

SSCB STATEMENT RE: LEYLA

On the publication of *Leyla's Story: Learning from Experience*, Audrey Williamson, independent chair of the Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB), said:

“Following a serious incident involving Leyla in 2015, a thorough independent review was carried out to see if any lessons could be learned and changes made to improve services.

“This was a traumatic time for Leyla, her mum Catherine and their family – and social care workers continue to provide support to them.

“We have worked closely with Leyla and Catherine¹ to make sure their views and feelings, together with the key learning points from this case, are captured in *Leyla's Story*.

“We hope this will provide a helpful and meaningful story – both for Leyla and Catherine and for professionals to use in ongoing learning and training.

“*Leyla's Story* documents improvements that were made by services in the immediate response to this case up to October 2017.

“Since then, agencies have continued to build on these improvements, as follows:

- Strengthening and improving the Child Exploitation Team to ensure exploited children receive appropriate support – this work will be widened out further within a dedicated exploitation hub
- Regular checking that children who are looked after are receiving the right services to meet their needs
- Updating multi-agency training and exploitation awareness raising, with conferences planned to fully embed learning in professionals' work and equipping those who work in this complex area with the right skills
- Reviewing the quality of personal education plans for Looked After Children through the 'virtual school', with a new ePEP introduced to improve the quality and accessibility of plans for schools and social workers so that this group of children receive the educational support they need at the earliest opportunity
- Making regular checks that Looked After Children are receiving health care they may need

¹ *Leyla* and *Catherine* are pseudonyms chosen by them to protect their identity for publication

- Implementing positive changes to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) policy and procedures to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people – Sandwell CAMHS also offers a drop-in advice service to children's social workers on a regular basis for advice regarding individual cases

“We are committed to working together to prevent exploitation and protect vulnerable children and their families.

“Most importantly, I would like to thank Leyla and Catherine for their time in sharing their views and experiences. It is only by listening to their experiences that we can improve our services and better protect and support others in the future.”