



Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership

Local Safeguarding Children Groups

Annual Report

April 2022 to March 2023

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1. **Introduction**

Six Local Safeguarding Children Groups (LSCGs) support the work of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). These groups meet on a bimonthly basis and provide a multi-agency local forum where agencies can meet collectively to increase learning across the safeguarding network and improve inter-agency work.

This year has seen changes to the chairing of the LSCGs four of our co-chairs have had to step down because of changes in their job roles that has rendered chairing these groups impractical. These co-chairs have provided leadership for safeguarding practices in their localities over a number of years and have been instrumental in building and maintaining the LSCGs as a powerful network resource for Norfolk. Losing four chairs created five vacancies and three of these have been filled and there are potential replacements in the wings for the remaining two places.

Feedback from LSCG members last year highlighted the need for occasional face to face meetings to happen whilst it was recognised that virtual meetings were more efficient in terms of time and capacity of staff. November saw the first face to face LSCG meeting since before the pandemic, and all six groups came together for a half day to focus on all

three priorities. Sixty seven staff attended this session and the feedback from the event was very positive.

- “It was great to see people again in person and really good topics.”
- “It was very uplifting to have everyone in one room again.”
- “Most helpful to see people face to face, this provided an opportunity for individual and smaller group conversations that you do not have on Teams”
- “I really don't think it could have been improved, very inspiring”
- “Cant wait for the next one!”

The main criticism that came from three participants who would have liked more time:

- “Overall the event was good however there was too much packed into the morning. There wasn't enough time to have good discussions after each section.”

A counter viewpoint was expressed by others who enjoyed the pace

- “Excellent opportunity for networking and getting updated on County-wide issues and developments. Thought the format of short talks and group discussion worked really well. The pace kept people engaged and able to contribute.”

One of the key differences that came across in this meeting was the energy and enthusiasm which is less evident in virtual meetings where only one person can speak at one time. In a room with over 60 people, the volume of noise from conversations was both revitalising and inspiring although this did carry its own downside: “It was a bit tricky in groups to hear each other's contributions due to the noise level.”

A second face to face meeting was held for LSCG members as part of the Safeguarding Practice Review Roadshow Programme in March

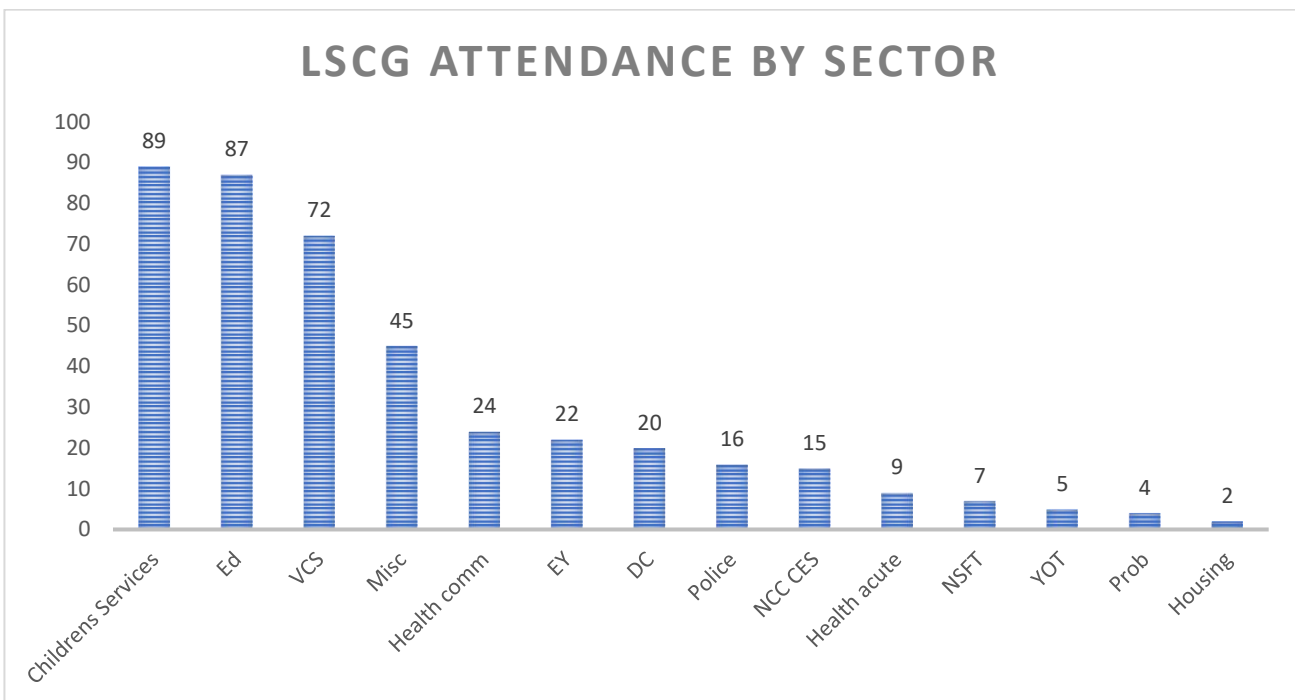
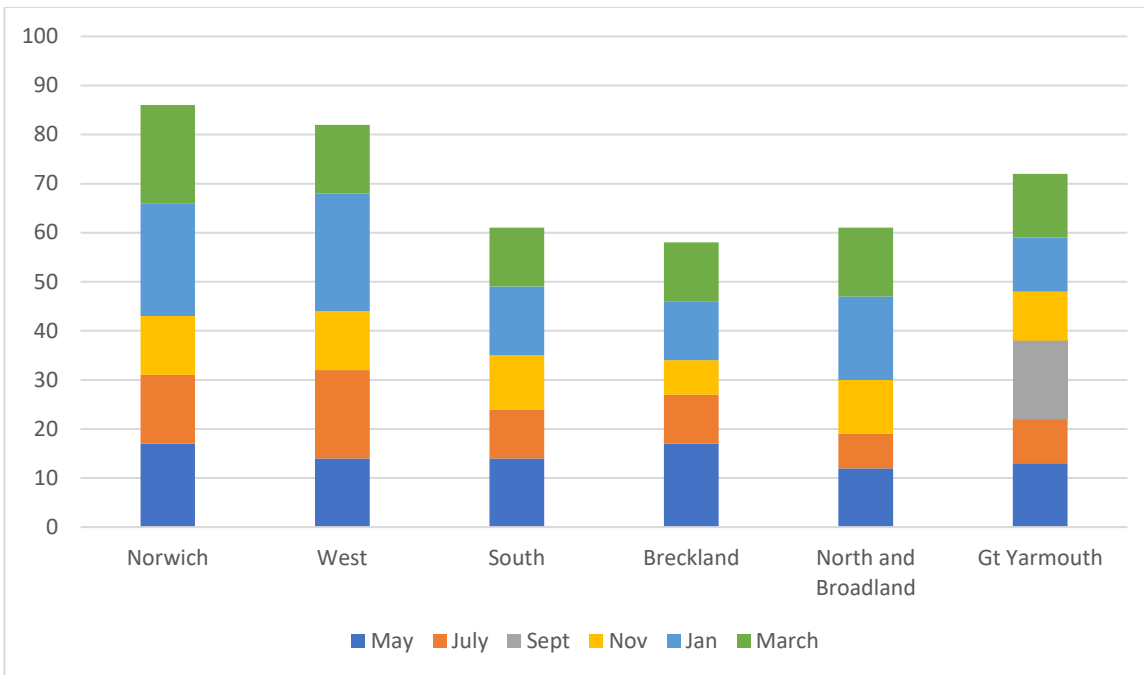
Last year's LSCG annual report identified two issues that needed to be considered for the groups moving into this year.

- Attendance and representation from FAST and Family Support teams
- Developing Multi-agency learning reviews

Progress on these issues will be discussed in this report.

2. Attendance

Attendance at all of the LSCG has been on average slightly reduced from the previous year. Attendance has still been reasonable and there is good representation across all sectors. In the latter half of the year LSCGs have benefited from attendance from Childrens Services staff from both FAST and Family Support teams. Due to a substantive item for the September meetings being postponed it was decided by the majority of Chairs to cancel the September meeting and to focus planning on the November face to face meeting



3. LSCG meetings

Presentations at meetings have included:

- ✚ Norfolk's Non-Accidental Injury to Infants report
- ✚ Working with fathers
- ✚ Holiday activity and food programme
- ✚ Participation and the voice of young people

- ✚ National Safeguarding Practice Review Systemic Review into the Murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson
- ✚ Child exploitation
- ✚ Neglect
- ✚ Protecting babies
- ✚ Norfolk Graded Care Profile
- ✚ Joint Agency Group Supervision
- ✚ Attendance Strategy
- ✚ Continuum of needs draft document

4. Activity between meetings

The previous LSCG annual report identified the need to develop more LSCG learning opportunities outside of the bi-monthly meetings. A programme of briefing sessions has been developed through the hard work and input from LSCG members. A total of 11 sessions have been held on:

- Strategic priority briefing sessions (Neglect, Child exploitation and Protecting babies)
- Trauma and Curiosity: seeing past the obvious. Joint LSCG LSAP workshop
- LSCG briefing: Working with fathers: barriers and solutions
- Family networking
- Exploitation and Professional Curiosity. Joint LSCG LSAP workshop
- Getting the most out of the Just One Norfolk (JON) website

Feedback from all of these sessions has been very positive and continuing these in the coming year should prove valuable.

LSCGs have committed to undertaking multi-agency learning reviews (MALRs) as a means of focusing on practice relating to the NSCP priorities. In the last year we have focused on Neglect (families with children under 11) and risk of exploitation linked to the vulnerable adolescent priority. LSCGs agreed to have a change of approach for the exploitation MALRs and after careful negotiation undertook two face to face sessions with young people that had lived experiences of exploitation they were willing to share. This was a valuable opportunity for a range of partners to consider how relationship based practice shapes our understanding of safeguarding adolescents and how building trust is key to improving outcomes and reducing risk. The young people found the experience of meeting with professionals positive and this will now be developed as the way forward for undertaking reviews with children, young people and their families.

Going forward LSCGs are keen to focus further on the lived experiences of children and engaging with families where parental conflict is present. This will be a focus in the coming year as part of the Every Relationship Matters in Norfolk (ERMiN) programme of support, where MALRs can be used to better understand the impact of evidenced based interventions and the impact these have for children that have experienced parental conflict and how partner agencies can collaborate more effectively.

5. Feedback from LSCG members

LSCG members were asked for feedback regarding their membership of the group including what they found valuable and what improvements or changes they would like to see. All respondents to the survey rated the usefulness of the meetings as four or five stars out of five with the majority scoring five.

Members were asked about sharing the learning from LSCGs with colleagues and all respondents were affirmative about this. Just under a quarter of respondents felt that they only did this occasionally and one of these acknowledged that this was because they had only managed to attend a small number of meetings.

Colleagues were asked what they thought would improve the work of the LSCGs.

The most frequent response to this question was that change was not necessary: "Nothing, I find them extremely useful, relevant and thought provoking".

There were three comments about the benefit of greater and more consistent attendance from all partners. Three respondents asked for greater knowledge about the roles of others. On a similar note, there is a need to improve the way in which updates from partners are shared across the network.

In the other comments sections the majority of responses focused on the value that colleague place on these meeting.

6. Conclusion

LSCGs continue to play a useful role in the safeguarding practices and networking across Norfolk. Online meetings remain the most efficient and effective route to allow access for colleagues across the partnership whose capacity is continues to be pressurised. Holding two face to face meetings this year highlighted the value that these have for partners and create a very different dynamic than teams meetings. Face to face meetings create a greater level of network building and stronger relationships which are such an essential component of multi-agency work. One LSCG member feedback the following:

"I have found that regular attendance at these meetings has helped by understanding of how all the pieces fit into the jigsaw. It has taken over a year for me to feel comfortable in sharing within the group but this has been aided through face to face sessions as well as online, alongside feeling more comfortable with the subject matter."

Finding ways to create greater networking opportunities whilst acknowledging the time restrictions is as ever a challenge but one that the LSCGs need to confront and develop to make the best use of this countywide resource.