

## **Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Performance and Quality Assurance Framework**

### **Introduction**

The Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) oversee the multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children, as required by the government guidance Working Together 2023. The Partnerships co-ordinate and ensure effectiveness of multi-agency working to safeguard children to support our vision, which is for children and young people in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to be safe, well and achieve their full potential.

### **The Performance and Quality Assurance Framework**

This Performance and Quality Assurance Framework has been developed, taking into account good practice, legislation in the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and Working Together 2023 statutory guidance.

The diagram below shows the outline of the framework.

### **Performance and Quality Assurance Framework**



The purpose of the assurance framework is for each Partnership to:

- be assured of continuous improvement in the safeguarding effectiveness of local arrangements for children

- promote and ensure effectiveness of multi-agency collaboration
- secure and evidence improvement in practice from multi-agency assurance reports, audits, local practice reviews and training and development
- capture the views of children, their families, senior managers and frontline staff throughout our safeguarding processes.

At the heart of this assurance framework are five simple questions:

- Are we improving our ability to keep children safe and how do we know?
- What did we do?
- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- What difference did it make?

For each Partnership to achieve a good understanding of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements it needs:

- a shared analysis of intelligence about practice which leads to action to improve standards of multi-disciplinary assessment, planning, intervention and review
- to identify the 'key focus areas' that are a business priority
- to obtain data and information from an appropriately balanced range of sources, using a range of methods.

The process requires a systematic means of each Partnership providing opportunities for their staff to:

- reflect on the quality and impact of their practice
- develop their curiosity and enhance clarity of thinking
- access support to deal constructively with the emotional and psychological impact of the work
- work in a trauma-informed way.

## **Independent Scrutiny**

All of the Partnerships' assurance work will be subject to independent scrutiny through the Partnerships' Independent Scrutineer and Young Scrutineers and the internal governance and scrutiny functions for each of the Safeguarding Partners.

A scrutiny framework has been established and agreed by Safeguarding Partners. The scrutiny framework reflects the functions as described in Working Together 2023 and adopts the '[Six Steps to Independent Scrutiny](#)' model. The framework aligns with the priorities identified and documented in the Joint Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Business Plan.

The Independent Scrutineer will play a role in the assurance framework, by following a scrutiny plan which continues over a two-year period to allow for evidence of both progression of areas identified as priorities and impact of the activity. The plan is regularly reviewed to ensure ongoing alignment with the Safeguarding Children Partnerships' Business Plan.

The areas the Independent Scrutineer will consider in relation to the Partnerships' Performance and Quality Assurance Framework and their methods for quality assurance include:

- The mechanisms in place for the Safeguarding Partners to collect, analyse and use data pertaining to safeguarding children
- The analysis of collected data, including:
  - How it enables the identification and response to disparities and disproportionality in children's safeguarding by protected characteristics
  - The understanding of qualitative and quantitative data and the advantages and limitations of both in being used to identify, set and review the Partnerships' strategy and priorities
  - How relevant data is being used to review the impact of safeguarding initiatives on desired outcomes for children and if this is informed by and applying the lens of intersectionality data
  - Any gaps in the provision of data being identified and if processes are in place to try to rectify gaps
- How findings from analysis and review of multi-agency data inform the Partnerships' strategic plans, priorities and working groups/task and finish groups and that the role and impact of structural inequalities and discrimination are factored into such processes/determinations
- The audit activity within the Partnerships', including:
  - The findings and learning from multi-agency case file and spotlight audits and how these will be addressed and actioned
  - If relevant agencies from the wider partnership are undertaking and sharing their own audits of data pertaining to safeguarding children
- The data and information sharing protocols in place and how these are understood and enacted by lead and relevant agencies and anything that is hindering effective information sharing
- How quality assurance mechanisms in place ensure that learning from different safeguarding approaches is shared and embedded across the Partnerships – for example, learning around Think/Whole Family, contextual safeguarding, anti-racist practice, professional curiosity, Signs of Safety – and how this learning is disseminated across the Partnerships via training and workforce development
- How each Partnership's Yearly Report presents data of safeguarding children concerns and if it considers and includes equality, diversity and inclusion issues, such as structural racism and poverty. Also, how Yearly Reports are made available in accessible formats to partners, relevant agencies and children, young people and families.

The Young Scrutineers will work alongside the Independent Scrutineer to ensure the views and experiences of a range of children across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are at the centre of the work of the SCPs. They will provide independent scrutiny of the work of the Partnerships from the perspective of a young person as part of the existing broader independent scrutiny framework. They will work with the

Independent Scrutineer to help develop reports detailing the outcome of scrutiny activity.

The Independent Scrutineer and Young Scrutineers will participate in an annual safeguarding learning and development event for Safeguarding Partners and scrutinise the outcomes from the evaluation of the intelligence gathering to inform the refresh of focus areas. This assists with promoting transparency.

### **The Elements of the Safeguarding Framework**

A variety of measures will be used for the evaluation of effectiveness.

Annually:

- Single agency Section 11 safeguarding self-assessments (undertaken by agencies as part of their duties under Chapter 4 of Working Together 2023) or frontline practitioner survey
- Single agency assurance statements
- Assurance reports from other partnerships / services
- Data that provides a wider context regarding safeguarding

Quarterly:

- Performance data and single agency narrative
- Multi-agency audits
- Business Plan priority progress
- Subgroup progress reports

Throughout the year:

- Learning from reviews, including national reviews
- Engagement and voice of children, young people and families
- Staff wellbeing and workforce feedback

Further information on each element is outlined below.

In addition to these regular elements, the SCPs can also request and receive information around single agency audits, single agency inspections and multi-agency assurance reports.

Most of these elements will be co-ordinated by different subgroups of the SCPs and then collated and analysed by the Planning and Delivery Group of the SCPs, who will then report to the SCPs. The process for this can be found at Appendix 1.

### **Single agency Section 11 safeguarding self-assessments / frontline practitioner survey**

Every other year, each member of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships will self-assess whether their organisation is being effective in keeping children safe. The

self-audit will meet the requirements of the Section 11 assurance process and will capture information on safeguarding practices among local organisations.

This will be based upon organisations' own quality assurance reporting and will include information on how they have responded to safeguarding learning and improvement, including specific themes from case reviews; how they have addressed the partnership priorities; and how the 'lived experience' of children has been considered. It will also cover safeguarding policies and procedures; information sharing; recording incidents of concern; recruitment of staff and volunteers, training and safer employment.

In the years where the Section 11 is not completed, a frontline practitioner survey will be completed.

This work will be co-ordinated by the Performance Group of the SCPs. The results and learning will be reported to the Planning and Delivery Group.

### **Single agency assurance statement**

The SCPs will seek annual assurance from partner agencies around their internal quality assurance processes. The aim is to provide a picture of activity that agencies have completed over the previous twelve months, giving an overview of what the key successes have been, what are the areas for development and any key actions for the forthcoming year linked to the business plan priorities.

This work will be co-ordinated by the Performance Group of the SCPs. The statements will be collated and reported to the Planning and Delivery Group.

### **Assurance reports from other partnerships / services**

The SCPs will receive annual assurance reports from other partnerships / services that oversee specific areas of work linked to safeguarding. Key lines of enquiry, where possible, will be viewed through a multi-agency lens. The following areas of work will be invited to present to the SCPs on an annual basis:

- Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)
- Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs)
- Front Door
- Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Corporate Parenting
- Adolescence Safety and Diversion Board (ASDB)
- Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Boards.

These reports will be sent directly to the SCPs and will be given specific agenda item slots.

### **Data that provides a wider context regarding safeguarding**

At the end of the business year, the SCPs will receive data that provides a wider context from relevant Partners that will provide a snapshot of the local picture. This



will include annual numbers of Early Help assessments; numbers of Children in Need; number of Child Protection Plans; number of Children Looked After; and numbers of Care Leavers.

This information will be collated by the Performance Group. It will be reported to the Planning and Delivery Group and included in the Yearly Report of each SCP.

### **Performance data and single agency narrative**

Indicators of performance in multi-agency safeguarding have been identified by the Performance Group of the SCPs to monitor effectiveness of the operation of the multi-agency safeguarding system. A core set of indicators will be supplemented by indicators identified as required to support understanding of the current Business Plan priorities. Data will be reported by each agency with narrative, utilising existing reports where possible.

This information will be collated by the Performance Group. It will be reported on a quarterly basis to the Planning and Delivery Group, with a year-end report provided as well, which will be included in the Yearly Report of each SCP.

### **Multi-agency audits**

Multi-agency audits will be completed, as informed by the Performance Group and Business Plan priorities, learning from case reviews, national learning and Section 11 results. Both multi-agency case file audits and spotlight audits will be completed throughout the year. A case file audit is a deep dive audit, looking at a smaller number of cases in more detail. A spotlight audit is dip sample audit, looking at a greater number of cases.

The Audit Group of the SCPs will complete the audits and analyse the findings. They will report into the Planning and Delivery Group.

There is an agreement in place that the Audit Group of the SCPs will support with Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)<sup>1</sup> preparation, by conducting SCP multi-agency audits on JTAI themes and sharing relevant learning from them.

### **Business Plan priority progress**

Progress on Business Plan priorities will be monitored throughout the year and assurance secured that actions are making a positive difference to the lived experience of local children and families.

This will be completed by the Planning and Delivery Group.

### **Subgroup progress reports**

The Performance Group, Audit Group, Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group and Policy and Procedures Group will report to the Planning and Delivery

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Targeted Area Inspections are carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Group on a quarterly basis via a highlight report on activity, actions and performance and information on the subgroup's work.

The Case Review Groups, Education Group, Communications and Engagement Group, and Voluntary and Community Sector Safeguarding Forum will report into the Planning and Delivery Group on an annual basis.

The Partnerships and each subgroup will keep an action log which is reviewed and completion recorded. Actions and outcomes from all audits and case reviews are reviewed and re-reviewed to ensure that they are embedded in practice.

### **Learning from reviews, including national reviews**

Learning from Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews will be reported into the Planning and Delivery Group by the Case Review Groups of the SCPs. Learning will be reported as it becomes apparent within review processes, in order to feed into assurance planning and ensure the Planning and Delivery Group has a broad, up-to-date picture of learning and areas for focus.

Additionally, learning from National Reviews and Briefings published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel will be considered by the Planning and Delivery Group. Where required, an action plan relating to this learning will be produced, RAG (red, amber, green) rated and monitored.

### **Engagement and voice of children, young people and families**

All assurance will include a focus on how agencies understand and respond to the voice and lived experience of children and young people. The Partnerships will look to gain information from parents and carers about their experience of the services they received.

In addition, young people will directly be involved in the assurance work of the SCPs through the Partnerships' Communications and Engagement Group and the Young Scrutineers. They will have the opportunity to feed into the priority development of the Partnerships and be involved in scrutiny of areas of interest they have identified.

### **Staff wellbeing and workforce feedback**

Workforce wellbeing, competency and views from the frontline are all important areas of assurance with regard to safeguarding practice. Single agency assurance will be sought through the Section 11 process and includes assurance and reporting relating to workforce capacity and wellbeing, including change, supervision and caseloads, as well as workforce competence in line with the SCPs' Competency Framework. Feedback and evaluation from multi-agency training, Safeguarding Matters Live events and the Supervisors and Trainers' Network will be collated. Also, single agency workforce engagement will be used to follow up areas for assurance.

The Safeguarding Keeping in Touch meetings will provide a monthly oversight of multi-agency workforce capacity. The Keeping in Touch meetings report into the Performance Group.

## **Performance and Quality Assurance Reporting**

A quarterly ‘How are we doing?’ assurance report will be produced by the Planning and Delivery Group, drawing upon the above information. This will assess impact against agreed outcome statements, draw together analysis of available evidence and be a composite report to the Partnerships highlighting what we are doing well, areas for further exploration and actions for the next period.

### **Yearly Report**

The Safeguarding Partners for each SCP will publish a Yearly Report setting out what has been done by the Partnership to safeguard children and young people during the previous year and how effective the partnership arrangements have been.

This report will include information about what the Partnership has done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice. It will adhere to Working Together 2023.

It will be distributed across all relevant partners for dissemination throughout their organisations. A copy will be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel ([Mailbox.NationalReviewPanel@education.gov.uk](mailto:Mailbox.NationalReviewPanel@education.gov.uk)) and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements Unit (DfE) ([safeguarding.reform@education.gov.uk](mailto:safeguarding.reform@education.gov.uk)) within 7 days of publication.

The report will be completed and published by the end of September every year and will be reflective of work undertaken the previous financial year (April to March).

## **Safeguarding Assurance Cycle Process**

The diagram below outlines the safeguarding assurance cycle for the Partnerships.





## **Gather intelligence – How are we doing?**

This phase will bring together all of the assurance work of the Partnerships, as outlined above. Further evidence may be gathered through questionnaires or focus groups to gather the views of professionals on specific gap or focus areas.

This will be analysed by the Planning and Delivery Group and the main messages will be shared at an annual quality assurance and development event to support review and forward planning.

## **Agree key focus areas**

The Safeguarding Partners have agreed there should be a focus on a small number of defined areas which the Partnerships conclude are the most important. From the evaluation of the intelligence, the Partnerships will review the existing focus areas and agree those for the next period as part of its annual quality assurance and development event.

## **Determine outcome statements**

For each of the focus areas, the Partnerships will determine outcome statements to clarify objectives and what good looks like. Work to review and agree Partnerships' outcome statements will be undertaken each year as part of the assurance process.

## **Agree, implement and review impact of the Business Plan**

The SCPs will develop a Business Plan outlining their priorities for development and assurance. The two-year Business Plan will reflect the actions needed to address the key focus areas and have measurable outcome statements. This will also include a plan to disseminate learning. Progress on outcomes and actions within the plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis at the Planning and Delivery Group and fed into the Partnerships.

## **Forward planning**

The Partnerships will work to a rolling two-year 'quality assurance timetable' which will be updated in the Business Plan.

There will be an annual evaluation of what practice improvements have been delivered through learning and development activities. Partnerships' priorities, including focused areas of the Business Plan, influence the multi-agency training required locally. This will also be informed by outcomes of reviews and audits, and other local/national issues.

## **Review**

This framework will be reviewed by the SCPs at least every two years.

**Appendix 1** – the table below identifies how the information required for the Performance and Quality Assurance Framework will be provided by partners and other partnership groups.

Quality Assurance Framework Section	How this is provided
Quantitative data provided by safeguarding partners in assurance reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance data with narrative reported by agencies into the Performance Group on a quarterly basis who then report into the Planning and Delivery Group.</li> <li>• Data considered by the Safeguarding Keeping in Touch meeting and Operational Group meeting to be fed into the Performance Group who then report into the Planning and Delivery Group.</li> </ul>
Qualitative evidence i.e. case reviews, audits, inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on emerging learning from reviews from Case Review Groups into the Planning and Delivery Group.</li> <li>• National Reviews and Briefings published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel considered by the Planning and Delivery Group, with the potential for an action plan to be produced and monitored.</li> <li>• Multi-agency audits, both case file and spotlight, undertaken by the Audit Group and reported into the Planning and Delivery Group throughout the business year.</li> <li>• Updates on multi-agency JTAI-based assurance reported into the Planning and Delivery Group.</li> <li>• Inspection findings reported directly into the SCPs by individual agencies.</li> <li>• Single agency Section 11 safeguarding self-assessments co-ordinated by the Performance Group and results reported into the Planning and Delivery Group.</li> <li>• Annual single agency assurance statements co-ordinated by the Performance Group and reported into the Planning and Delivery Group.</li> <li>• Assurance reports from departments and partnerships across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (i.e. Child Death Overview Panel, Local Authority Designated Officers, Front Door, Independent Reviewing Officers, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Corporate Parenting, Adolescence Safety and Diversion Board, Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Boards) received by the SCPs.</li> </ul>
Capturing the views of frontline staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frontline practitioner surveys co-ordinated by the Performance Group and results reported into the Planning and Delivery Group.</li> </ul>

Quality Assurance Framework Section	How this is provided
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding Keeping in Touch meetings provide a monthly oversight of multi-agency workforce capacity and feed into the Performance Group that reports into the Planning and Delivery Group.</li> <li>• Practitioner events, as appropriate, as part of the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) process.</li> <li>• Feedback and evaluation from multi-agency training, Safeguarding Matters Live events and Supervisors and Trainers' Network reported to the Planning and Delivery Group. Also, any single agency workforce engagement completed to follow up areas for assurance.</li> <li>• Section 11 process includes assurance and reporting relating to workforce capacity, wellbeing including change, supervision and caseloads, as well as workforce competence in line with the SCPs' Competency Framework.</li> </ul>
Engagement with children and young people e.g. young people's advisory group, youth council, children in care council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Scrutineer role to support with scrutiny of the Partnerships to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contribute to the review of policies and workstreams to ensure they have the voice of children and young people at the centre</li> <li>○ Undertake a range of participation and engagement activities with children and young people across Leicester, Leicestershire &amp; Rutland</li> <li>○ Co-design and co-deliver workshops, events, and youth-friendly resources and contribute to social media campaigns and communication strategies</li> <li>○ Undertake visits with the Independent Scrutineer to places where services are being delivered to children and young people to better understand and assess their effectiveness and to strengthen the Partnerships' communication with frontline practitioners.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Communications and Engagement Group to engage and co-produce with local young people and families through established groups.</li> <li>• Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) to engage with children, young people, and families in line with statutory guidance.</li> <li>• Audits undertaken will capture the voice and lived experience of children and young people, where possible.</li> <li>• Agency assurance included in Section 11 self-assessment.</li> </ul>

Quality Assurance Framework Section	How this is provided
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly single-agency narrative includes emerging learning/issues/developments.</li> <li>• Annual update of children's and young people's voices from identified sources across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.</li> </ul>
Public transparency – yearly report, outcome of business plans, published reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly Report</li> <li>• Outcome of Business Plans</li> <li>• Published reports</li> </ul>
Independent scrutiny and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent Scrutineer – as part of the scrutiny framework, which reflects the functions as described in Working Together 2023 and adopts the 'Six Steps to Independent Scrutiny' model</li> <li>• Young Scrutineers</li> <li>• Internal governance and scrutiny functions for each of the Safeguarding Partners</li> <li>• Inspection findings</li> </ul>