

Safeguarding Strategy

2025-2028



FOREWORD

As your Executive lead for Safeguarding, I am proud to be able to present our second Safeguarding Strategy.

Since joining the Trust, I have been impressed and assured by the systems and processes in place to ensure we are an organisation that has embedded safeguarding as a golden thread throughout all aspects of our clinical and non-clinical practice.

Safeguarding is at the heart of the care we provide, it is everyone's responsibility, and it underpins our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable people who come into contact with our services. This strategy aims to leverage the existing progress made and provides the direction required to strengthen safeguarding culture and practice, ensuring continuity and improvement across the organisation. This is not just an aspiration, but a tangible commitment woven into the fabric of this strategy.

This strategy reflects and builds upon the learning, the changing needs of our community, and the evolving national safeguarding landscape. It sets out clear priorities to ensure that we remain vigilant and responsive to emerging risks. We remain committed to working in partnership with our local safeguarding boards, partner agencies, and voluntary organisations, recognising that safeguarding is strongest when it is a shared endeavour.

Safeguarding remains a complex and challenging area of practice and, this strategy will serve as our compass, guiding our priorities over the next three years. It is aligned with the Trust's values commitments and overarching goals.

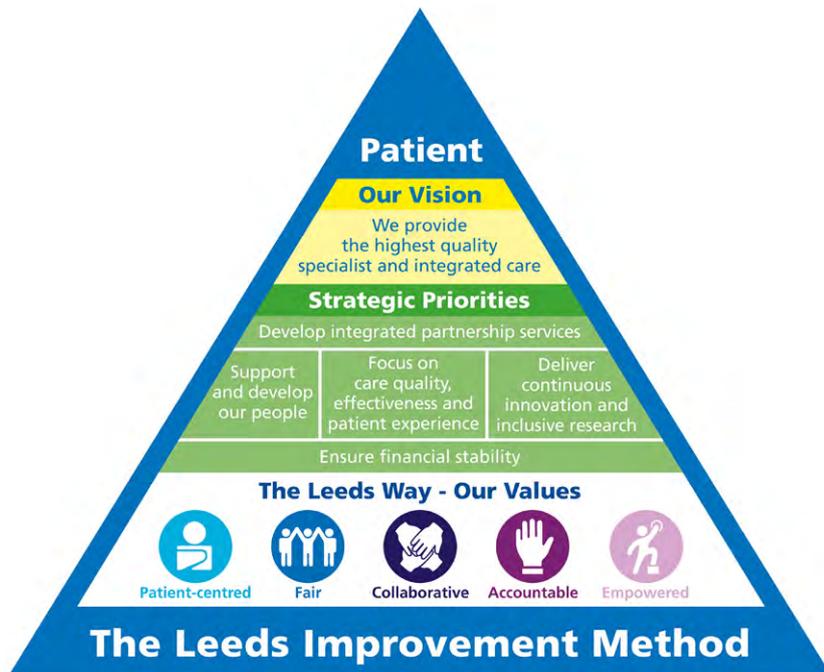
As Chief Nurse, I want to thank all colleagues for their dedication to safeguarding. It is your commitment, compassion, and professionalism that ensure our patients, their families carers, and our staff are safe and supported. Together, through this strategy, we will continue to strengthen our safeguarding arrangements and create an environment where people can live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.



Beverley Geary
Chief Nurse

OUR STRATEGY

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is an ambitious organisation with a clear vision to provide the highest quality specialist and integrated care. Our vision, values and strategic priorities are summarised in our strategic triangle below, which shows patients at the centre of everything we do.



Our mission:

to be an internationally renowned academic healthcare institution, working in partnership to deliver the highest quality, safe, effective and innovative care which improves outcomes.

- One of the **largest teaching hospitals** in the country
- A **regional and national centre for specialist treatment** and the **local hospital for the Leeds community**
- **Seven hospitals** across **five sites** in the city
- Treat around **1.6 million patients** every year
- Spend around **£1.9 billion** each year
- Almost **22,000 staff**
- Established **Centre of Excellence** for Research and Innovation at scale and a top recruiter for clinical trials

The Leeds Way

The Leeds Way is what we stand for and what we want to achieve. It is how we do things around here and what makes Leeds Teaching Hospitals different to other organisations. The Leeds Way is described in our strategic triangle; it encompasses our ambition through our vision and strategic priorities and our culture through our values, as created by our staff. It sets out what our stakeholders can expect from us as a Trust.



Patient-centred



Fair



Collaborative



Accountable



Empowered

The Leeds Improvement Method

The Leeds Improvement Method (LIM) is our philosophy of continuous improvement that underpins all our organisational strategies. It brings the principles of daily management methods, improvement methodology, respectful behaviours and the removal of waste from processes together.

Our strategy framework

The Safeguarding strategy is part of a wider suite of strategies that work together to support the Trust to meet its overarching vision. At the centre of this is the Trust’s corporate strategy, supported by three core strategies and eleven enabling strategies. This strategy forms part of the patient safety and quality strategy.

Our strategy framework enables us to ensure our strategies align and are updated appropriately to reflect and support the overall Trust strategy.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the revised Safeguarding Strategy 2025-2028 which supersedes the existing Safeguarding Strategy (2021-2024). The focus on this revised strategy was to build and improve on the work delivered in the previous safeguarding strategy. To achieve this the strategy has been developed in consultation with key internal and external stakeholders, including our patients, children, young people, families and carers.

Safeguarding is a core component of Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust commitment to providing safe, effective and compassionate care. Our focus is to continue to develop a culture of safety, respect and inclusion, where safeguarding is embedded into every aspect of care delivery across all our services.

BACKGROUND

The core value for safeguarding at Leeds Teaching Hospitals is to ensure that the safeguarding of our patients, their families, our staff and our communities are at the foundation of our Trust values encompassed in the Leeds Way.

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTHT) recognises that one of the most important principles of safeguarding is that it is 'everyone's responsibility.' A joint child and adult approach have been adopted in line with the Trust's shared safeguarding agendas, principles and duties of care as it is only truly effective when we work collaboratively and restoratively with our partner agencies to 'Think Family' and protect all those at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding the unborn, children, young people and adults cannot be done in isolation; it is only truly effective when we work collaboratively and restoratively with our partner agencies to 'Think Family' and protect all those at risk of harm, abuse or neglect. This city-wide approach is being embedded across all our services, whilst focusing on developing evidence-based and research-informed approaches to safeguarding practice that balances the rights and choices of an individual, with the Trust duties to act in their best interest to protect the patient, the public and the organisation from harm.

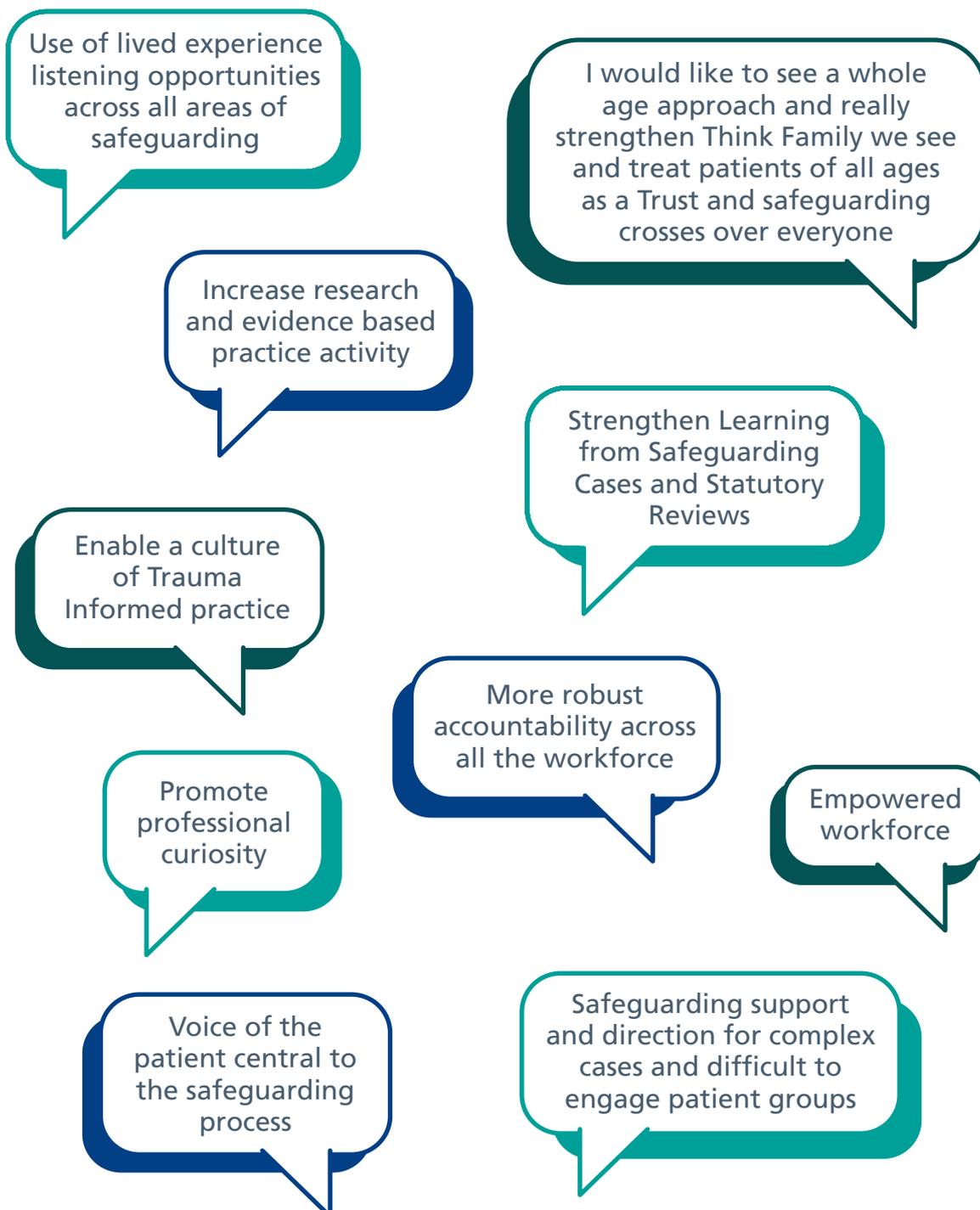
The term safeguarding covers everything that assists an unborn, child, young person or adult at risk of harm to live a life that is free from abuse and neglect, and which enables them to retain independence, well-being, dignity and choice. It is about preventing abuse and neglect, as well as promoting good practice for responding on a multi-agency basis. As an organisation we are committed to strong partnership working to ensure all our patients are protected, empowered and supported throughout their journey with.

This strategy sets out the Trust's strategic approach to strengthen our safeguarding direction across the Trust over the next three years.

Developing our new strategy

Consultation has helped us evolve our strategy framework, and produce this revised strategy. The voices of our staff and volunteers across Leeds Teaching Hospitals, along with our external partners, and crucially our patients and communities have enabled this document's production.

We heard that the progress that had been made since the first strategy was written and what we needed to consider and build upon moving forward:



The following is a snapshot of our engagement events:

- 10 Engagement Events
- 10 Days 6 Months
- Participants:
 - Children and Young People
 - Communities
 - Adults and Carers
 - Clinical Support Workers
 - Ward & Team leaders
 - Voluntary organisations
 - Third Sector representation
 - Clinical Educators
 - Matrons
 - Leads - Heads of Nursing & Midwifery
 - Heads of Profession
 - Senior Leadership Team
 - Estates and Facility teams
 - Representatives from Nursing, Midwifery, and Allied Health Professionals
 - Safeguarding multi-agency partners



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Safeguarding is an integral part of the Trust strategy 2024-26 and our vision to provide the highest quality specialist and integrated care will ensure that all statutory functions are met.

At the core of our Safeguarding Strategy 2025-28 lies our commitment and our vision in LTHT to provide the highest priority to support and protect our patients. This involves working with partners to create a culture that does not tolerate abuse or neglect, promoting a person-centred approach to safeguarding and ultimately preventing harm. We are committed to safeguarding all our patients, working collaboratively across the health and social care system to support service development and continuous quality improvement.

This strategy is aligned to our multi-year goals and will bring us closer to the Trust vision for providing the highest quality specialist and integrated care.

To achieve our goal of being the best for patient safety, quality and experience we will work in partnership with our staff, patients, and their families/carers. We will ensure that we respect individual needs and values to ensure that we treat every patient as an individual, deliver the best clinical outcomes, provide a positive patient experience and one which is free from avoidable harm. To achieve our goals and ambitions, we have identified three strategic priorities that will guide our efforts and shape our future.

- 1. Our Patients:** are at the heart of everything we do. We are dedicated to deliver excellence in care, consistently respecting individual needs and values to provide a positive patient experience.



- 2. Our People:** play a critical role in delivering our goals and ambitions. We aim to enhance the voice of all our staff within LTHT regionally, nationally and globally. By fostering collaboration and empowerment, we can drive innovation and elevate our professional practice across all professions and disciplines.



- 3. Our Partners:** hold a vital and essential role, safeguarding is a shared responsibility and necessitates a collaborative effort. We will continue to build and maintaining strong relationships with various partners. We will use our collective influence to identify best practice and promote high standards and consistent safeguarding practices.



We will continually monitor progress against the strategic aims to ensure they remain relevant, achievable and deliver the required outcomes.

Our ambitions

- We will continuously improve safeguarding practice to ensure patient safety and the quality of the care our patients receive.
- We will deliver this based on the Leeds Way values.
- We will embrace safeguarding knowledge to ensure our workforce has the skills, confidence and mechanisms to safeguard all our patients.
- We will work in partnership with multi-agency and statutory organisations to identify best practice and support necessary change, with continuous improvement underpinning all that we do.
- We will build a culture of trauma informed practice in a *'Think Family, Work Family'* approach where staff can be open, empowered to admit when things have gone wrong and feel supported to speak up. This will enable Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust to be a locally, nationally and internationally renowned centre of excellence for patient care, education and research.

OUR SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK



Our Patients

The voice and experience of our patients, their families, carers and the communities we serve is a fundamental principle to safeguarding, ensuring person-led and outcome-focused approaches.

This means actively involving individuals in decisions about their own care and safety, recognising their expertise gained through lived experience. A core principle of safeguarding is to empower individuals to make their own decisions about their care and safety, respecting their choices and preferences. Everyone must feel part of any process, this is their journey, so being a part of any decision making is essential to ensuring outcome-focused solutions. It is our role to identify those groups that may be at additional risk, such as those from marginalised backgrounds and ensure we champion their collective voice.

By exploring health inequalities and this focus will allow us to design safeguarding interventions which support those identified groups ensuring everyone can be heard so that we are meeting the safeguarding needs of marginalised and seldom heard groups, reducing inequalities and deprivation within our communities.

Goals and ambitions

- We will hold our patient voice at the centre of all we do, to make sure our patients are heard, and their contribution is valued throughout the organisation. We will ensure their experiences and perspectives should be valued as much as professional opinions promoting a culture of shared decision making.
- We will work together with our patient, families, carers and communities in relation to safeguarding and promoting their welfare and hearing their voice, while striving to achieve the best possible outcome, considering how their experiences can inform and shape our services in a meaningful and productive way.
- We will continue to strengthen a 'Think Family' approach is adopted across the organisation. Ensuring that the needs of all family members are considered when addressing the needs of any individual within that family, particularly in cases of potential safeguarding concerns.
- We will actively engage with our patients and communities to explore and identify potential safeguarding risks and vulnerabilities that might not be apparent through traditional methods.

How we will achieve this

- By creating clear and accessible information about safeguarding processes and empower individuals to participate in decision-making and have a degree of control over the process, making safeguarding personal and embedding the voice of the child.
- Foster a culture of regular and reflective safeguarding supervision where staff can discuss and analyse how they are capturing and responding to individual voices in safeguarding.
- Ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures explicitly incorporate the importance of patient voices and outline mechanisms for gathering, recording, and acting upon this feedback.
- Work collaboratively with patients, families, and other agencies to develop and implement safeguarding practices that are truly person-centred
- We will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of patient engagement in safeguarding and use the feedback and insights gathered to continuously improve practice and ensure better outcomes for individuals, providing a safe and empathetic place for disclosure.
- We will advocate for our patients with care and support needs that are reluctant to engage with professionals and services.

How we will measure this

- We will use data and information through the review of our safeguarding processes, safeguarding referrals, documentation and plans to provide explicit understanding of what is going well and what needs improvement.
- We will analyse statutory safeguarding reviews and serious incidents to identify systemic issues and improve practice.
- We will collaborate with other teams across the organisation and our external partners to ensure safeguarding is incorporated in other assurance processes.
- We will review safeguarding audits to ensure the patient voice, feedback and lived experience are meaningfully captured and inform practice.
- We will utilise and strengthen safeguarding governance processes to ensure dashboard data presented at quarterly steering group captures the patient voice and identifies any key themes and trends.
- Production and measurement of patient information leaflets, easy read leaflet is recorded and reported via the Patient Information Forum.



Our People

The Trust will empower our staff to become better equipped and informed in recognising and delivering their duties in safeguarding practice.

We will provide them with the correct tools to enable them to make timely decisions, encourage and support them to use their professional curiosity, respecting that they are the subject matter experts in their field. We will support our staff to work in a trauma informed way prioritising our staff, and their wellbeing through training, supervision, reflective practice, and a supportive culture. This will ensure the Trust has competent and confident staff, who are aware and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Goals and ambitions

- We will support staff to recognise and report safeguarding concerns, using evidence-based assessments.
- We will encourage staff to demonstrate professional curiosity and appropriate professional challenge, escalating concerns where applicable.
- We will continue to work across the organisation with all our staff to identify and mitigate risks, promote open communication about safeguarding concerns and drive continuous improvement in safeguarding practices.

- We will commit to creating a culture of compassion and kindness for all and actively seeking ways to offer a safe environment in which we endeavour to understand and pay attention to the signs and symptoms of trauma and the variety of ways this may present.

How we will achieve this

- We will ensure our training provides staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognise potential signs of abuse and neglect, understand their responsibilities, and know the procedures for reporting and responding to concerns. This training should be tailored to the specific roles and responsibilities of different staff members within the Trust.
- We will provide effective safeguarding advice, supervision and guidance to our staff, volunteers, and carers, to enable them to support people with any safeguarding concerns.
- We will empower our workforce to build their resilience, develop therapeutic relationships and promote their professional curiosity in safeguarding.
- We will promote a supportive, safe culture and environment that enables safeguarding issues to be raised and addressed, resulting in actions and outcomes properly recorded. The voice of the child and applying the principles of making safeguarding personal will be central to our decision making.
- We will work to build capacity in the wider workforce with safeguarding leads in CSU's and through having department/ward based local champions that are confident in safeguarding.
- We recognise and will support any staff, volunteer or carer who find themselves experiencing abuse first hand, or know of a close family member, colleague, or friend who is a victim of abuse and will provide appropriate, proactive support.
- We will continually demonstrate how our growing digital capabilities enables and enhances the care our staff provide to our patients.

How we will measure this

- This will be measured through attendance at safeguarding training, compliance and training data - Target 80%. Impact of learning on practice will be monitored through our training evaluation, impact data and safeguarding training audits.
- Through feedback from the Safeguarding Leaders and our safeguarding staff Champions.
- Through staff surveys and CSU feedback from internal forums. This feedback will be collated and results will be published and monitored through internal governance processes.



Our Partners

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility that necessitates collaboration, communication, and a coordinated effort across various sectors.

Safeguarding can only be effective when a collaborative approach is adopted, it cannot be undertaken in isolation; it requires a collaborative and multi-agency approach. This approach is crucial to ensure the safety and well-being of children and adults, they need to live safely and with dignity. We will continue to build on internal and external partnerships to strengthen our safeguarding practice, fostering open communication and shared learning to improve the safety and well-being for our patients and communities. Multi-agency working allows for the sharing of information, resources, and expertise, leading to more effective earlier identification of potential harm, improved responses and response to potential risks, ultimately aiming to reduce the likelihood of harm.

Goals and ambitions

- We will strengthen partnerships working with an ambition to create more cohesive effective safeguarding practices.
- Understand and identify current challenges and gaps, to identify improvement work and measurable objectives.
- Seek out opportunities of working more widely with other organisations and community groups to enhance safeguarding practice.
- We will ensure that clear lines of communication and collaboration between partners and agencies is in place.

How we will achieve this

- By collaborating and working with our statutory partner agencies we will review current information sharing agreements and communication agreements to ensure they are meeting safeguarding practices and processes.
- Review and map out current/existing safeguarding processes and procedures to identify any challenges, gaps and opportunities to develop shared protocols and guidelines, to ensure everyone understands their roles, responsibilities in safeguarding.
- Analyse any learning and key themes from safeguarding referrals, statutory reviews and incidents to provide opportunities for us to improve and replicate best practice, and to support future policy and process development.

