



Safeguarding
Children Partnership
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND

Leicestershire & Rutland
Safeguarding Children Partnership
Annual Report - 2021-22

1. Foreword

We are pleased to present this report of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Over the past year the Covid-19 pandemic has continued to impact on families and children, and more recently additional pressures have emerged, such as increased cost of living. These factors have put further pressure on those working with families and children and the whole system supporting children's health, wellbeing and safety.

As a partnership we have sought to work together and support each other across the system and at all levels of our organisations to continue to identify and respond effectively to children in need of safeguarding. We have seen good progress in sharing information well and in developing new approaches to support the safety of babies and adolescents.

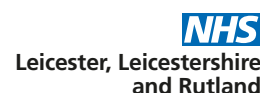
In the midst of the challenges we see workers and managers in organisations across Leicestershire & Rutland striving to work with others to support the welfare and safety of children.

We know, however that we cannot be complacent, we need to continue strong communication, robust challenge, a desire to improve and a focus on the welfare of children across our and all organisations working with children. As a partnership we will continue to focus on learning and improving, and look to better understand the impact that our work together as partners has on supporting children to be safe and well and reach their full potential.

Thank you to all workers and managers who really see, listen to and work so hard to support children in Leicestershire & Rutland to be safe.

The Safeguarding Partners for Leicestershire & Rutland

“[The worker] always made me feel heard and safe. I often would cry at the constant unconditional kindness she would show me. It helped me find the strength to open up to others too” (Young person – Domestic Abuse Consultation)



2. The Partnership

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) brings together organisations across the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland with the vision:

“For children and young people in Leicestershire and Rutland to be safe, well and achieve their full potential”

The members of the partnership include the statutory safeguarding partners: Police, Local Authorities, and Integrated Care Board. For the period of this report the Clinical Commissioning Groups for the area were statutory safeguarding partners, but these were replaced by Integrated Care Boards from July 2022.

The membership also includes other relevant agencies including schools, health agencies, probation and other organisations working with children. The full membership of the partnership can be found on the SCP website <https://lrsb.org.uk/scp-membership-list>.

The Partnership:

- Sets how organisations should work together to safeguard children
- Provides multi-agency training and development resources to support good safeguarding
- Tests how well organisations are working together and the difference this is making
- Reviews serious safeguarding incidents to identify improvements needed
- Uses learning and feedback to improve and develop how agencies work together to safeguard children.

Independent Scrutiny of the work of the partners and the partnership is led by an Independent Advisor. The Independent Advisor for Leicestershire and Rutland is jointly appointed with Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. The Independent Advisor scrutinises the work and effectiveness of the partnership and provides an independent view into decisions regarding Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

This is the statutory report of the SCP outlining the work it has carried out from April 2021 to the end of March 2022. The Independent Advisor’s scrutiny report is included at the end of this report.

For more information on how the SCP works please visit <https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp>.



3. The work of the Partnership

3.1 The Priorities of the Partnership

The SCP worked with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to identify the following shared priorities and outcomes for 2021/22:

Covid-19 response (shared with the Safeguarding Adults Boards for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland):

Understanding and responding to the impact of Covid-19 on Safeguarding adults and children so that safeguarding approaches are effective in recovery from Covid-19 and informed by learning from the pandemic

***What we did:** The partnership continued to assess and respond to the impacts of the pandemic on safeguarding and held reflective review meetings to identify learning and partnership working to continue and adapt.*

Safeguarding Babies: Improving how we work together with families before and after births to safeguard babies and seek assurance that multi-agency working with families to safeguard babies is effective.

***What we did:** The partnership changed procedures and provided training to respond to learning from local and national reviews. The partnership supported the roll out of the ICON project to support new parents to cope with crying babies.*

Child Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing: Seek assurance that partnership working supports good mental health for children and that mental health and safeguarding are effectively addressed together

***What we did:** The partnership gained assurance of safeguarding approaches for children on waiting lists for mental health services. The partnership needed more assurance that pathways for mental health support also support good safeguarding, so will continue to follow this up in the coming year.*

Domestic Abuse and Child Safeguarding: Seek assurance that partners are responding appropriately to safeguard and support children living with domestic abuse

***What we did:** The partnership carried out an audit of cases involving domestic abuse and sought the voice of children and fed the findings from this into domestic abuse needs assessments, reviews of domestic abuse services and a review of domestic abuse safeguarding procedures.*

Harm outside of the Home: Seek assurance that the local approach to safeguarding children from extra-familial threat is effective.

***What we did:** The partnership received updates on progress in the development of the local approach to address harm outside the home. The partnership will continue to follow this up in the coming year when this is completed. The partnership reviewed local approaches regarding peer-on-peer sexual abuse and developed engagement with independent education settings.*

Safeguarding Children from Diverse backgrounds: Understand and improve how well partners work together with children and families from diverse backgrounds.

***What we did:** The partnership identified many partners had not carried out work internally regarding understanding safeguarding children from diverse backgrounds and scoped work to continue into the next year through a dedicated group.*

The work on these priorities was embedded within the assurance, training, procedure and review work of the partnership outlined in more detail in the following sections of this report.

“Don’t see people like us as weak, victims or broken, we are strong and survivors. I want to hear ‘you can do it’ not ‘you went through all this and that’s why your life sucks’ completely changed the narrative of the support”

(Young person – Domestic Abuse Consultation)

3.2 Seeking Assurance

The SCP has a Quality Assurance Framework shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. This can be found here <https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp>.

Performance data

During the year the SCP reviewed comparative data for the safeguarding system against other areas of the country. This showed that rates of referrals and repeat referrals in Leicestershire & Rutland and trends in these were in line with other areas of the country. End of year data had not been considered by the time this report was completed and is not able to be shared.

Self-assessment

During 2021 the safeguarding partners and specific relevant agencies carried out a self-assessment of their safeguarding effectiveness. The partnership focussed this assessment on specific areas of priority in the pandemic, including staff welfare, support and capacity, responding to the voice of children and response to domestic abuse.

Following improvement work in the year almost all partner agencies provided some evidence that they were effective across all areas in the assessment:

- Governance of safeguarding,
- Consideration of safeguarding in commissioning,
- Consideration of safeguarding in service change, including the response to Covid-19,
- Supporting workforce capacity and resilience in order to effectively safeguard children,
- Engaging with children to hear and respond to their voice, and
- The response to children affected by domestic abuse.

The assessment did not directly identify any areas for significant work across partners or on a multi-agency basis. All agencies were asked for their plans for how they would improve effectiveness, which will be followed up in next year's assessment.

This self-assessment was backed up by positive inspection outcomes for the Leicestershire and Rutland County Councils and Leicestershire Police relating to their work with children and families including safeguarding.

Audits

The SCP carried out one multi-agency audit in 2021-22 focussed on domestic abuse and safeguarding children. Alongside this health partners funded Barnado's to carry out some work to hear the voice of Children from homes where domestic abuse had taken place.

The audit reviewed ten cases across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and found that across the majority of cases there was good multi-agency working, information sharing and involvement in safeguarding processes. The voice of children was often sought and considered well by most agencies. A different agency in each of three cases could have improved how they considered and shared the voice of children within the safeguarding process. There were a number of notable areas for improvement:

- There was a consistent lack of engagement with the perpetrators of domestic abuse, often males, and a lack of consideration of referral to routes to address their behaviour.
- In some cases there was an over-reliance on victims to manage the behaviour of perpetrators
- Sometimes expectation was placed on children to report if parents' abusive relationships restarted, a potentially inappropriate responsibility.
- In Leicestershire domestic abuse agencies were not being invited to multi-agency child protection meetings.
- The diversity and backgrounds of children and families and impact of this was not clearly considered in most cases in Leicestershire and Rutland

The Barnardo's consultation work sought the views of young people whose parents had been considered as at high risk of harm at Domestic Abuse MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meetings. The findings from this are detailed in the section of this report on feedback from children and families.

A review of the SCP domestic abuse procedures will be completed in 2022 which will take into account the findings and recommendations of the audit and Barnado's report. These findings have also been reported into local Community Safety and Domestic Abuse Partnership arrangements and the SCP will follow up how these have been responded to.

“I felt like I had to keep explaining myself which was exhausting”

(Young person – Domestic Abuse Consultation)

Schools Surveys

Rutland

Rutland Safeguarding through Education Audit was undertaken during October 2021. The audit was distributed to all Rutland education providers inclusive of:

- Rutland State Funded and Independent schools,
- Individuals in governance roles in maintained schools and academy trusts,
- Private and Voluntary Early Years Sector,
- Wraparound and Holiday Childcare providers, and
- Out-of-County providers of Rutland children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Children Looked After (CLA).

50% of Rutland's education sector returned their response to the audit and these indicated widespread good practice in governance, process and practice in relation to safeguarding children.

Future engagement activities and promotion of the audit will be planned to increase the number of responses to ensure that the information gathered is even more robust and reflective of practice across all Rutland education and childcare providers including 'Out of County' provisions accessing Rutland funding for children with special education needs and/ or disabilities and for Children Looked After. In addition focused Rutland Safeguarding events have been diarised through to January 2023.

Leicestershire

Leicestershire Schools Safeguarding Annual Return was sent out for return in November 2021. 99% of schools in Leicestershire returned the survey. The return identified widespread good practice in training and recruitment in relation to safeguarding children and prompted improvement in practice in relation to checks made by the safeguarding governor for almost 20% of schools. The return also prompted improvement in practice in regard to approaches to hearing the voice of children in schools and responding to sexual abuse.

Leicestershire & Rutland

The surveys in both Leicestershire and Rutland asked about the actions or planned interventions schools took in response to Ofsted's '[Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges](#)' report. Almost all schools had taken action in response to this, in terms of training, policy update, awareness raising with staff and pupils and many had worked with pupils to provide additional routes to raise concerns or identify areas of particular concern in the school.

“I feel like school had a big part in it, they were very supportive. I had a time out card at school which allowed me to get out of lessons and talk to someone or be alone if I needed to” (Young person – Domestic Abuse Consultation)

Other assurance work

The Independent Advisor carried out visits to the 'front door' services for Children's Social care and the Police to meet with staff and managers and assess local working and systemic issues impacting their practice. This is detailed further in the report of the Independent Advisor.

The SCP set up a monthly 'Keep in Touch' assurance meeting with Leicester SCP to continue to consider ongoing impact of the pandemic and other operational matters affecting safeguarding services, with a particular focus on workforce capacity and wellbeing. During the year this identified the following areas of concern:

- There are workforce capacity issues in many services and significant area of challenge in some services. Covid-19 is a factor in this, as well vacancies and availability of trained staff. All services are prioritising children at risk and safeguarding within their response to these challenges. (October 21)
- Workforce capacity issues could prevent concerns and issues being picked up early and could lead to missed opportunities to identify and respond to risk of abuse or neglect early. (January 22)
- Permanent exclusions have increased and there remains a large increase in number of children electively home educated, which decreases visibility of these children. (March 22)
- There are large waiting lists for children's community health services which may potentially impact upon the development, health and well-being of children, and increase stress in families (March 22)

In response to these concerns the SCP has supported open reflection and conversations regarding the impact of workforce gaps on services and how this is impacting safeguarding through the Keep in Touch meeting and at the main Partnership meetings and has gained assurance that safeguarding continues to be prioritised. The SCP also tasked partners to review how they were identifying and supporting children at risk of harm, particularly those who were less visible to services, such as those missing education or electively home educated.

In addition the SCP reviewed local approaches and practice regarding:

- Peer on peer sexual abuse between children
- The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse reports regarding religious institutions and institutional responses to allegations.
- Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing children

From these the SCP identified a need to develop engagement with private schools in the area regarding safeguarding, and following consultation set up a safeguarding forum for private schools in the area alongside existing safeguarding engagement approaches with maintained schools that will commence in the summer of 2022. When the SCP followed up progress on work to address peer on peer sexual abuse at the end of the year it identified inconsistencies in responses across the area and commenced a review of procedures in line with national guidance which will be completed in summer 2022.

This work has also shaped the SCP's priority for 2022/23 to support safeguarding in independent, out of school and small community settings.

“My social worker was kind, she helped me with practical things. However, my social worker then changed lots of times to someone I had no connection with, I would get transferred and wouldn't know it was going to happen... it was a very unsettling time; I didn't know what was happening or when?”

(Young person – Domestic Abuse Consultation)

3.3 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures

The partnership has ensured procedures are in place for multi-agency safeguarding in line with [Working Together 2018](#) and has specifically revised the following procedures in response to learning from local and national reviews and assurance processes:

- Procedure for children on child protection plans who leave the UK,
- Guidance regarding children with mental health needs/self-harm and suicide risk
- Neglect Toolkit updated to include adolescent neglect, Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUDI) syndrome and pre-birth neglect
- Pre-birth child protection procedure
- Review of the multi-agency thresholds document
- Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Child Protection Practice Standards document
- In addition work was underway at the end of the year to complete:
 - A review of the Fabricated and Induced Illness procedures
 - A review of the domestic abuse procedures

The SCP procedures can be found online: <https://lrsccb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>.



3.4 Training

The SCPs training co-ordination and delivery function is shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to support consistent and effective partnership working.

With the continued impact of the pandemic almost all training was delivered online, however in March 2022 we were able to run our first large-scale in person training event in two years. This was run partnership with De Montfort University (DMU) for World Social Work Day. 125 participants accessed a full programme on 'Transcending Otherness: Disturbing Othering' supporting inclusive practice.

We provided training resources and events in support of our priorities as well as other areas identified in a training needs assessment with partners, identifying other key areas including neglect, intrafamilial sexual abuse and multi-agency safeguarding more broadly.

As well as our core training programme we supported the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) with the booking and administration of an extensive, tiered, Trauma Informed training programme. We have also supported smaller projects by individual agencies such as the Reducing Parental Conflict programmes in Leicester City and Leicestershire

We continued to use a more blended approach to learning incorporating video resources and resource packs alongside online training sessions and exploring different approaches.

One new approach was the 'Festival of Learning'. This was run as a series of 43 training sessions held online over two weeks in September 2021 focussed on how the Statutory, Voluntary and Community Sector Work Together to Safeguard Children.

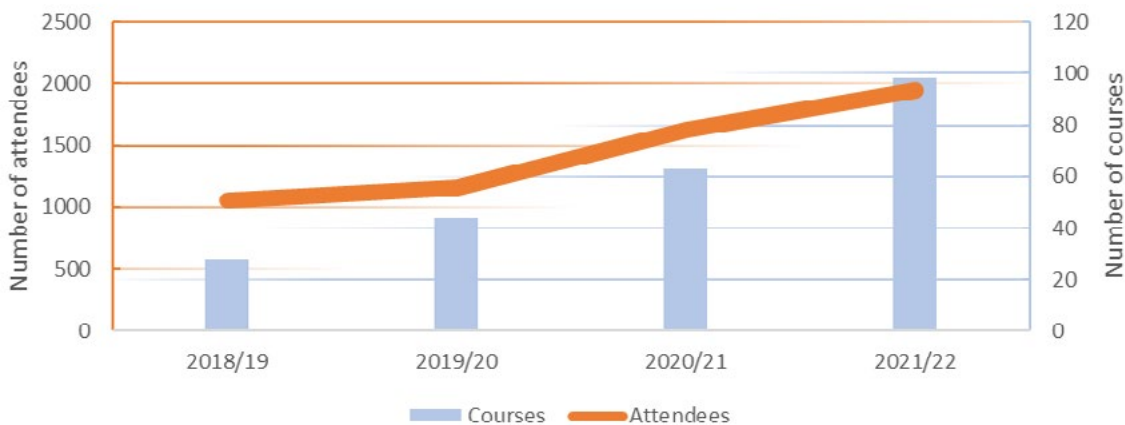
Feedback on the event was good, and demonstrated a need for more training focussed on the voluntary and community sector, however less people attended that we aimed for. The training group has reflected on this and identified areas for improvement for running a similar event in future to increase attendance, including work to increase the reach of information about the event into the voluntary and community sector.

Another new approach has been joint work with the Safeguarding Adults Board to provide some resource packs for learning and sharing on common themes. In 2021-22 we produced two shared 'Build Confidence in Practice' resources:

- 1) Working with Resistance
- 2) Professional Curiosity

Overall training was delivered to almost two thousand (1949) individuals over 98 training events this year. The chart overleaf identifies a continued increase in numbers attending SCP training on previous years.

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Training - Attendees and Courses



Alongside this increase several training events were cancelled due to sickness and/or low numbers. There were also a lot of courses which were fully booked but only a half to two thirds of registered participants attended. When reaching out to understand lack of attendance workers reported a significant increase in workload which has been aggravated by a lack of staff, either through sickness or outstanding vacancies.

Our training evaluation shows an increase of 80 to 90 points (on a scale from -100 to +100) across evaluated training in all areas of knowledge, confidence, and skills, in line with last year. This is based upon a return rate of 42% of course attendees, which we are aiming to improve. With broadened learning options it is more difficult to identify who is accessing training materials and therefore the full reach and impact of SCP training.

We want to improve our understanding of access to and impact of SCP training resources to enable us to focus on providing effective training and learning resources that support changes in practice. To do this we will as we explore a learning management system that will work with our continued blended approach including in-person and online training sessions alongside continued use of video and online training resources that can be used in individual agency settings.

To support improved attendance we will also look to reintroduce a charging policy that was suspended with the pandemic.

“The training was so insightful and engaging. Really pleased I joined. I have gained so much knowledge but also practical skills as well.”

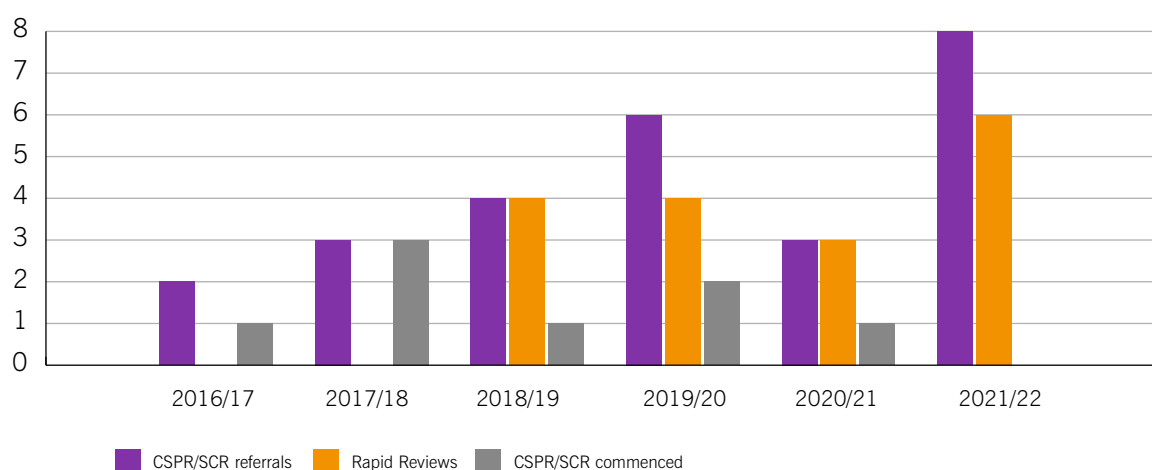
“This was one of the most comprehensive and interesting training sessions I have attended. Getting the local picture in relation to Modern Slavery was both fascinating, but also worrying, with me now reflecting on recent cases and thinking that I could/should have been more curious. I really recommend all frontline practitioners attend future sessions whether you think it is relevant to your role or not as you will come away knowing just how relevant it is.”



4. Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The partnership assesses Serious Safeguarding Incidents as defined by Working Together 2018 and decides whether a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR), in order to identify how to improve safeguarding responses in future, is required.

The Partnership carried out six rapid reviews following a serious incident notification and considered two further referrals for review in the period of this report. As shown in the chart this is a notable increase in referrals compared to previous years. The Safeguarding partners will monitor this to identify any longer-term trends.



The partnership was able to identify learning to improve safeguarding systems from five of the six Rapid Reviews. The partnership identified no further learning was to be gained from further review of any of these cases and therefore no Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews were required. This view was supported by the Independent Advisor to the Partnership and by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

Two Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews commenced in previous years were nearing completion at the end of March 2022 to be published later in 2022. These have taken longer than the statutory six months to complete for the following reasons:

- Commencing reviews delayed by finding availability for meetings across partners, agreeing an approach regarding the reviewer and commissioning a reviewer.
- The reviewer has identified they need to speak to professionals who worked directly with the children and their families to fully understand the case and learning, which has been delayed awaiting decisions regarding prosecution.
- Criminal processes have also delayed speaking to families.
- In one case lack of availability of the identified expert reviewer to complete the work has delayed progress on the review.

The partnership has continued to develop approaches to improve quality and timeliness of rapid reviews. Local agencies worked well to continue to contribute to rapid reviews and the ongoing Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews whilst facing continued resource challenges during the pandemic.

In addition the rapid reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews have identified good individual and multi-agency working by many organisations to prioritise, see and respond to children at risk of harm during the ongoing restrictions of the pandemic.

The reviews also identified the following key areas for further work:

- Responding to families where parents have chaotic lifestyles and/or multiple complex needs
- Understanding the impact of modern slavery of adults on children's lived experience
- Information sharing between health agencies, particularly midwifery and health visiting services
- Recognising the impact of parental learning difficulties on parenting and responding to additional support needs relating this.
- Improved confidence in recognising and responding to potential Fabricated and Induced Illness.
- Continued work in health, police, local authority services and across all agencies to support identification and response to neglect
- Consistent use of the procedure to respond to bruises or marks of concern on pre-mobile babies
- Promote messages regarding safe use of bath seats

In response to this learning from reviews the following action has been undertaken:

- Improved the Thresholds document, the Pre-Birth and Post Birth Planning procedure and the Management of Bruises, Marks, and Injuries of Concern in Pre-Mobile Babies and Non-Independently Mobile Children procedure
- Significant update to the Fabricated or Induced Illness procedure
- Delivery of a learning session on Modern Slavery and its effect on children, which will be repeated in the New Year due to demand.
- Promotion of bath seat safety awareness with Public Health within social care and the health community
- Promotion of proactive communication with substance misuse treatment agencies where parents are substance misusers.
- Local work to highlight the importance of hearing and responding to the voice of children including promotion of the 'Was not brought' video and 'Was Not heard' video, also used in national psychological wellbeing training
- Neglect toolkit updated to support practitioners to identify and respond to neglect of children including babies and older teenagers.

Learning has been shared with practitioners across organisations through multi-agency training, briefings and learning events to communicate learning, guidance and changes in procedures and learning.

The SCP also communicates learning to the partnership workforce through the Safeguarding Partnerships' [Safeguarding Matters newsletter](#), through articles and '7-minute briefings' designed to convey key messages from reviews and encourage managers and workers to reflect on their practice.

Action plans are in place to respond to other areas of learning from reviews.

The partnership continues to develop its approach to rapid reviews and these have become a useful tool to identify learning swiftly and ensure action can be taken more quickly to respond to matters arising from serious safeguarding incidents.

During the period covered in this report the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published one National Child Safeguarding Practice Review. “The Myth of Invisible Men” Safeguarding children under 1 from non-accidental injury caused by male carers was published in September 2021.

The report identifies *“an urgent need to improve how the system sees, responds to and intervenes with men who may represent a risk to the babies they are caring for. For this group of men, the role that they play in a child’s life, their history of parenting and their own experiences as children and how this effects them as adults, are too frequently overlooked by the services with responsibilities for safeguarding children and for supporting parents”*.

Whilst the recommendations from the report are firstly aimed at national bodies, local partners have been assessing and adapting their response to fathers and other male carers. Five of the eight Rapid Reviews and one of the two CSPRs related to babies who were pre-birth or under 12 months old. Therefore Safeguarding babies has been and remains a priority of the partnership and updates to procedures and training have included the need to consider the role of and include fathers and male carers in work with families.

Local work on the ICON programme promoting strategies to cope with and respond appropriately to crying babies has included a focus on engaging with fathers and public campaign planned for the coming year will have a focus on getting ICON messages to males.

In the coming year the partnership will include focussed questions in all its assurance and review work to assess how fathers and male carers are engaged in safeguarding work and support services. It will also carry out assurance work to assess the effectiveness of local work to safeguard babies.



5. How feedback from children and families has informed our work and influenced service provision.

During the year the SCP reviewed its engagement approach to ensure it was having meaningful engagement with young people that made a difference to the work of the partnership.

The focus going forward will be drawing upon existing participation work within organisations across the partnership, to understand what young people are saying about safeguarding and how partners are hearing and responding to the voice and lived experience of children and young people. This will reduce duplication and consultation fatigue, and where the partnership requires specific participation work this will be carried out through working with existing participation groups.

Partners commissioned Barnado's to carry out some work to hear from children and young people whose parents have been considered at Domestic Abuse MARAC to understand their experience. The reach of the survey was limited by the pandemic and interviews were only able to be carried out by telephone with eleven young people.

Most young people felt that support they received was helpful, but they had to wait too long for it, and communication with them about their experience and support, including listening to them could be significantly improved.

The more detailed findings of the consultation were:

- Communication with young people could have been better. Many felt professionals seemed judgemental and did not understand what they had been through. Many young people were anxious about support, not understanding what support would be available or be like.
- Many young people had to wait a long time for support, and in the meantime developed their own coping strategies which were not always healthy.
- Almost all young people who received support from specialist domestic abuse services found this to be beneficial and a positive experience.
- Changes in workers was very unsettling
- Having to repeat their lived experience several times as part of the process caused more trauma for some young people.

The report made the following recommendations:

- Scope existing Domestic Abuse support pathways and arrangements to support children and young people, identifying gaps. Build on good practice examples.
- Young people to be involved in shaping new and existing services for domestic abuse.
- Improving access to and range of domestic abuse services and support.
- Discuss the support offer and the benefits of support services
- Explain and re-explain confidentiality
- Provide needs led holistic support
- Triage for access to appropriate referral pathways
- Audit / examine robustness of multi-agency working
- Trauma Informed Practice training for professionals
- Consideration of a Phase 2 Consultation

All of this feedback and the recommendations will be taken into account in the review of the SCP domestic abuse procedures in 2022 and have been shared with the Domestic Abuse Partnerships to influence domestic abuse strategy, commissioning and service provision.

The Partnership continued to promote and receive excellent feedback on the 'Was not heard' film. This film by young people locally encourages those who work with children to understand how children communicate with them and highlights the importance and legal duty to hear and respond to them.

“It would have been helpful if someone had helped me to understand what was happening and who was going to be helping me”

(Young person – Domestic Abuse Consultation)

“I enjoyed the freedom of it. I had a lot of my freedom stripped from me in other ways, and so knowing that I had support and someone I could openly speak about my problems to, without judgement really helped me to be less fearful of speaking about things that happened to me”

(Young person – Domestic Abuse Consultation)



6. Changes to the arrangements

The partnership is committed to developing and improving. The partnership continued its joint working arrangements with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to support effective use of resources and consistency in approaches.

The safeguarding partners for the two areas, alongside the Safeguarding Adults statutory partners reviewed the business office support arrangements for the SCPs, and decided to retain current arrangements with a greater focus on join up and reducing duplication.

Chairing of the joint partnership moved from the Independent Advisor to the Safeguarding partners for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland in rotation.

The arrangements will also be updated to recognise meetings between the lead representatives of the statutory partners as part of the partnership structure and to clarify delegation and reporting structures within the organisations of the safeguarding partners.

The arrangements document will be updated in line with this and published alongside this annual report.



7. Independent Scrutiny -

Report of the Independent Advisor, Kay Whyte-Bell

During the last year the impact and challenges of Covid 19 have remained however, statutory and partner agencies have responded robustly, ensuring that the most vulnerable are prioritised. It is important to recognise and appreciate the singular and collective efforts of all members of the statutory and partner agencies in their relentless focus on safeguarding children, their continued collaboration and seeking to identify and seek solutions to the emerging gaps, issues and challenges.

A key priority for Scrutiny Activity was to hear the voice of frontline practitioners and managers. It is important to get a sense of how strategic decisions and partnerships impact on the day-to-day experience and practice of those charge with delivering on those priorities. This was achieved by meeting with staff from both Leicestershire and Rutland Children's Services, and additionally with Leaders from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Overall, there were minimal multi-agency practice issues identified, and those that were, all practitioners and managers had a good understanding of the route to channel issues and used escalation processes as appropriate. Following on from the national interest in the outcome of the court trials in relation to two child deaths, staff reported calls and activity had increased at the front line, coupled with the growing pressure due to recruitment or sickness absence. However, staff reported good support from their managers and leaders as well as excellent partnership arrangements to ensure that resources were made available to respond as well as possible to these emerging challenges.

Leaders from the CCG identified capacity issues particularly in health visiting and midwifery (national issue), but were able to clarify how arrangements had been adapted to ensure that safeguarding children remained a priority for front line service provision. Professional relationships are critical but also in calling each Partner to account; to this end there continues to be regular meetings with Children's Social Care Leaders and Health Leaders to focus on the capacity and response issues.

Scrutiny activity during 2021-22 has included:

- Attendance at least once of all the SCP's subgroups to seek assurance of process, attendance and engagement
- Meeting with front line staff and managers from Leicestershire CS and Rutland CS
- Meeting with Health professionals from the CCG
- Regular touch base meetings with the 3 Stat Partners
- Regular attendance at the Audit & Assurance Sub-Group
- Member of T&F Group (Safeguarding Children from Diverse Backgrounds)
- Providing independent advice for Rapid Reviews and Case Review Group
- Regular meetings with SAB Chair to assure progress on joint priorities
- Joint Chairing of SAB and SCP's meetings
- Attendance at Vulnerability Executive
- Attended (The Association of Safeguarding Partners (TASP) seminars and East Region Chairs/Independent Scrutineers quarterly meetings

Key strengths:

- Through meetings with front line managers and staff evidence of strong collaboration, accountability and partnership across the three Statutory Partners and other agencies
- More Children's Services staff co-located in police Safeguarding Hub brings greater partnership understanding, communication and better working together
- A range of new or updated multi-agency procedures and guidance introduced including the Launch of the newly revised Neglect Toolkit to include learning from the Myth of the Invisible Men national report
- Continuation of the Safeguarding Sub-Cell
- Positive Ofsted reports for both Leicestershire County and Rutland Children's Services evidenced strong partnership working
- Relaunch of the public awareness campaign "Our Door is Open"

Key areas identified for further assurance activity:

- Development of a robust multi agency data set linked to the priorities of the SCPs
- Progressing work on joint SAB/SCP's transitions priority
- Evidence of impact in key learning from Rapid Reviews
- Front line staff and managers identified more work to be done on improving the quality of some referrals
- Assurance on the priority of children and young people's mental health and well-being

Emergent challenges:

- Workforce issues across all statutory partner agencies. Assurance is being sought that children who are most vulnerable or subject to CPP are being prioritised by all Statutory Partners.
- The local impact of the two recently published national reviews on safeguarding and children's social care is yet to be fully understood whilst the response is considered by national government.

8. Finance

The work of the SCP is supported by the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Partnership Business Office that also supports the Safeguarding Adults Boards and carries out Domestic Homicide Reviews for Community Safety Partnerships in Leicestershire & Rutland. The SCP is funded by contributions from its partners.

A single funding arrangement for the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards for 2020 onwards has been agreed between the statutory partners for the Safeguarding Adults Boards and the children's Safeguarding Partners for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.

The contributions from partners for the Leicestershire & Rutland SCP and SAB as a whole for 2021/22 can be seen below alongside contributions for the previous year:

	2020/21	2021/22
Leicestershire County Council	£112,633	£102,496
Rutland County Council	£50,367	£45,833
Leicestershire Police	£89,000	£88,725
West Leicestershire CCG and East Leicestershire & Rutland CCG	£106,500	£88,724
National Probation Services	£1,348	£1,348
Total income for SCP and SAB	£359,848	£327,126

Statutory partners agreed to reduce contributions for one year with the difference to be funded from the SCP and SAB reserves.

Overall expenditure across the SCP and SAB for 2021/22 was £327,594. Expenditure for the SCP was apportioned as follows:

	2020/21	2021/22
Staffing	£110,676	£105,579
Independent Advisor	£14,113	£7,914
Support Services	£3,250	£12,370
Operating Costs	£9,128	£6,700
Training	£41,200	£48,100
Case Reviews	£3,760	£5,254
Total Expenditure	£182,127	£185,917

Expenditure overall was broadly in line with the previous year. Expenditure on support services have increased with legal advice for the partnership now funded from this pooled budget. Expenditure on training increased as we implemented training in response to previous review findings and adapted training approaches. Expenditure on staffing reduced due to vacancies in the business office and expenditure on the Independent Advisor reduced with the first full year of the revised Advisor role.

9. Priorities 2022/23 onwards

The SCP has reviewed learning from local and national reviews, and from local assurance and engagement work, as well as speaking to children and young people and considering the current context of the pandemic in determining its priorities going forward. The SCP has identified the following shared forward priorities with Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board:

SAFEGUARDING BABIES

Continue to improve how we work together with families before and after births to safeguard babies



CHILD MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Seek assurance that partners are working to support good mental health for children and that mental health and safeguarding are effectively addressed together

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

Complete our work to understand and improve how well partners work together with children and families from diverse backgrounds

HARM OUTSIDE OF THE HOME

Seek assurance that the local approach to safeguarding children from extra-familial threat is effective. This includes priority work on Safeguarding Transitions shared with the Safeguarding Adults Boards.

SAFEGUARDING IN INDEPENDENT AND OUT OF SCHOOL SETTINGS

– Work with faith groups, independent schools, community organisations and other settings to support them to play an effective role in safeguarding children.