



Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Quality Assurance Framework

1. Introduction

1.1 This Quality Assurance Framework sets out the commitment and key performance elements of Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) and is endorsed by partners. 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 SSCP, such as the section 11 audit and themed audits) of best practice and areas for improvement.

1.2 The Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership is informed by national and local safeguarding aims and objectives, research and analysis. It is underpinned by 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018). The key principles of this are that:

"Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action."

"[A] child-centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of each child. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families."

1.3 The first principle encapsulates the importance of multi-agency working, whilst the second 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, children with specific additional needs, children with special educational needs, children whose family circumstances are challenging (e.g. where parents have 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 to Safeguard Children' 2018 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 Partnership has a responsibility to assess the effectiveness of this early-help offer.

1.6 Similarly, under 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018', the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership holds responsibility for publishing a threshold document (**Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset**) which clearly outlines when children should be referred to Children's Social Care. This responsibility extends to making arrangements to resolve any difficulties or disagreements over thresholds and associated actions. Click on link to access: [Effective Support Documents](#)

1.7 The Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership has developed a local framework for learning and improvement. This includes undertaking regular reviews of cases that do not meet the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, but which may provide scope for learning from which service delivery may be improved. Click on link to access: [Learning and Improvement Framework](#)

1.8 Consequently, within the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, performance management adopts 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 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 Assurance Framework also incorporates the need for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership to monitor the provision of early help. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' 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 all partners and relevant agencies use the elements of the Quality Assurance Framework to inform their annual Business Plans and subsequent performance management action plans. The Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership 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.

Scrutiny and assurance framework

SCRUTINY AND ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK		Roles/ responsibilities	Dissemination of learning	Timescale
Section 11 audit	<p>The Section 11 self-assessment is an audit exercise to ensure agencies and organisations with a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 are compliant with their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people within their organisation. The audit considers the following domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and governance • Performance and outcomes • Commissioning and quality • Priorities and partnerships • Resource and workforce management • Culture and challenge <p>There are opportunities to develop additional questions for specific areas of focus as identified by the partnership. We will make use of the Section 11 findings to inform thematic Partnership Forum events.</p>	<p>High-level oversight of key areas of concern and good practice by Independent Scrutineer</p> <p>SSCP Business Unit</p> <p>Partners/ relevant agencies</p>	<p>Reported to Q&P subgroup/Partnership Business Group</p> <p>12 monthly report</p> <p>Learning bulletin</p>	<p>Quarter 3/4 2020/21</p> <p>Repeated every two years</p>
Section 11 peer review workshops	<p>Agencies with responsibilities under Section 11 will participate in peer challenges following the Section 11 audit. Given that this is an activity which takes place every two years, the peer review workshops will take place in the year after the section 11 audit in order to look at progress since the audit was completed.</p>	<p>Partners / relevant agencies including community members</p> <p>Involvement of young people and families</p>	<p>Reported to Q&P subgroup/Partnership Business Group</p>	<p>Quarter 1 2019/20</p> <p>Repeated every two years</p>

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	The workshops will test out areas identified for development as well as those identified as good practice and will be conducted in the spirit of partnership working but with challenge and scrutiny where areas of focus have been identified by the audit. Peer challenges will be on a rotational basis.		12 monthly report Learning bulletin	
Scrutiny/ assurance by children and young people	Face to face meeting between Safeguarding Partners and children and young people – as requested during the consultation on the Children and Young People’s Plan. Coordinated by SCC Partnership Business Unit			Annual
Section 157/175 audits	School audits carried out by the Education Safeguarding Service with oversight provided by Education Safeguarding Partnership.	Education Safeguarding Service/ All schools and colleges/ early years providers	Education Safeguarding Children Partnership	Annual
Multi-agency audits	Revised framework to be agreed by task and finish subgroup of Q&P subgroup. The multi-agency audits should include a systematic multi-agency review of the quality of early help assessments, plans and interventions which includes evaluation at all levels from senior managers to frontline practitioners.	SSCP Audit Officer Independent Scrutineer to take oversight of quality and outcomes, as part Q&P subgroup	Reported to Q&P subgroup	Quarterly
Serious incidents/ rapid reviews	Serious Incident Notifications – when the SSCP receives a notification they are required to carry out a rapid review of the case to determine whether it meets the criteria for a local (or national) child safeguarding practice review	LA is responsible for informing National Panel and SSCP of	See below	Within 15 days of notification

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		serious child safeguarding incidents. Scrutineer to sign-off of final report and provide consistency of decision-making process		
Child safeguarding practice reviews	Commissioned by SSCP following recommendation to Executive following rapid review (see above) – which must be endorsed by National Panel. Purpose to identify improvements to practice in order to safeguard children Executive to commission Independent author? (could be from regional pool?) Reports must be published	Executive (or Independent Scrutineer) to sign off final report Process overseen by Learning and Improvement subgroup	Reports have to be published MAPIGs Learning bulletins Integrated into multi-agency training	As required To be completed within 6 months of decision
Learning reviews	To be completed as agreed by the Learning and Improvement subgroup where thresholds for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are not met. Learning and Improvement subgroup to develop a suite of methodologies for learning reviews.	Independent Scrutineer to take oversight of findings via twelve-monthly report	Learning bulletins Integrated into multi-agency training	As required

SCRUTINY AND ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK		Roles/ responsibilities	Dissemination of learning	Timescale
		Process overseen by Learning and Improvement subgroup		
Thematic reviews	To be completed as agreed by the Learning and Improvement subgroup where thresholds for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are not met.	Independent Scrutineer to conduct scrutiny of final report (where published) Process overseen by Learning and Improvement subgroup	Learning bulletins Integrated into multi-agency training	As required
Safeguarding conversations	One-off conversations with practitioners involved in a selected case, generally of good practice in multi-agency working, reflecting safeguarding priorities. Conducted within the Appreciative Inquiry framework. Formerly chaired by SSCB's Independent Chair supported by a Board member. Recommendation: Safeguarding Conversations to be re-launched. To be led by two representatives from relevant agencies. One of whom would chair all conversations – to be changed each year.	Quality & Performance subgroup/Learning and Improvement subgroup (appropriate to theme)	Learning bulletins Integrated into multi-agency training	Quarterly
Twelve-monthly report	Required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. Completed by chairs of subgroups, collated by Business Unit	Independent Scrutineer to sign off twelve-monthly report and	Published on SSCP website reported to	April 2020 (for year 2019/20)

SCRUTINY AND ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK		Roles/ responsibilities	Dissemination of learning	Timescale
		provide written comments to Executive	Health and Wellbeing Board	
Qualitative follow up with parents/ carers/ young people	Identify a partner or member of the Business Unit to undertake 6 telephone calls per quarter across a range multi-agency interventions <i>(methodology to be agreed)</i>	Business unit under direction from Quality and Performance subgroup chair	Reported to Quality & Performance subgroup	Quarterly
Quality assurance of CP conferences	Feedback from practitioners to be sought by ISRO service. Quarterly analysis to be reported in annual ISRO report.	ISRO service	ISRO annual report goes to Corporate Parenting Board	Monthly - aspirational
Inspection processes e.g. CQC, Ofsted, HMIC, JTAI	Regulatory inspection activity across individual partners by regulatory bodies; joint partnership inspection activity	Three key partners and Independent Scrutineer to be available for interview as well as any partners with Section 11 responsibilities	Inspections published	As required
Regional peer review	Partners who have been involved in regional scrutiny meetings to conduct reciprocal peer review activity, co-ordinated by Avon & Somerset Constabulary	Co-ordination by A&SC CCG designated safeguarding professional, CSC representative, SSCP	<i>Not yet determined</i>	<i>TBC – not yet in operation</i>

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		Business Manager, A&SC Inspector		
Partnership Executive	To receive exception reports from Partnership Business Group	Oversight by Independent Scrutineer		Monthly in transitional phase. Quarterly from 2020/21
Partnership Business Group	To receive themes from data dashboard as identified by Q&P subgroup and prepare exception reports for the SSCP Executive			Quarterly
Quality and Performance subgroup	To receive data dashboard and identify themes	Independent Scrutineer to scrutinise data scorecard		Quarterly

November 2019