highlighted in the report the LSCP have requested a meeting with the leadership team at Wetherby to establish how assurance can be obtained and what support maybe required. Updates on progress with the action plan will be presented to the LSCP Executive for consideration and oversight in July 2024.



THE COMING YEAR 2024-25

Priorities for 2024-25

To establish the safeguarding children priorities of 2024-25 the Executive considered the progress with the current priorities, learning from reviews, inspection findings, the reviewed Working together guidance, alongside an OBA event with partners and Takeover event with young people.

It was agreed that the priorities for 2024-25 should be:

- Domestic Abuse- children as victims.
- Safeguarding through Family Help
- Safeguarding Teenagers- serious youth violence and exploitation

These priorities will allow the partnership to continue the work established in 2023-24 and address emerging themes. The Executive will seek assurance regarding the response of the current safeguarding system to these areas and identify opportunities to develop practice and improve the outcomes for children in Leeds.

The outcomes related to these priorities and the impact of any development work will be outlined in the 2024-25 annual report.

Planned work for 2024-25

To ensure continuous improvement in safeguarding practice and to ensure momentum is maintained, the partnership have already committed to some areas of identified work for 2024-25:

- Publish the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across Leeds and provide the Department of Education oversight of these arrangements by December 2024 in line with WTSC 23
- Oversee and monitor successful implementation of the JTAI multi agency action plan
- Undertaking a Partnership Health Check Self-Assessment
- Fully embedding of Working Together 2023
- Development of a robust and responsive audit and review programme
- Further develop systems to demonstrate impact and levels of assurance
- Further develop the voice and influence of children, young people, parents, carers and families, in particular those with experience of the safeguarding system.
- Embed Education as part of Executive and strengthening their voice at strategic level
- Further strengthen the voice of the third sector at all levels
- Revise the Neglect Strategy and further develop the tools that support best practice.
- Consideration of a multi-agency safeguarding supervision model
- Development of a practitioner group to enhance the linkage with and voice of front line staff.
- Development of a professional curiosity champions model
- Undertake a training needs analysis in relation to Serious Youth Violence
- Continue to develop opportunities for wider partnership work with Safer Leeds and Leeds Safeguarding Adult Board and other relevant Boards and Partnerships.
- Develop further the work with sports organisations
- Development a model to learn from what works well
- Establish a chairs and deputy chairs meeting to ensure joint working across subgroups.

