

# Annual Report 2017 – 2018

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**Fran Pearson, Independent Chair of the Board**

## Chair's introduction

### Our Priorities

The Annual Report of the Luton Safeguarding Children Board is a report on the Board's effectiveness from April 2017 to March 2018. The starting point for the Board's work programme is that as a body, we want to make the children and young people of Luton safer by improving the way agencies work together to protect them.

The Board's priorities are based on local need. Based on this need, the board focussed on three priorities in 2017 to 2018. These were: neglect; mental health and self-harm; and children missing in and from the education system. The Board also conducts 'usual business' throughout the year in order to coordinate local efforts to keep children safe. Looking back is also an opportunity to look forward to the future. Consequently, this report concludes by setting out the Board priorities for 2018 to 2019. These were agreed on the basis of safeguarding needs identified during the year, which the Board tested out against what the data was telling us.

### Making a difference

I started as Chair of the Board in September 2015. This is my fourth Annual Report. I see the annual Report as the place to analyse and question whether or not the Board has made a difference to children and young people in Luton who need safeguarding. Looking back at the year I can see examples throughout the twelve months where the members who make up the Board have collectively given leadership and influenced practice and strategy to keep children in Luton safer. There are some really good pieces of work going on in Luton, so it is a pleasure to include examples of good practice to support the analysis. The implementation of the Graded Care Profile for child neglect, which we had evaluated by an independent organisation, is a tribute to all the organisations that have supported the programme. However, although organisations have given examples throughout the year of how they have improved the way they capture the child's voice in assessments and ongoing work, the Board has not commissioned as much work to hear directly from children and young people as we have in the past. A Bedfordshire-wide group on Voice of the Child should assist with this, but we need to be clear in the future that we are hearing from Luton children at the Board.

### A fragile safeguarding system - resources

Every year we ask our Board members to make an assessment of the resources they have available for child safeguarding. This is not solely about budgets, but also the frontline staffing capacity they have to do direct work with children, and the workloads of these professionals as well as they level of need that the organisation's managers have an overview of. Our conclusion on the system this year was that it was fragile. There is pressure on housing in the town, and the changes in benefits impacting on families with the highest levels of need. These alongside other issues do lead to increasing need amongst the children and families of Luton, whilst organisation's budgets are mainly static or reducing.

## **Serious Case Review: Child J – national policy change that was influenced by Luton LSCB**

In May 2017 the Board published the Serious Case Review into the tragic death of a thirteen-month-old boy, who for the purposes of the report, we called 'Child J'. On behalf of the board, I would like to send our condolences to the extended family of Child J. This little boy moved to Luton with his mother and her partner and was here for the final six weeks of his life. Child J's short life involved moves between London boroughs, domestic violence and a move to Luton because of housing pressures in London. Sadly these issues are all common to professionals working to protect children in Luton. I wrote to the government minister responsible for safeguarding and asked that changes be made to the national guidance on child safeguarding about children who, like Child J, are classed as a 'Child in Need' rather than as one who has Child Protection needs, at the point when they move from one local authority area to another. This was because the lack of such a requirement affected the information that had to be passed between local authorities when some families move into the area. The latest version of the national Working Together guidance published in 2018, incorporated a new requirement in line with the request from our Board. In Luton the decision was made immediately after Child J's case first became known to do a full assessment of needs for all 'Children in Need' that we were aware of moving into the town, despite it not being an expectation of government. However a substantial risk remains, as other authorities do not reliably tell us when a vulnerable family move into the area.

### **Changes to multi agency safeguarding partnerships**

The next annual report will give a fuller account of how we are responding to national changes for Safeguarding Children Boards. The Children and Social Work Act replaces safeguarding boards with new multi agency safeguarding partnerships. In Luton we are taking the approach of building further on our joint work with the other Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Boards but without losing our focus on Luton. However we will be keeping a partnership board for Luton, which will continue to give top priority to the leadership of child safeguarding for our town.

### **Lay members: community and faith engagement**

Our community members, all Luton residents who bring us views and voices from different perspectives, informed by their own experience in the area child safeguarding, have made our board richer. This has partly been because of the way they help scrutinise the work of the Board and ask questions that are not always easy or straightforward to answer but which safeguarding boards quite rightly should address. I would like to thank Kimberly Campbell-Lamb, Rashida Din, Mahala Harvey, and Amal Ibrahim. The lay members have been central to our new group for the adults' and children's safeguarding boards, planning practical ways of how we will work with the huge variety of faith and community organisations that make Luton the wonderfully diverse place that it is.

### **Holding myself and the Luton Safeguarding Children Board to account**

I hope you will look at our plans for 2018-2019, and use these to question me about how effective the Board is in leading and driving improvements in safeguarding children in Luton. I want to bring the annual report to as many organisations and groups in Luton as possible, as part of our work to engage faith and community groups.

Over the course of the year we set up a joint team to support the adult and child safeguarding boards. This will make the best use of resources but most importantly mean that we naturally think about families, however those families define themselves, and recognise that sadly, children who have been abused and neglected, can become vulnerable adults in response to this, whose needs should be recognised. I would like to thank the team who support the Board for their help this year, and along with them, all Board and sub group members for their contributions.

Fran Pearson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frances Pearson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Independent Chair

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## Section 1 Luton

### 1.1 Children living in this area

Approximately 54,700 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Luton. This is 26% of the total population in the area.

A significantly higher proportion of the local authority's children are living in poverty, compared with regional and national averages. Luton is in the top quartile of England authorities for child poverty and is the 47th most deprived local authority in the country. One in four (14,769) children in Luton live in poverty, using the national definitions. The levels of deprivation affecting children in Luton are high, with several electoral wards in the top 10% most deprived areas in the country.

The proportion of children entitled to free school meals:

- in primary schools = 18% (the national average is 16%)
- in secondary schools = 20% (the national average is 14%).

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 61% of all children living in the area, compared with 22% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area are Asian and Asian British and Black and Black British. More than 120 languages are spoken in Luton. Half of all school children do not speak English as their first language.

The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language:

- in primary schools = 52% (the national average is 19%)
- in secondary schools = 48% (the national average is 15%).

### 1.2 Child protection in this area

#### Children in Need

There were 2,249 Children in Need at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

Data from the CiN Census for Luton shows that children in need during the year were:

- 52.2% male and 45.8% female
- 37.1% were of White ethnicity, 29.7% were of Asian ethnicity, 13.6% were of Black ethnicity, 13.1% were of mixed ethnicity

#### Referrals

There 3,223 referrals during the year. This is a decrease of 6.6% in comparison to the previous year 2016/17 (3,462).

Over a quarter (25.5%) of the referrals came from the Police, followed by schools at 15.6%.

Just 1.2% (40) of referrals in the year resulted in no further action.

## Assessments

There were 3,412 single assessments completed in the year, of those 68.8% were completed within timescales which is 45 working days from the start date. There was a 7.2% decrease in the number of single assessments completed in 2017/18 in comparison with the year before (3,678).

The majority of assessments (45.6%) had 'no factors identified' at the end and 21.3% had 'other'. The other top five factors identified were parent/carer domestic violence at 16.1%, parent/carer mental health at 12.7%, emotional abuse at 11.7%, neglect at 8.8% and child subject to domestic violence at 7.7%.

## Child Protection

There were 306 initial child protection conferences in the year. This is an 11.5% decrease when compared to the previous year at 346. 77.5% of initial child protection conferences that took place in the year 2017/18 were within 15 working days of the section 47.

An additional 26 transfers in initial child protection conferences took place in the year. Of those, 61.5% took place within 15 working days of the section 47.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 there were 208 children subject of a child protection plan in Luton. This is a decrease on the previous year of 6.3% (14 children).

Of those children that were subject of a child protection plan at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, 47.1% were registered with latest category of abuse type of neglect, 42.8% were emotional abuse, 6.3% were physical abuse, 1.9% were sexual abuse and 1.9% were multiple.

During the year 2017/18, 282 children *became* subject of a child protection plan. This shows a decrease of 2.4% (7 children) in comparison to 2016/17 (289).

296 children *ceased* to be subject of a child protection plan in the year 2017/18. Of those ceasing, 1.4% lasted for 2 years or more (4 children). This is a decrease in comparison to the previous year 2016/17 at 2.4%

99.2% of Child Protection cases were reviewed within required timescales. Just one case was out of timescale in the year. This has increased from 92.5% in the previous year 2016/17.

## 1.3 Local context

### **A year of consolidation and clear focus**

This year saw continued stability in the Board, and an opportunity to embed the learning and improvement work that had started in 2016. The two serious case reviews initiated in 2016 were completed.

The Board agreed the need to maintain a focus on neglect and children who go missing based on data about local need. One of the SCRs, alongside feedback from board members, highlighted the need for the Board to consider the issues of self harm and suicide in relation to young people.

### **Working with the other Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Boards**

There are many issues that are common to child safeguarding across the county such as sexual exploitation, how we respond to child neglect and the increasing concerns about mental health

There have also been changes underway during the year, which meant that for the most part it is the same organisations providing a service across the county (Bedfordshire Police Force, East London Foundation Trust, Cambridgeshire Community Services and the two probation services).

### **Housing in Luton - pressures on the town, and the implications for families**

The previous two annual reports have noted the significant level of demand for housing in Luton. This has not changed and poses significant stress on all organisations.

### **Resources**

Luton Council has spent the year implementing the Family Safeguarding Model and this is welcome investment to support the provision of good practice which facilitates a multi- professional and multi-agency understanding of the needs and risks to children.

There is a wider issue of increasing demand at a time of fewer resources. The Board heard this year about the gap in provision at tiers 2 and 3 in relation to support for mental health issues. Schools also raised the challenge they faced with the reduction in funding in terms of trying to support pupils. The Board is very aware of the challenges facing all organisations and that this is not just a Luton issue.

Recruitment of staff is a national issue and is one that impacts on Luton in across the system, with schools, children's social care and health, all struggling to ensure they are fully staffed.

Consequently as a Board we are concerned about the fragility of the system as a whole.

## 1.4 National Context

### **Our local arrangements ahead of national changes**

Previous reports noted the plan for legislative change. In April 2017 the Children and Social Work Bill became an Act of Parliament. The Act will phase out Local Safeguarding Children Boards and replace them with a partnership

arrangement. The Board had very early discussions about the DfE proposals in Dec 2017.

In collaboration with the Police, the two CCGs and three local authorities, a working group has been meeting since April 2018 to review the arrangements with a view to proposals being put to each Board later on in 2018 and implementation in late 2019.

#### **Changes to Child Death Overview Panels (CDOP)**

The Children Social Work Act does mean a change to the operation with plans currently being developed for it to cover Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire. There is likely to be little change to the practice, with the current plan being that one annual report is produced but for simplicity there would be 2 panels meeting (one for Beds and one for Milton Keynes)

## Section 2 Luton Safeguarding Children Board Priorities for 2017-2018

**Priority One: Tackling Child Neglect in Luton** with the aim that:

- Graded Care Profile 2 assessments of neglect are carried out earlier with children at risk by the universal services
- There is a measurable increase in the confidence of practitioners in working with neglect
- All relevant professionals are licensed to use Graded Care Profile 2
- Feedback from young people influences safeguarding policy and practice

**Priority Two: Missing Children**

Working within the regulated and unregulated education/learning settings (including elective home education), as well as those families are mobile and move across authorities to ensure children are safeguarded with the aim that:

- Increased numbers of schools in Luton that are currently unregistered become registered as providers
- We have a clear grasp of the data and by the end of the year can identify those children in Luton who are most at risk

**Priority Three: Mental Health** with the aim that:

Children will report that they know where to get help with mental health concerns and are more confident about doing this

Practitioners feel more confident in their ability to support young people

Colleagues in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services can report more supportive and appropriate joint working with the child or young person ahead of the point when specialist services are asked to take a referral

Next year's annual report will assess our effectiveness in delivering these priorities.

### 2.1 A timeline for our year

April 2017	Extraordinary Board meeting to consider SCR on Child J
	Beds Police meeting with 16+ accommodation providers (missing children)
June 2017	
July 2017	Launch of MASH
	Recruitment of lay members
July – sept 2017	Development of emotional wellbeing and mental health action plan for children and young people
October 2017	Sec 11 presentations

	PanBeds LSCB spotlight event on fathers in safeguarding
	PanBeds Audit of GCP2 (neglect priority)
November 2017	Spotlight on radicalisation Audit of early help
	Joint development day for LSCB & LSAB
December 2017	Launch of Family Safeguarding Model PanBeds Conference on Online Safety
Feb 2018	First meeting of PanBeds sub group on Digital Safeguarding PanBeds audit of Mental health (mental health priority)
	GCP 2 training team win NSPCC award for implementation
March 2018	Learning review Learning review
	PanBeds conference on Safeguarding and Mental health

## 2.2 What makes an effective Safeguarding Board?

Work done by the National Association for Independent LSCB Chairs says that effective Boards:

- Have an informed understanding of safeguarding arrangements and performance in single agencies
- Have an authoritative oversight of the quality of front-line multi agency practice
- Have effective governance arrangements and operating structure
- Have clear lines of accountability with other strategic partnerships and be able to demonstrate its influence on the work of those partnerships
- Operate a robust business planning approach to its work and routinely use feedback from children, young people and their families to evaluate its impact as well as service provision
- Have a strong culture of challenge that is the responsibility of all Board members
- Have a coherent strategy and deliver an action plan to address CSE and missing
- Ensure learning from audits, case reviews, Serious Case Reviews and child death reviews reaches frontline practitioners and is used to develop practice and service provision
- Ensure the provision of high quality multi agency safeguarding training and evaluate the impact on practice of such training
- Set out the expectations of safeguarding training for all through its training strategy
- Be able to evidence the impact of its work on improving practice and outcomes

- Be visible to all stakeholders; including by publishing an evaluative and analytical annual report.

Below is a summary of the Board's progress in meeting its priorities.

## 2.3 Priority 1: Tackling Child Neglect in Luton and as a Board

### Implementation and use of Graded Care Profile:

Partners had focused in the previous year in ensuring all staff were trained to use it, and as of April 2017 there was a clear expectation that it would be used in all cases where neglect was suspected. In order to assess impact a short independent evaluation was commissioned consider two questions:

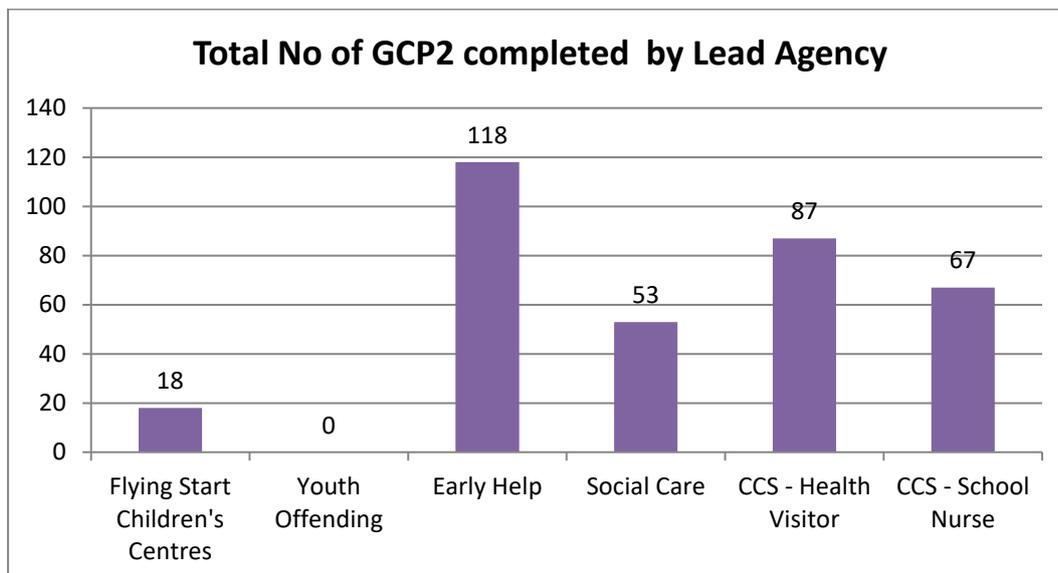
- How far have the aims of implementing GCP2 been met?
- What remains to be done to complete implementation?

The evaluation was completed in June 2018 with a seminar held to identify actions that the Board and partners should take forward. The summary and full report can be found on the board website. It is worth pulling out a couple of points made:

*Luton's implementation of GCP2 has been successful in many respects. Training was well received by those who gave feedback, and most importantly, trained staff from across Luton, are using the assessment tool with a range of families at different levels of need. Support offered by trainers and experienced staff has been appreciated and applied. From the evidence we have accessed, inter agency work in implementing and using GCP2 appears to have been effective to date, and there is still enthusiasm for it one year on, which is a real achievement. To take this further, the LSCB may want to consider how to improve the effectiveness of future training transfer, by following up on everyone who undertakes GCP2 training, potentially via their managers, to improve uptake and impact.*

*It is encouraging that practitioners feel confident to use the approach with families with whom they have not previously worked. Some practitioners are seen to be using the tool more systematically. They are quoting it as an aid to reflection, allowing them to revisit their assessment and reconsider their observations; as a way of reinforcing and supporting parent's strengths; as a guide to difficult conversations with colleagues and families, about areas of parenting that are not meeting a child's needs; and as a way of formulating clear plans and decisions. There are again several mentions of the value of joint working. All these are aspects of best practice where neglect is or may be an issue (Ofsted 2014; Ofsted blog 2018).*

There has also been a lot of work to ensure data is collated and used to understand how issues of neglect are being managed. The chart below shows the spread of agencies that have used the tool in this year. It identifies that the investment in training professionals who work in tier 1-3 services has been beneficial as that is where most are being completed.



The evaluation poses a number of questions which the Board are considering and will help shape the work it and partners undertake to maintain the progress in identifying neglect earlier.

#### 2.4 Priority Two: Hidden Children:

- Education
- Trafficked children
- Looked After Children
- Children at risk of or experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation
- Children in private fostering arrangements

A task and finish group has been meeting to identify the existing processes that are in operation. That group identified that there are some good processes in place for example within health, health visitors ensure GP's are notified about families and supporting families to have school aged children registered with school admissions. However the group identified that there is a gap in terms of holding a common list of families between housing, health and education who have moved into the town or left. Following a report to the board in Sept which identified the challenges, the group will be developing some processes to improve the sharing of information across agencies.

#### 2.5 Priority Three: Self harm and suicide

In collaboration with the other two LSCBs in the county, we undertook a survey of practitioners to assess levels of understanding and confidence in supporting young people. This fed into developing an audit and a county conference. The PanBeds audit provided assurance that when young people received a service from CAMHS, there was good evidence of engagement and listening to the young person. However, there are significant challenges if the referral does not meet the criteria and there is a paucity of support services. This is an area that has been acknowledged in Luton and has led to the instigation of a partnership group to develop and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental health action plan for Luton. One key development will be the new School Liaison team which will enable each school to have a link worker.

## 2.6 Community engagement

The Board had identified a need to recruit lay members with the resignation of one member which only left one. A successful recruitment has led to the appointment of four lay members who bring a lot of knowledge about Luton from a range of professional and personal experiences.

One of the areas they have already had an impact on, is the work on community and faith engagement. They have been very helpful in shaping the framework paper and being part of the steering group which will support the work.

## 2.7 Work with LSAB

There has been closer alignment between the two boards, with the two business units coming together in Feb 2018 as one unit, with one business manager to support the work of the two boards. We see benefits for both Boards in terms of better connectivity with an explicit “think family “ approach as well as developing an increased PanBeds approach to adult safeguarding emulating some of the gains that have been developed for the LSCB.

## Section 3: Reports to the Board and what they tell us about impact

### 3.1 Training Report

The PanBeds LSCB training unit ran 3 large scale events in relation to the needs identified by the LSCB's.

Oct 2017	A Father's Role in Safeguarding Children
Jan 2018	Children as Victims of Domestic Abuse
June 2018	Safeguarding Vulnerabilities Mental Health Conference

Over the year there was a 10% increase in attendance at training events, with participants on average scoring them high (3.76 on a score of 1-4). Ninety one percent of delegates rated their knowledge between 8 and 10 after attending the course.

There was a significant increase in people accessing e- learning from 2255 in the previous year to 3629, and again 97% agreeing they would recommend the learning. It's also important to note the uptake by the voluntary and community sector has doubled from 518 to 1148.

The increase in uptake alongside evidence of positive evaluation does show the move to PanBeds has been beneficial for people in Luton supporting children and families.

### 3.2 Private Fostering

Numbers of notifications have remained consistently low varying between 1 & 3. Briefings have been circulated to partners and the issue raised in sub groups.

### 3.3 Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report 2017- 2018

Child Death Overview Panels were set up following a 2004 report: "Sudden unexpected death in infancy".

During the period April 2017 until March 2018, there were 57 deaths reported across Bedfordshire. There was an increase in the number of deaths from 54 in 2016-17 to 57 in 2017-18. Unexpected deaths accounted for 21% of the total deaths reported in 2017-18, which is a decrease from the previous year where 31% of the deaths were unexpected. 63% of the reported deaths were of children less than 1 year of age. Of the total reported deaths 39% were female and 61% were male. There were no significant differences in the proportions of unexpected deaths by gender, with 18% for female and 23% for male.

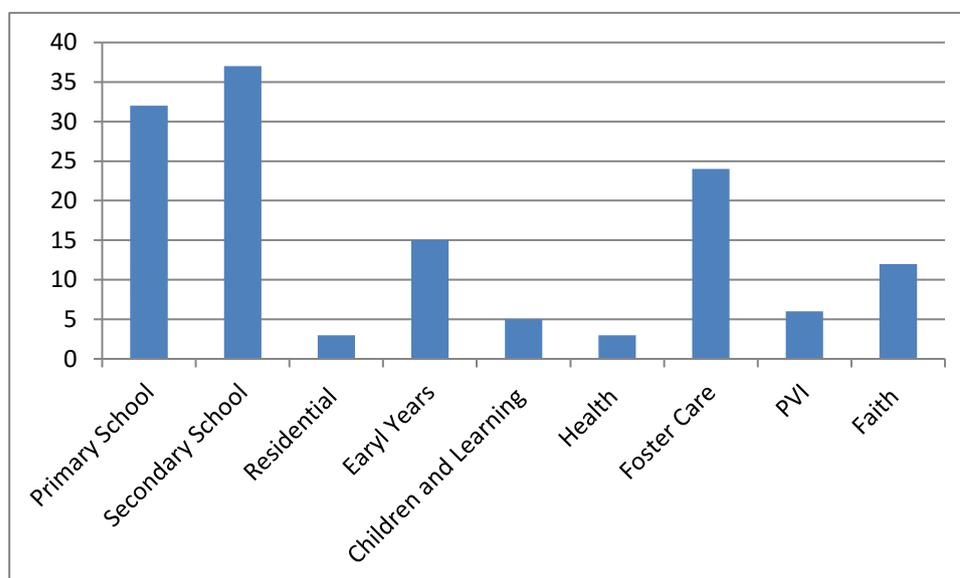
The number of deaths in each LSCB area over the past 5 years is shown in Table 1. This shows that Luton has had a decrease in child deaths this year 25 compared to 28 whilst Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough have each had an increase of 3 deaths on the previous year.

LSCB Area	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	Total	Average 2013/2018
Luton	20	26	31	28	25	130	26
Central Bedfordshire	10	13	16	14	17	70	14
Bedford Borough	16	12	13	12	15	68	13.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>53.6</b>

During 2017-18, Bedfordshire CDOP reviewed and closed 66 cases at panel meetings. Modifiable factors were identified in 39% of these cases; this is lower than last year where modifiable factors were found in 57% of cases heard at panel. Similarly to previous years, the modifiable factors identified included service provision, consanguinity, maternal BMI and smoking. There were also cases that found modifiable factors of substance misuse and road safety factors.

### 3.4 The Local Authority Designated Officer's (LADO) Report

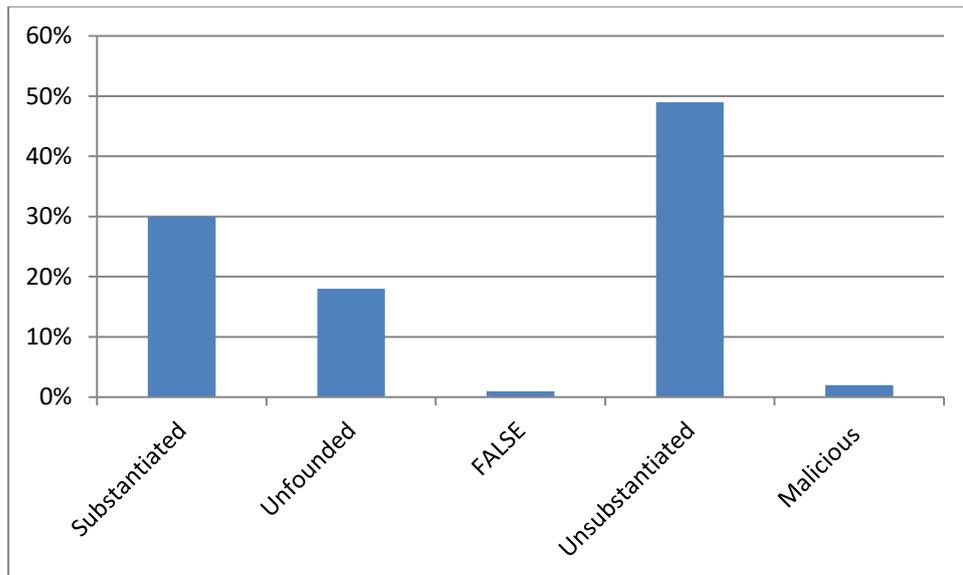
The "LADO" follows up referrals and contacts where there are concerns, or allegations made, about professionals working with children.



Schools continue to be the largest individual sector for LADO referrals. However, they are also the largest workforce by a significant margin. During the period shown, secondary schools made the most referrals. This unusual because in previous years there have been more referrals from primary schools. The majority of our *In Safe Hands training* has been delivered in primary schools which may have had an impact on this.

Following the closure of the main residential care provider in Luton we have seen a reduction in referrals from this sector.

As with previous years the most common outcome term is unsubstantiated (does not indicate guilt or innocence) and tends to be used in cases where there were no witnesses or, perhaps in an unregulated setting, where there is no route to investigate the allegation. Those still to be concluded include cases which came in near to the close of the period or have ongoing police or HR involvement.



## Section 4: Our plans for 2018 - 2019

The Board's priorities for the next year, based on what we learnt as a Board during 2017-2018 are:

### 1. Neglect

- Action plan on implementation
- Pre GCP 2 checklist
- Better understanding of use of tool in relation to older children

### 2. Self harm & suicide

Work with the emotional wellbeing and mental health group on developing clear pathways for support

Work with PanBeds suicide prevention (sub group on young people) on developing guidance on self harm

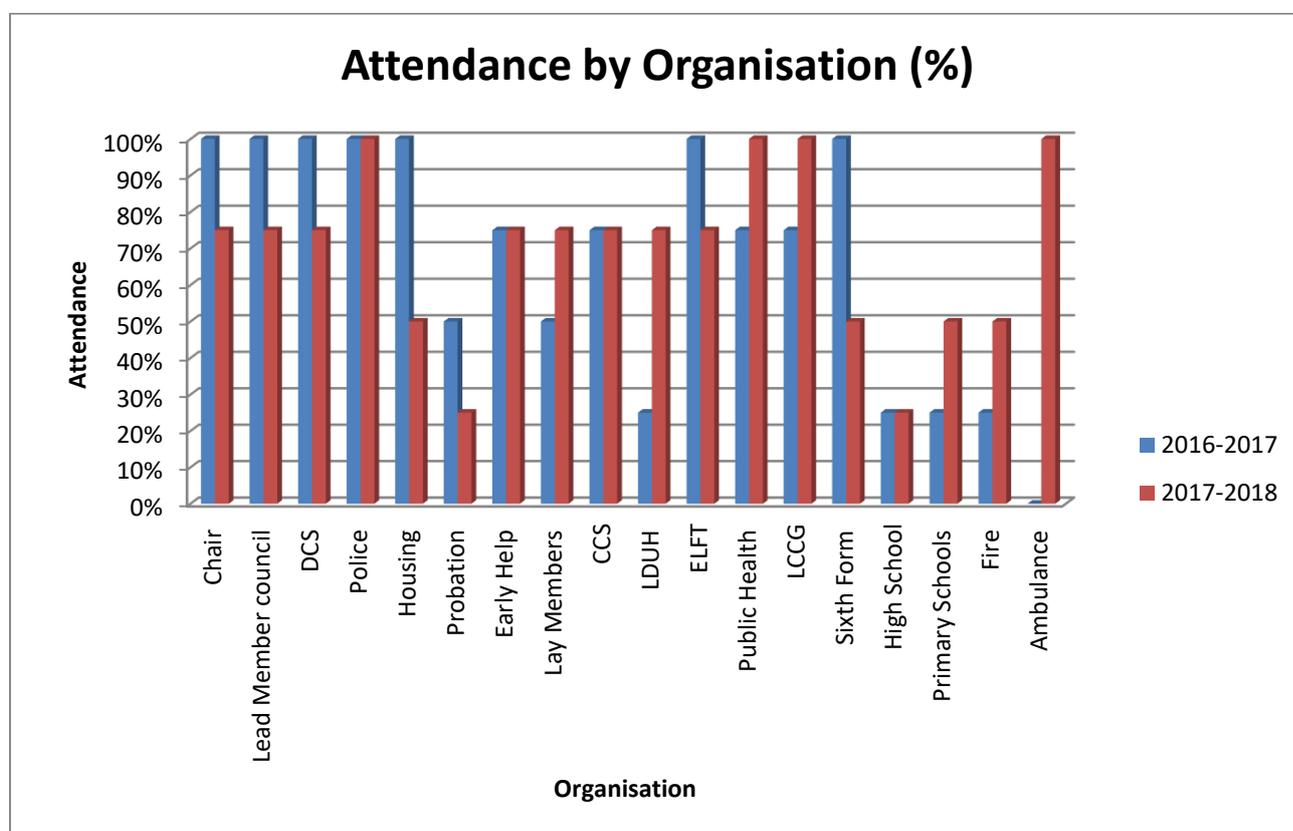
Work with East of England LSCBs on sharing learning

### 3. Hidden children

Complete the work on information sharing processes across partners  
Use the faith and community sub group to improve engagement with small organisations in the town and support them to improve their safeguarding practice.

#### 4.1 Agency attendance at Board 2017-2018.

There were four meetings during the year.



## 4.2 The Board's budget

The budget was agreed before this year and all agencies are signed up to it for a longer period. It is of note that some national research about police force funding to LSCBs showed that Bedfordshire Police are, based on population size, the most generous police force funders of Safeguarding Children's Boards in the country. (Miller 2015/16).

<b>LSCB Partner Agency</b>	<b>Total</b>
Children & Learning	<b>£149,299.00</b>
Health agencies: (CCS/L&D Hospital/NHS Luton CCG & ELFT)	<b>£87,063.08</b>
National Probation Services	<b>£839.64</b>
Bench Community Rehabilitation	<b>£800.00</b>
The Police & Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire	<b>£23,359.60</b>
CAFCASS	<b>£550.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£261,911.32</b>

## 4.3 The Independent Chair and accountability

As Independent Chair of the Luton Safeguarding Children Board, I am, like all independent Chairs, accountable to the Local Authority Chief Executive. In Luton, this is Trevor Holden. I have held regular meetings with him and the Lead Member to discuss the challenges and the work needed to improve the safeguarding systems in the Borough.

## Section 5 - Having your say on this report

We know as a Board that we are not as good as we want to be at using the voices of local children and residents to influence our work. This particularly applies to community groups and other local organisations. If you are part of a community group or organisation, and would like me to come and talk about this report and the work of the Board, then please do invite me - I want to make better links between the Board and local organisations in Luton. If you would like to comment on any of the issues in this report, your views are important to us. You can contact the Board via our website - it's been rebuilt just as we go to publication so we'd like your views on the site as well as any comments about this Report.