

Safeguarding Annual Report 2025-2026
Public Board

Thursday 24 September 2026

Presented for:	Assurance
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Previous Committees:	Quality Assurance Committee, 20 August 2026 Safeguarding and Mental Health Oversight Group 29 July 2026

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exemption	☐ YES (restricted from the FOIA) ☒ NO (available to the public under the FOIA)
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Link to Strategic Objective	Partnerships – integration that adds value, with patients at the centre.
Link to Provider Capability Assessment	Governance, risk and regulatory
Link to CQC Well-led Statement	Governance, Management and Sustainability
<u>Regulatory Impact</u>	Regulation 13: Safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment

Key points	Purpose
1. This annual report provides information on the activities of the Trust Safeguarding Team and assurance that the Trust is meeting its statutory obligations, confirming continued compliance with statutory duties and national safeguarding standards.	Assurance
2. The report summarises the current safeguarding landscape across children, adults, Prevent and Mental Capacity, highlighting emerging risks, system pressures, and mitigating actions to ensure a resilient and robust safeguarding framework.	Assurance and Information
3. The report identifies emerging safeguarding risks, horizon-scanning themes and strategic priorities for 2026/27 and seeks assurance that appropriate mitigating actions and governance arrangements are in place.	Assurance

<u>Risk Appetite Framework</u>			
Level 1 Risk	Level 2 Risks	(Risk Appetite Scale)	Impact
External Risk	Regulatory Risk - We will comply with or exceed all regulations, retain its CQC registration and always operate within the law.	Averse	Operating within

1. Summary

This Safeguarding Annual Report provides a summary of the key issues and activity in relation to the Trust's safeguarding teams during 2025/2026 and provides assurance to the Safeguarding and Mental Health Oversight Group (SMHOG) and external agencies that evidences how Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTHT) discharges its statutory duties in relation to:

- The statutory requirement under section 11 of the Children Act (1984, 2004) to safeguard and protect the children and families who access care.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in line with the Care Act 2014 and Department of Health Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 (October 2014)
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards amendment in 2007.
- Care Quality Commission 'Healthcare for all' (2008) requirements in relation to Care of People with a Learning Disability.
- Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Prevent duty under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Safeguarding remains a clear organisational priority. The Trust continues to meet its statutory duties under the Children Act 2004, Care Act 2014 and Mental Capacity Act 2005. Governance arrangements remain robust.

The term safeguarding covers everything that assists a child, young person or adult at risk 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 to concerns on a multi -agency basis.

However, the safeguarding landscape is increasingly complex. Demand, acuity and case complexity continue to rise across adult and children's services. There is also a sustained rise in highly complex safeguarding cases requiring intensive senior professional oversight and multi-agency coordination.

In addition to providing assurance regarding statutory compliance, the report highlights emerging safeguarding risks including increasing patient complexity, domestic abuse, self-neglect, mental ill health, exploitation, workforce pressures and health inequalities. It outlines the mitigating actions in place and identifies key priorities for 2026/27 to ensure the Trust remains responsive to national reforms, emerging risks and the changing needs of patients and families

2. Update

The Annual Report provides SMHOG with:

- An overview of the national and local context of safeguarding.

- An overview of the areas of practice included in safeguarding within the Trust.
- An update on safeguarding activity within 2025/2026 including progress made in strengthening safeguarding practice and outcomes
- Assurance that the Trust is meeting its statutory obligations and the required national standards with regard to Safeguarding, Prevent, Mental Health and Mental Capacity.
- A briefing on the challenges and work to be addressed by the safeguarding team working in partnership across all Trust teams in 2026/2027.
- Identification of emerging safeguarding risks, horizon-scanning activity and mitigating actions.
- An overview of national reforms, legislative developments and system changes that may impact safeguarding arrangements during 2026/27.
- Strategic safeguarding priorities aligned to the Safeguarding Strategy 2025-2028.

3. Quality and Performance Implications

Safeguarding remains a key quality and patient safety priority. The report demonstrates continued compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements supported by robust governance, workforce development, quality assurance and multi-agency partnership working. During 2025/26 safeguarding activity has continued to increase in complexity, particularly in relation to domestic abuse, self-neglect, mental ill health, exploitation, health inequalities and patients with multiple vulnerabilities.

Performance against key safeguarding indicators, including training compliance, safeguarding activity, incident reporting and case management, continues to be monitored through established governance arrangements. The report identifies mitigating actions including workforce development, trauma-informed practice, strengthened digital safeguarding systems and partnership working to ensure the Trust remains responsive to emerging risks and national developments.

4. Financial Implications

The Safeguarding Annual report provides assurance that the Trust is meeting its statutory duties and there is no identified financial implication.

5. Risk

The report identifies a number of emerging safeguarding risks including increasing safeguarding complexity, health inequalities affecting vulnerable populations, workforce pressures and the implementation of significant national safeguarding reforms. These risks are recognised, monitored and managed through established safeguarding governance arrangements. Mitigating actions include enhanced safeguarding support, workforce development, trauma-informed approaches, strengthening digital safeguarding systems and continued partnership working. No new risks requiring escalation to the Corporate Risk Register have been identified through this report.

6. Communication and Involvement

The Safeguarding Annual Report has been informed by safeguarding activity across the Trust and includes contributions from the Safeguarding, Mental Capacity Act and Mental Health Act teams. It reflects learning from safeguarding reviews, incidents, complaints, audits and partnership working during 2025/26.

Safeguarding learning and key messages continue to be shared through governance meetings, training, supervision, safeguarding champions and regular engagement with clinical teams and partner organisations.

7. Impact on Equality & Health Inequalities

Safeguarding activity recognises that people experiencing deprivation, social exclusion, domestic abuse, exploitation, mental ill health and other vulnerabilities are disproportionately affected by safeguarding risks. Trust safeguarding arrangements support equitable access to safeguarding pathways through early identification, timely intervention and effective multi-agency working. Safeguarding practice contributes positively to reducing health inequalities by supporting vulnerable individuals and families to access appropriate services and support.

No adverse equality impacts have been identified.

8. Publication Under Freedom of Information Act

This paper has been made available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

9. Recommendation

Whilst Safeguarding, Prevent, Mental Capacity and Mental Health agendas continue to be a challenging area for all health agencies and multi-agency partners, the Trust continues to actively respond and contribute to regional and national developments. This Annual Report demonstrates that safeguarding vulnerable people remains a significant priority for the Trust and offers assurance that the annual work programme has been delivered, and the Trust continues to meet its statutory duties as well as proactively developing safeguarding provision and implementing learning from adverse events into frontline practice. Safeguarding children and adults at risk continues to have a high profile within the Trust. Robust safeguarding and mental health legislation structures and processes ensure that the Trust meets its statutory requirements and safeguards its most vulnerable patients.

The Quality Assurance Committee is asked to:

- Receive the report as assurance that LTHT continues to meet its statutory safeguarding duties.
- Note the emerging safeguarding risks, horizon-scanning themes and mitigating actions outlined within the report.
- Endorse the safeguarding priorities for 2026/27 aligned to the Safeguarding Strategy 2025-2028.
- Receive the report for information and note the improvements and key priorities delivered during 2025/26.

10. Supporting Information

The following papers make up this report:

- Safeguarding Annual Report – provided to the Private Board (exempt from publication under Sections 31 and 38 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as it contains information relating to security arrangements and patient safety which could increase risk if disclosed)

