

# Somerset Safeguarding Children Board Quality and Performance Framework



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## **1. Introduction**

**1.1** This Quality and Performance Framework sets out the commitment and key performance elements of Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and is endorsed by all Board Members. The purpose of this framework is:

- to provide a greater understanding on how safe children and young people are in Somerset;
- to use this information to inform the development of appropriate strategies to improve performance and outcomes for children, young people and their families;
- to provide evidence (in conjunction with other activities of the SSCB such as the section 11 (S11) audit, themed audits of best practice and areas for improvement.

**1.2** The SSCB Performance Management Framework is informed by national and local safeguarding aims and objectives, research and analysis. It is underpinned by 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (WT). The key principles of this are that:

*“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility: for services to be effective each professional an organisation should play their full part”*

*“A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children”*

**1.3** The first principle encapsulates the importance of multi-agency working, whilst the latter emphasises that the child needs to be at the focus of this. Achieving this means that the views and wishes of the child should be integral to the work undertaken with the child and their families/carers.

**1.4** Similarly, the guidance emphasises the care that should be taken in assessing the needs of children within particularly vulnerable groups, such as young carers, children at risk of anti-social or offending behaviour, disabled children specific additional needs, children with special educational needs, children whose family circumstances are challenging (i.e. parents with substance misuse, mental health or domestic abuse issues) or who are showing early signs of abuse or neglect.

**1.5** In accordance with this, the guidance contained in Working Together places great importance on the provision of early help by Local Authorities. Effectively, this means greater use of inter-agency assessments in order to deliver a range of effective, evidence-based services. Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (like all LSCBs) has a responsibility to assess the effectiveness of this early-help offer.

**1.6** Similarly, under the WT guidance, the SSCB has a responsibility for publishing a threshold document (**Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset**) which clearly outlines when children should be referred to Childrens Social Care.

This responsibility extends to making arrangements to resolve any difficulties or disagreements over thresholds and associated actions. Click on link to access:

<http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/effectivesupport-documents/>

**1.7** The Working Together guidance also places a responsibility on the SSCB to develop a local framework for learning and improvement. This includes undertaking regular reviews of cases that do not meet the criteria for a Serious Case Review, but which may provide scope for learning from which service delivery may be improved. Click on link to access:

<http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/groups/learning-and-improvement-group/>

**1.8** Consequently, within the SSCB, performance management will adopt an approach which focuses on “outcomes” rather than simply measuring how well we have complied with processes and procedures. This approach focuses on “*what positive difference has been made?*” in terms of understanding what positive impact has been made and if lives are made meaningfully better as a result of interventions/services by agencies.

**1.9** For outcomes to be considered positive in a child-centred approach, the views of the child, young person and their families/carers need to be sought. This demands active engagement and participation with children, young people and their families.

**1.10** The Quality and Performance Framework also incorporates the need for the SSCB to monitor the provision of early help. Working Together refers to this as “*providing support as soon as a problem emerges*” through rapid identification, assessment and delivery of targeted services to prevent further escalation.

**1.11** It is intended that the Board and Individual Agencies use the elements of the Quality and Performance Framework to inform their annual Business Plans and subsequent performance management action plans. The SSCB will monitor the effectiveness of the framework through the Quality and Performance Subgroup. Individual agencies may wish to consider suitable mechanisms for their own internal performance management monitoring arrangements.

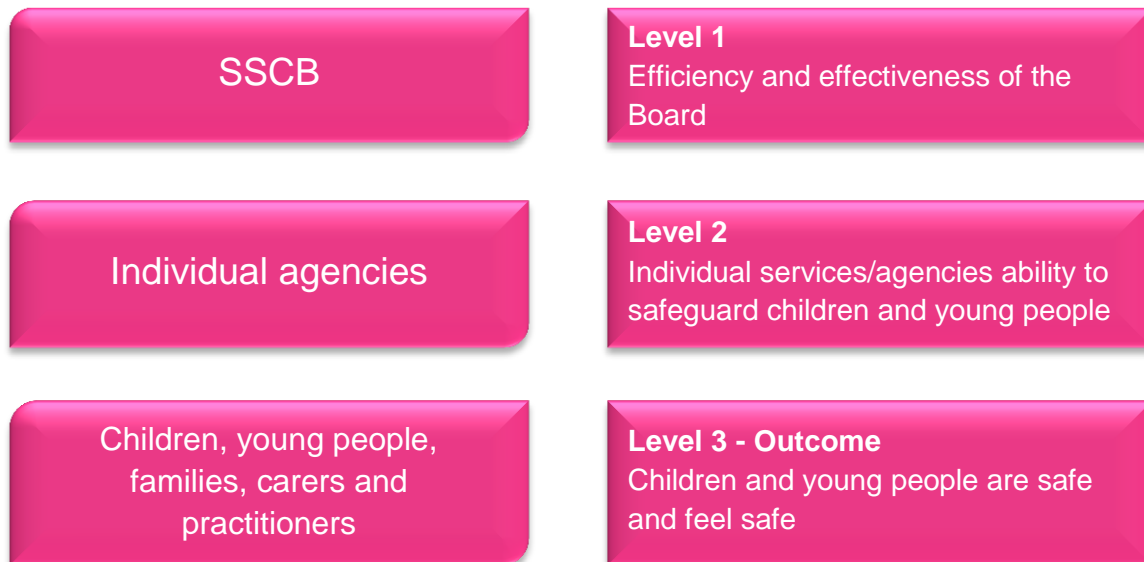
## **2. Purpose and Aim**

**2.1** The purpose of the Framework is to enable the Board and agencies to:

- have a **planned approach in scrutinising and challenging** the quality and effectiveness of their services through self-assessment;
- **performance monitor** safeguarding outcomes for children and young people;

- have business/Board plans that are **informed by need** identified by national and local safeguarding data and information;
- **Learn from reviews, and audits to continuously improve.**

**2.2** The Framework is aimed at both the Board and individual organisations that are responsible for safeguarding children and young people in Somerset. It includes several key elements that enable performance to be measured at the 3 levels:



### **3. Key Elements of the Framework**

**3.1** The Quality and Performance Framework gives a flexible structure to evidencing improvements to safeguarding children at the three levels. These include:

- Element 1: Setting the Content Area
- Element 2: How will performance be measured?
- Element 3: What does good look like?
- Element 4: Performance Activities – When and by who?
- Element 5: Governance and Accountability
- Element 6: Learning and Continuous Improvement

#### **4. Element 1- Setting Content Areas**

**4.1** The 'content areas' are defined and agreed as the most important by the Board. It sets the priorities and focus to inform business plans and action plans for forthcoming years. Often the 'content priorities' will be informed by the annual Children's Safeguarding Needs Assessment, which include data and information both locally and nationally.

##### **Examples of Content Areas:**

- Priorities identified by an agency
- Particular vulnerable groups (e.g. Children missing education)
- Specific risk issues (e.g. domestic violence, parental mental health and substance misuse – "Toxic Trio")

##### **Informed by:**

- Annual Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Local research and audits
- Performance indicators
- Learning from Serious Case Reviews
- Common themes from S11 audit

##### **Outcome:**

- Effective outcome focussed
- SSCB Business Plan
- Individual Agency Safeguarding Plan

#### **5. Element 2- How will performance be measured?**

**5.1** Once the content areas have been agreed these will be measured by three types of performance. These are:

- **Quantity** - 'How much did we do'?
- **Quality** – 'How well did we do it'?
- **Outcome/Impact** – 'is anyone better off – so what'?

**5.2** This provides the performance accountability on how well individual agencies and the Board are performing. The quantity and quality evidence will be data/information provided by the Board and individual agencies; it is the outcomes that measure the effects and impact on children and young people.

## Quantity, Quality and Outcomes/Impact

### **Quantity**

How much did we do?

Source of Information:

- Multi-agency safeguarding data
- National Performance Indicators
- Management Information Reports

### **Quality**

How well did we do it?

Source of Information:

- Local information including
- Experience of Children, young people & families
- Experience of Practitioners
- Audits of Children/Parent case records
- S11 Audits
- Peer reviews of specific groups
- Serious Case Reviews
- External Inspections
- Monitoring of Complaints
- Development Events

### **Outcome / Impact**

What difference has been made?

Using these sources of information will provide evidence of the effect on:

- Children and Young People living in Somerset being safe and feeling safe
- Children and Young People feeling safe from abuse (harm) and neglect
- Individuals being confident in: understanding & identifying neglect and abuse of children & young people, and in knowing what to do if they have a concern about a child or young person
- SSCB Priority Outcomes including: Child Sexual Exploitation, Hidden Harm. Neglect and Domestic Abuse/Violence.

As detailed in the diagram above, the framework contains three types of performance information:

1. **Quantitative:** this type of evidence is concerned with “how much or how many”. Examples include data or trends, performance indicators and targets.
2. **Qualitative:** this type of evidence is concerned with “how well something is done”. Examples include the views of practitioners, children and families, the quality of assessments, and quality case auditing.
3. **Outcome:** this type of evidence is concerned with “so what”, what difference has an intervention made to children and families. Examples are reduction/cessation of harm, improved wellbeing, children reporting feeling safer.

**5.3** Consideration should be given to what is currently collected and what additional/different performance information is needed based on the agreed ‘content area’. An agreed performance monitoring data set is presently being agreed by the Board.

**5.4** The data set is led by the SSCB priority objectives and includes national, local and SSCB performance indicators. Many of the national indicators are quantitative or statistically-based. Whereas the local indicators tend to focus on qualitative approaches.

## **6. Element 3- What does ‘Good’ look like?**

**6.1** As alluded to above, to measure performance yardsticks (or “metrics”) are required.

The Board and partner agencies have previously agreed the need for mechanisms (including appropriate quality and tolerance levels) to determine:

- if anyone is better off as a result of receiving a service or intervention?

And (if applicable)

- the amount by which they have benefited from this service or intervention

**6.2** The statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under s11 of the Children Act 2004 provides a set of 11 minimum standards against the key safeguarding arrangements:

- Senior Management commitment to the importance of safeguarding children;
- A clear statement of the agency’s responsibilities towards children is available to staff;



- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Service Development takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare;
- Service development is informed by the views of children and families;
- Individual case decisions are informed by the views of children and families;
- Effective inter-agency working enabling information sharing to service users;
- Staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or in contact with children and families;
- Safe Recruitment;
- Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- Effective inter-agency working and information sharing in order to ensure safeguarding and promoting Children's welfare (S11).

**6.3** Further work on what evidence and performance activities can be used will be produced in future action plans.

## **7. Element 4 - Performance Activities**

**7.1** Performance activities undertaken by Somerset Safeguarding Children Board will be primarily focused on those specified in the SSCB Business Plan.

**7.2** The SSCB performance dataset comprises National, Local and SSCB-specific performance indicators/measures. These may include quantitative (e.g. numerical information, such as rates per 10,000 etc.) and qualitative (e.g. observations, descriptions, why and how etc.) performance measures. The dataset defines minimum reporting frequency (although, due to the performance dataset being "new", some intervals may be subject to change), lead agency and evidence type.

Five key areas where performance information can be obtained:

## Performance information source model



**7.4** The use of this model will translate into performance management activities being undertaken at specified frequencies (as indicated in the performance management dataset). These may be quarterly or annually, as indicated in the below diagram.



**7.5** There will be times when ad-hoc performance requests need to take place often involving serious case reviews and the actions and learning from such activities need to be reflected within the overall monitoring and outcomes of this performance management framework.

## **8. Element 5- Governance and Accountability**

**8.1** On the Board's behalf, the Quality and Performance Subgroup will remain responsible for the co-ordination and management of performance and quality assurance. This involves:

- Producing a performance work plan that supports the SSCB Business Plan objectives
- Agreeing and monitoring the core performance indicators;
- Ensuring that all agencies contribute to providing safeguarding data and information to understand needs;
- Contributing to the collation and analysis of S11 audits and sharing best practice for service improvements
- Identifying, conducting and analysing annual themed audits
- Scrutinising of performance and reporting to the Board on a quarterly basis.

**8.2** The Chair of the Quality and Performance Subgroup continues to provide progress on the performance activities, outlining any significant risks and/or key improvements, on a quarterly basis.

**8.3** Under S11 of the Children Act 2004, partner agencies of the SSCB have a responsibility to identify a lead officer and designated person for safeguarding. Each agency will have their own mechanisms for determining how well they are safeguarding children and young people. The products of these mechanisms (e.g. thematic audits, file inspections etc) are likely to provide evidence of how they are meeting their obligations to children and young people, or where improvements need to be made, which can be fed back through the S11 audit process.

**8.4** Based upon the outcomes of this (and other reporting mechanisms presently operated by the SSCB), in accordance with the provisions of Working Together, the SSCB annual report will provide a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of child safeguarding and the welfare of children within Somerset. The report, through scrutiny of the evidence gained, will highlight good practice and identify where (and how) improvements are to be made.

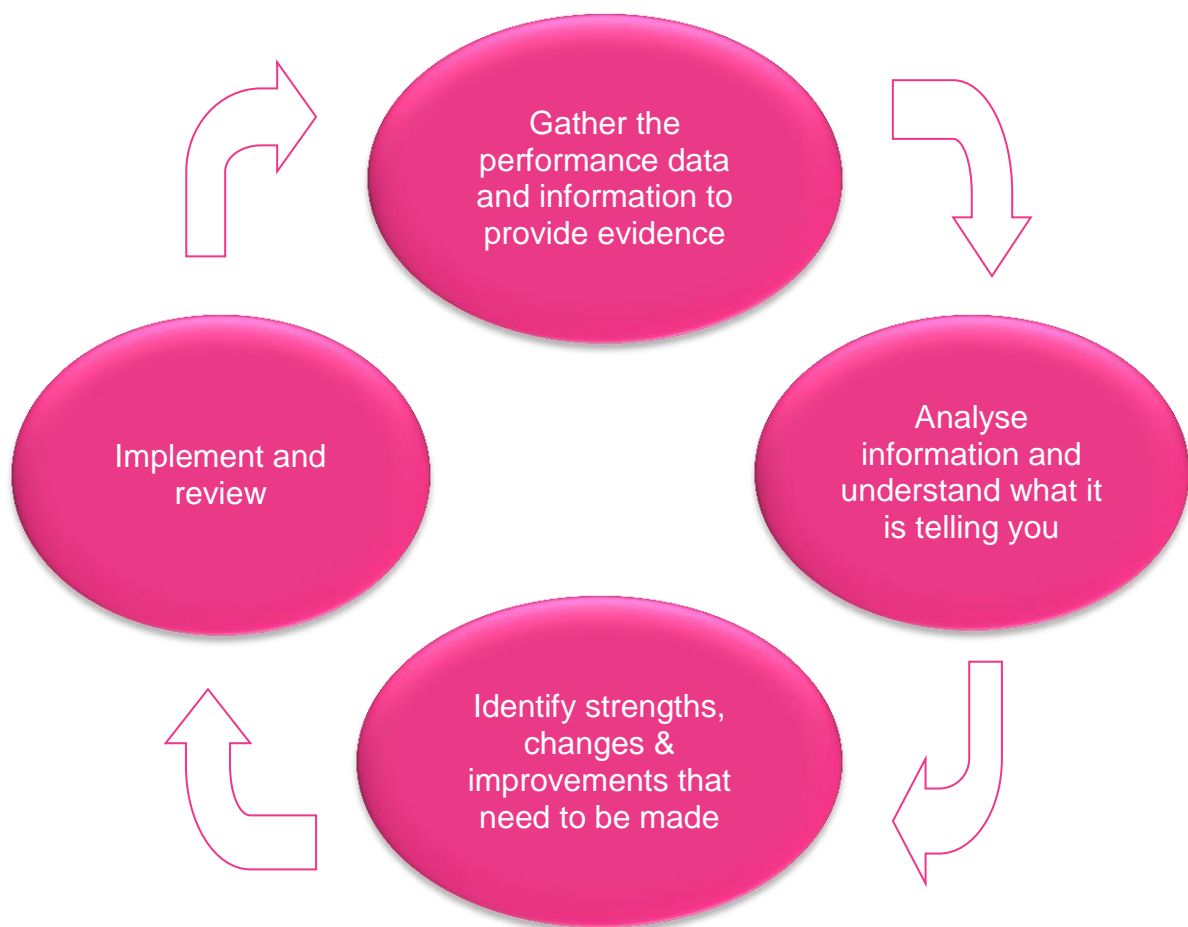
**8.5** Similarly, the forthcoming report will also contain a breakdown of the contributions made by partner agencies and expenditure by SSCB. This ensures scrutiny over the financial commitment to, and efficiency and operational performance of, Somerset Safeguarding Children Board.

## **9. Element 6- Learning and Continuous Improvement**

**9.1** Ultimately, the main purpose of the Framework is to show improved outcomes for children and young people. Working Together places a mandate on Somerset Safeguarding Children Board to develop and implement a robust framework for learning and improvement to support the achievement of this goal.

**9.2** The Continuous Improvement model subjects the performance information to systematic analysis, from which knowledge may be gained to inform service development and improvement.

### **Continuous Improvement Model**



**9.3** It is expected that this continuous knowledge acquisition will drive evidence-based practice. This learning will be passed on - through direct work, training, provision of guidance documents etc. - to improve outcomes for children and young people. Examples of which would include (amongst others):

- Responsivity to users needs and wishes
- Reviewed / Revised policy and procedures;
- Integration of training into practice

- Workforce development strategies – learning, development and
- recruitment of staff;

**9.4** The combination of the two models that highlight where performance information is derived (data sources model on page 9) and the continuous improvement model (page 12), results in performance management activities feeding continuous improvement of services. This will form the basis for the SSCB Learning and Improvement Framework.