



UNDERTAKING AN AUDIT AS PART OF THE SURREY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD AUDIT/QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMME

1. What is the purpose of audit?

What is an audit?

- Audit is a quality assurance process. It provides a means of finding out whether the service is following guidelines and or applying best practice in a particular area. It is a systematic process that involves: defining standards and criteria, collecting data and analysis the findings.

Why conduct an audit?

- Audit is undertaken to ensure that policy and procedures are being followed. It provides evidence of best practice and can demonstrate the quality of work to external bodies and inspectors. It also allows areas of weakness to be identified and acted upon.
- The process of doing the audit can be as beneficial as the outcome because it provides staff with the time and space to reflect critically on practice and, in the multi-agency audits carried out by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB), the opportunity for agencies to learn from each other.

Who should be involved?

- It is good practice to involve people with a range of different perspectives within the audit group, representing a spectrum across the work force.
- For multi-agency audits there should be a short life task and finish group of representatives from partner agencies who can develop the audit methodology and the kind of issues the audit should address from the perspective of partners
- Where ever possible the audits should be informed by the views of children, parents and carers and the workforce.

2. The SSCB programme and the role of the Quality Assurance Sub Group

The audit programme

- The SSCB Quality Assurance and Evaluation Sub Group will devise an annual programme of audits that seek to assure quality in key areas of safeguarding activity.

The area safeguarding groups may be asked to suggest and support audits in the same way as the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Sub Group

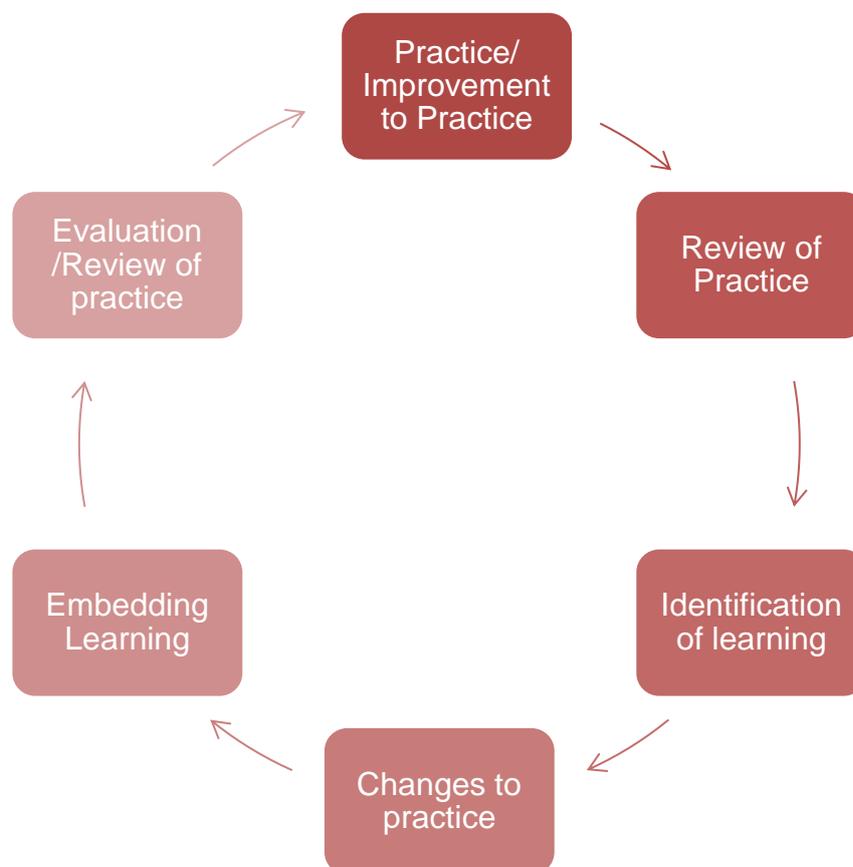
- The topics will be selected by issues/questions raised by:
 - Inspection/review processes
 - Complaints
 - Serious Case Reviews/Case reviews
 - Learning and Improvement framework
 - SSCB priorities

- For the year 2016/17 this will include:
 - Domestic Abuse Audit
 - Neglect Audit
 - Missing Children and Return Home Interview Audit
 - Early Help/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Audit
 - Family Support Programme Audit
 - Re- audit as required (Core Group Audit)
 - Dip audits and surveys

Overseeing Audit activity

- The Quality Assurance and Evaluation Sub Group will oversee each audit by:
 - Commenting upon and approving the scope for each audit to be undertaken
 - Commenting and approving the report for each audit before a summary is submitted to the Board as part of the SSCB Quality Assurance Officer's quarterly report.
 - Quality assuring the action plans arising from audits to ensure that they are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound (SMART) and there is a clear understanding about what actions will be taken forward, by whom and when. Action plans will be agreed at the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Sub Group, the SSCB Quality Assurance Officer will prepare an outline action plan for each audit
 - Reviewing the action plans
 - Agreeing if re-audit is required and the timescales for this
 - Ensuring, through the Quality Assurance Administrator, that a record of all audits, re-audits and action plan reviews are maintained until the audit is signed off

3. Undertaking an audit



Audit standards

- The Quality Assurance standards from Surrey Children's Services have been adopted by the SSCB to ensure that:
 - The Child is the central focus of our work
 - The right actions are taken at the right time to meet the child's best interests
 - All children are seen and spoken to on their own as appropriate
 - The details of all contacts should be recorded in line with agency procedures
 - The record conveys the child's daily experience of living and where possible the quality of the child's attachment to the main care-giver
 - Each child has a plan which is fit for purpose and takes account of the child's age and level of development
 - Clear interventions have been put in place which have achieved improved outcomes for the child

The wishes, feelings and views of the child underpin and inform all the work we undertake

- The wishes, feelings and views of the child are included in all records and considered in reports and decision making

- Appropriate methods are used to communicate effectively with all children taking account of the needs and age of the child
- The views of very young children will be obtained through observation of their interactions with parents/carers where appropriate
- The child's record evidences that the child has been seen and spoken to and their views recorded
- There is evidence that the content of reports and plans are shared and discussed with the child where the child is of an appropriate age
- Children are given the opportunity to attend meetings about them with appropriate support
- The child is given the opportunity to give feedback on the services they receive

Work with children, families and carers acknowledges and respects diversity and difference, and considers the impact of their culture and background

- Workers demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences and identity in respect of the individual family
- There is access to an independent interpreter and/or translator where appropriate and documents are translated where necessary
- There is evidence that where there are barriers to accessing universal services these have been identified and addressed
- Ethnicity and religion as described by the family should always be correctly recorded

Children are safeguarded and protected in a timely manner through a balanced analysis of risks and strengths. Particular attention is paid to safeguarding children with a disability

- Immediate and appropriate action is taken when the child is deemed to be at risk of significant harm
- There is evidence on the child's record of a balanced, up-to-date risk assessment which is reviewed regularly
- There is evidence of direct work with parents/carers to improve parenting capacity and minimise risk
- Risk management demonstrates an understanding of the child's age and development, balances risk taking and safety

Corporate parenting responsibilities will ensure safety, security and stability of care where possible within the child's family network and community. Particular attention will be given to good quality care planning and achieving permanency for a child without delay

- Evidence of assessment, planning and review within timescales
- All activity demonstrates that the child, parents or carers and extended family have been consulted, particularly fathers
- Evidence that the child's health, education and social needs are addressed
- Particular attention is given to good quality care planning and achieving permanency with the child's timescales
- Timely consideration is given to the of future needs of the child and transition to services available post-18

Active engagement in partnership working with community networks and partner agencies to achieve optimum outcomes for children

- All strategy discussions, assessment, care planning and review demonstrates engagement with partner agencies to promote their contribution in order to progress the child's plan
- Evidence of information sharing across involved agencies
- Evidence of consultation with community networks to promote creative use of resources
- Evidence of the use of early intervention and support and where statutory involvement ends

Staff are supported, trained, managed and provided with reflective supervisions to ensure the best possible outcome for children and young people

- Good quality induction is in place in line with SSCB expectations regarding safeguarding
- All staff will receive safeguarding supervision which is both supportive and critically reflective

Managers lead staff to deliver quality and excellence, have an understanding of relevant processes and resources, and provide a clear direction to constantly improve service delivery

- Effective safeguarding oversight is in place which includes an appropriate level of challenge and enquiry
- Safeguarding decisions are clearly recorded and the reason is explicit
- Teams ensure an appropriate safeguarding advisor is available and approachable for guidance and decision-making
- Managers evidence quality assurance activity including learning from user feedback and serious case reviews

The standards for each audit are included in the audit proposal.

The audit group

- A multi-agency group is formed as a short task and finish group for each audit. The group should:
 - Agree the scope of the audit, the standards and aims
 - Decide on the best way to conduct the audit which should include case review, including an agreed audit tool, consultations with the work force and where possible ascertain the views of children and families. This can be done through focus groups, questionnaires, structured interviews and surveys
 - Agree the sample size

The audit tool

- The standards provide the framework for the questions used in the tool.

- The questions should also reflect the issues which need to be addressed.
- Ideally each question should have a number of options for the auditor and a free text box where extra information can be provided if required.

Distribution of the audit and the audit tool

- This should be agreed by the commissioning group. The leads for distribution are:
 - Named nurses – acute and community
 - Named midwives
 - Quality Assurance Manager – Children’s Services
 - Members of SSCB Quality Assurance and Evaluation Sub Group to their respective agency if appropriate and proportionate

The report

- The analysis should include quantitative and qualitative information.
- The following headings should generally be used:
 - Introduction – the reasons for the audit, the background and National issues. If it is a re-audit what were the issues from the last audit.
 - Method – how was the audit undertaken, who was involved in the planning group, which agencies were involved. What tools were used? Were Children, families/carers and workforce involved? How?
 - Results – highlight these under the questions/standards used, this can include qualitative and quantitative information
 - Discussion – this should summarise the results of the audit drawing out strengths and weaknesses, includes an interpretation of the findings which are brought together as a recommendation for further work
 - An action plan

Action Plans

- Each audit should have its own action plan which should be agreed by the relevant commissioning group.
- The action plan should be short and outcome focused

Reporting

- For each major audit an executive summary should be provided.
- The report should be shared with the SSCB Quality Assurance Sub Group, and then with other groups
- A quarterly report should be completed to advise the Full Board of the findings from the audit

4. Information Governance

- Working Together 2015 says that in order to fulfil its statutory function under regulation 5 a Local Safeguarding Children Board (in this case the SSCB) should use data and as, a minimum, should:

- Assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help
- Assess whether SSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations set out in chapter 2 of this guidance (Section 11 audit)
- Quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identify lessons to be learnt
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

This supports information sharing to allow the data for audit to be shared.

- The majority of agencies who constitute the Board and sub groups are signed up to the [Multi Agency information Sharing Protocol](#) (MAISP)
- Audit information must be sent to secure emails or encrypted. Each agency is responsible for their own information security once the audit information has reached them
- Completed audit forms should be kept until the audit report is completed and agreed by the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Sub Group.
- The completed audits must be kept secure and then destroyed.

5. Communication

- In order to be effective each agency must take responsibility for the distribution of the findings of the audit as relevant to their area of practice. A lead member within each agency should have the responsibility for this task.
- Where the audit has involved contributions from parents and children's the relevant outcomes and actions should be shared with them.

Dissemination of Findings

- In order to be effective the SSCB will share findings in accordance with the [SSCB Quality Assurance Framework](#)
- Each individual agency takes responsibility for the distribution of the findings of the audit as relevant to their area of practice.
- Where the audit has involved contributions from parents and children's the relevant outcomes and actions should be shared with them.