



Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership – Quality Assurance Framework

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March 2019

1. Introduction:

Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) is committed to the safeguarding of children and young people. An important aspect of this is to assure that the quality of the multi-agency work being undertaken with children and families is effective and of a consistently good quality throughout the Sandwell borough. This Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) aims to set out a robust process for assessing the quality of the work undertaken with children and families.

Safeguarding of children is often referred to as ‘everyone’s business’. It has long been recognised that safeguarding is the responsibility of every professional who is involved with a child, not just qualified social workers. This is a value enshrined in the Children’s Act (2004), the Munro Review of Child Protection (Final Report, 2011), and the revised ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (HM Government, July 2018).

2. Overall aim of Quality Assurance:

Quality Assurance is a process of evaluation by which to ensure the effectiveness of our work and ensure it is making a positive difference to the lives of children and families. It is essential that individual agencies continually evaluate their work to ensure it is effective and consistent. It is also crucial that the multi-agency work conducted is evaluated and monitored, which is the role of the SCSP within this Quality Assurance Framework.

The overall aim of Quality Assurance is to ensure that multi-agency working in Sandwell is effective and to be able suggest improvements to influence continual development throughout the borough. Other aims from the quality assurance process are to evidence best practice, highlight suggestions for improvement, and demonstrate whether effective multi-agency working can be evidenced. Once suggestions for improvement are made, the quality assurance process must ensure information is disseminated so that lessons can be learnt, and improvements made. The final aim of the quality assurance process is to continually evaluate lessons learnt to ensure that improvements are being made for the lived experiences of children and families.

3. Role of Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership in Quality Assurance:

The SCSP will be responsible for co-ordinating multi-agency audits, disseminating information/learning from the audits, and reviewing the audits through evaluation of actions that have occurred because of lessons learnt from the audits. (As per the Quality Assurance Process below).

The SCSP will endeavour to conduct 4 multi-agency overview evaluations (one per quarter), looking at specific themes, which will be influenced by the partnerships prioritises and emerging safeguarding themes in Sandwell. The SCSP will also co-ordinate 4 multi-agency audits (one per quarter), focused on 5-10 cases examining a specific theme which will be influenced by the SCSP Priorities and the multi-agency overview evaluations. There will also be a wider examination of the specific topic, trying to gain the voice of the practitioner and the child, as well as an expectation from partner agencies to provide details of their responses to the specific topic.

Each multi-agency overview evaluation and multi-agency audit will produce a report, learnings, and a 7-minute briefing. This information will be disseminated by the SCSP to the QPP Representatives,

who will be tasked with cascading the information to their agencies, as per the Terms of Reference of the group. Once the learnings and any actions have been implemented, an evaluation of progress will be completed, this will either be a further multi-agency evaluation or audit.

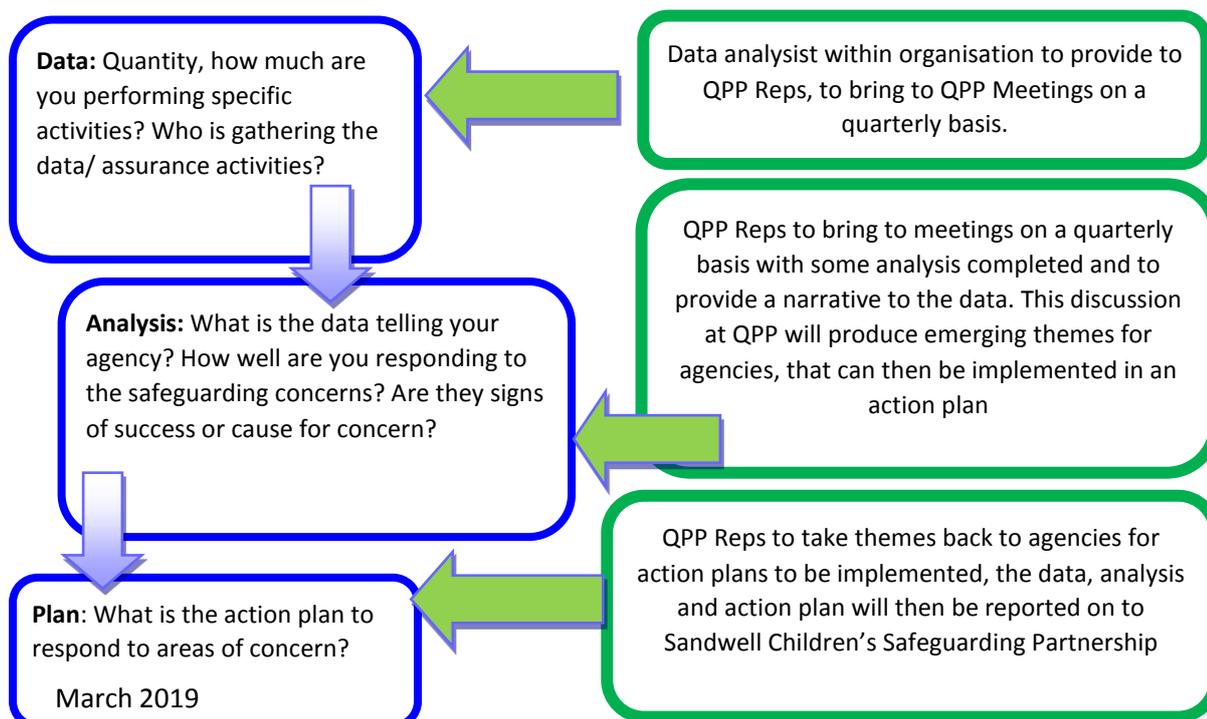
The SCSP is also responsible for co-ordinating Section 11 (bi-annual) and Section 175/157 (annual) audits, this will include setting the questions, receiving the responses, co-ordinating the audit panel, analysing the data, and producing recommendations and/or actions for each agency.

4. Role of partner agencies in Quality Assurance:

The role of partner agencies is crucial to the success of the quality assurance work of the SCSP. Partner agencies will be expected to submit various performance data and respond to multi-agency audit requests within the deadlines outlined in the audit schedule. The expectations of partner agencies for each of these requests for data/information are outlined below:

Multi-Agency Audits – one multi-audit will be conducted per quarter, the SCSP will co-ordinate the audits and compile the information, but it is the responsibility of partner agencies to submit the information in a timely manner to ensure a rounded picture of all involvement with the child/young person/family. Partner agencies will be expected to submit a chronology and complete an audit tool, capturing the voice of the practitioner and child/young person. This will be requested through the QPP Representative. This should be submitted within the deadline for any of the sample who are involved with that service, if any of the sample are not involved with that service, the QPP Representative should respond with ‘Not Know to Agency’. QPP Representatives will then attend the audit day as the audit panel. Frontline practitioners and managers will be invited to attend to present and discuss their cases. A report with recommendations and a 7-minute briefing will then be circulated and added to the SCSP website. Please see below for the audit schedule 2019-20.

Performance data – requested quarterly in line with the SCSP Quarterly Reports, this will be outcome data provided by the QPP Representative (as outlined in the Terms of Reference for the group) and will be discussed at the QPP Meetings on a quarterly basis. Please see the ‘Dataset Requests Diagram’ for details of the 2018-20 deadlines. QPP Members will be responsible for ensuring the data provided is accurate and submitted on time.



Section 175/157 Audits for Education Providers – conducted on an annual basis, currently using the Virtual College platform. This should be completed by Heads/Principles/Executives and Designated Safeguarding Leads. The aim of this audit is for education providers to ensure that they are regularly reviewing and updating their safeguarding policies and practices. It is the responsibility of education providers to ensure that they completed the audit on time and that the information provided is accurate. If there are concerns relating to the audit, and/or the audit is not completed by the deadline, school will be invited to attend a panel to answer questions relating to concerns and/or non-completion. The SCSP will also complete a dip test sample, choosing 5-10 education providers at random to attend a panel relating to their audit. There will be a schedule for each academic year and schools will only be invited at most once every three years for the random sample.

Section 11 Audits – all partner agencies are obliged to complete the Section 11 Audit on a bi-annual basis. The aims of the audit is for agencies to ensure that they are regularly reviewing and updating their safeguarding policies and practices. It is the responsibility of partner agencies to ensure that they completed the audit on time and that the information provided is accurate. Agencies will then be invited to attend a scrutiny day to examine their responses to the Section 11 Audit and devise an action plan. It will then be the responsibility of partner agencies to ensure that they deliver the actions on their action plan within the time allowed.

It is the responsibility of partner agencies to ensure the quality of the information provided to the Audits and for the performance reports. Each agency should have a representative who is trained to complete audits, this person should work with the frontline practitioner to complete the audit and ensure that there is as much information as possible provided, only then will there be a rounded picture of what is happening in the life of the child/young person and family.

For agencies that cover Sandwell and Birmingham the responses from the Birmingham Section 11 will be used for general questions that cover both areas. This has been agreed with Birmingham Local Safeguarding Board that they will share the responses from the following agencies;

West Midlands Police
 Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
 National Probation Service (NPS)
 Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG
 Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust

For the above agencies their responses to the Birmingham Section 11 will tailor what is required for their Sandwell Section 11. Areas of concern and/or SCSP's strategic priorities will require further examination, whereas more general areas will be covered by their responses to Birmingham.

Larger agencies such which incorporate more than one area that will need to complete a Section 11 will need to identify who will be responsible for each of the sections. For example, for Sandwell Council, they need to identify who will be responsible for Neighbourhoods, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Public Health.

5. Voice of child/direct line to frontline workers:

A key component in safeguarding of children is consistently good practice multi-agency working, which needs to be scrutinised to ensure it is effective in meeting the needs of children and young people. The SCSP will, therefore, record the voice of the child where possible in all multi-agency audits. This will be captured through practitioner completing the audit tool to identify the work carried out with the child/young person to capture their voice, to be included in the audit feedback, and discussed during the audit. The aim is to ensure that the voice of the child is central to the quality assurance work.

The SCSP will also capture the view of frontline workers as they are key to good practice multi-agency working. Frontline practitioners will be invited to work with the auditor in their agency to complete the audit and will be invited to attend the audit day to present their work and contribute to the learning process. All reports and 7 Minute Briefing should be disseminated to frontline workers through the QPP Representatives (as per the Terms of Reference of the Group), so that they can use the learning from the audit to improve frontline work.

As part of capturing the child (or service users') voice, it is important for agencies to be conducting service user evaluations. The outcomes of these evaluations should be used to influence and improve service provision, as per 'Working Together' guidance 2018. The SCSP would then need to receive assurance from partner agencies that they are carrying out service user evaluations, and how they are being used to influence and improve service provision.

6. Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership Business Development Plan and Priorities 2019-2020:

1. SCSP is to continue to improve its governance, performance and quality assurance processes and to be assured of the effectiveness of the new MASA
2. SCSP is to be assured that there is a culture and continuous system of single and multi-agency learning and improvement
3. SCSP to be assured that there is a robust system to respond to serious incidents and local child safeguarding practice reviews
4. SCSP is to be assured that ‘Early Help’ services are accessed and delivered effectively, and <u>thresholds</u> are understood and consistently applied
5. SCSP is to be assured that there is evidence to consistently demonstrate that children and young people are effectively safeguarded from the risks. Particular areas of work to target improvement include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Exploitation (CSE, Missing Children, Modern Slavery, Gangs, Domestic Violence) b. Neglect
6. Ensure children and young people in dangerous settings have faster, easier access to safeguarding support

7. Quality Assurance process:



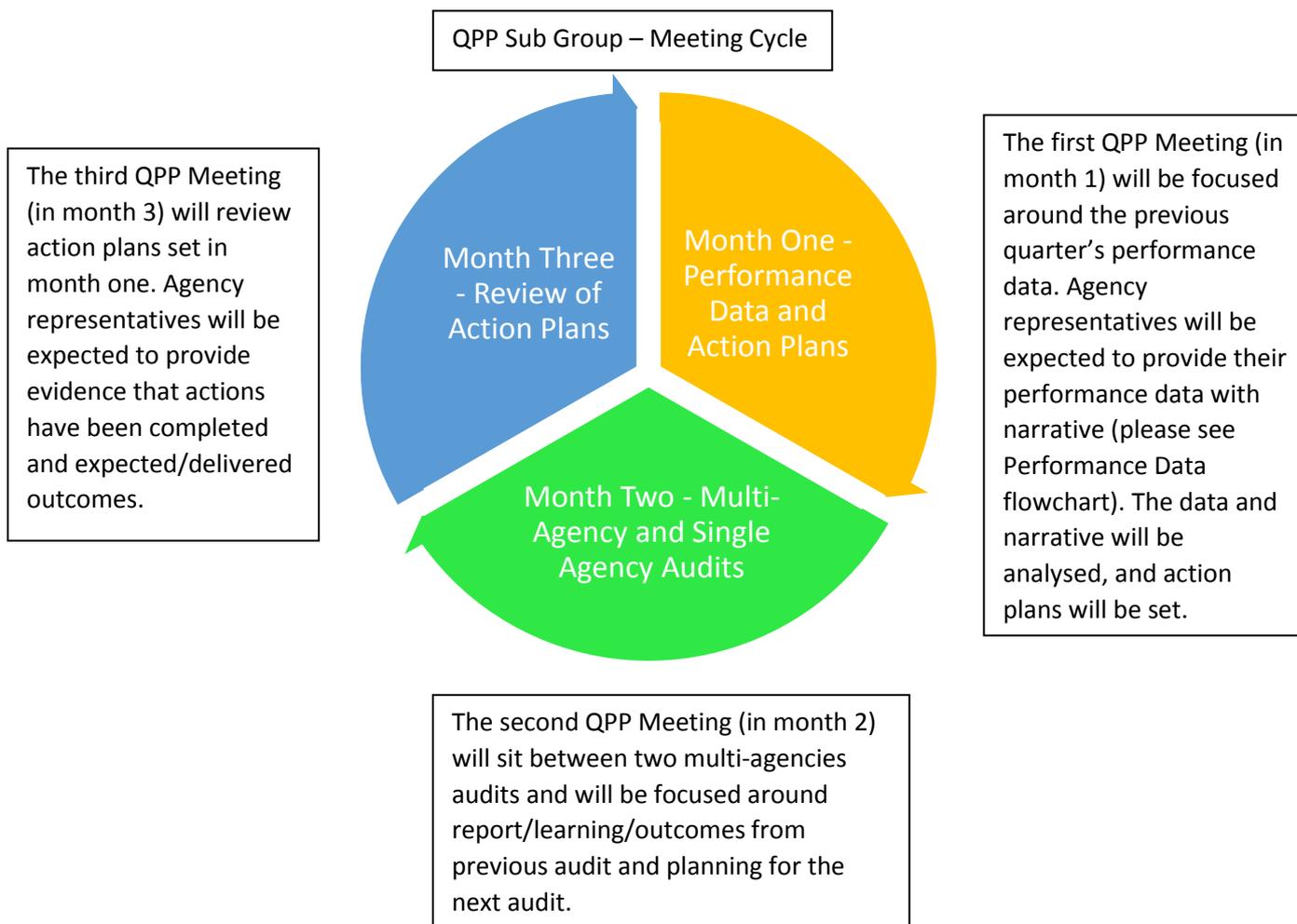
8. Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews:

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (formally Serious Case Reviews) take place when a child has died or been significantly harmed, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. Once a case has been identified as potentially meeting the threshold for a SPR, a rapid review meeting takes place to identify any early learning. The outcomes of the rapid reviews and any early learning will be fed into the QPP Group on a quarterly basis and will be used in relation to performance data from agencies on identified themes. Once the SPR has been completed and published, any learning identified will again be discussed at QPP and feed into the audit/performance data activity.

9. Learning and Development Evaluations:

The recommendations from the Quality Assurance work, including the work of the QPP Sub Group reviewing performance data and the Multi-Agency Audits, will be used to inform and update multi-agency safeguarding training. The Learning and Development work through the Learning Improvement Framework (LIF), will also help to shape the timetable for the multi-agency audits.

10. Quality Assurance Audit schedule for 2019-20:



Quarter 1 April – June 2019	Quarter 2 July – September 2019	Quarter 3 October – December 2019	Quarter 4 January – March 2020	
SCSP Annual Multi-Agency Audit Calendar – 2019-2020				
1st May 2019	3rd July 2019	2nd October 2019	14th January 2020	
Pre-Birth Assessments	Children Living with Mental Health Issues	Exploitation (Review Audit)	Neglect (Review Audit)	
SCSP Section 175/157 Schedule – 2019-2020				
May 2019	July 2019	August 2019	20th December 2019	February 2020
Panel day for random dip sample	Results/ report for 2018/19 Section 175/157 released	Audit for 2019/20 released	Deadline for completion of Section 175/157 – 2019/20	Assurance panel for those schools not completed/not compliant
SCSP Section 11 Schedule – 2019-2020				
April 2019	May/June 2019	August 2019	October 2019	
Questions designed and approved by QPP Sub Group	Section 11 Audit sent out with completion deadline TBC	Scrutiny panel day – agency representatives and QPP Representatives to attend	Report and Action Plans approved and circulated	

11. WT 2018 – Independent Scrutiny:

The Role of the Independent Scrutiny as taken from Working Together 2018:

31. The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This independent scrutiny will be part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections.

32. Whilst the decision on how best to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny is to be made locally, safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.

33. The independent scrutineer should consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported.

34. The published arrangements should set out the plans for independent scrutiny; how the arrangements will be reviewed; and how any recommendations will be taken forward. This might include, for example, the process and timescales for ongoing review of the arrangements.

35. Safeguarding partners should also agree arrangements for independent scrutiny of the report they must publish at least once a year.

The framework for Independent Scrutiny for SCSP is to be determined locally.

12. Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs):

A JTA is a multi-agency inspection which is conducted by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation). The JTA will focus on a specific theme with around 20 cases being assessed and information from multiple agencies requested. These cases are then whittled down to five for 'deep dive' analysis of the cases. The JTA assesses several areas of multi-agency working and the effectiveness of LSCBs in responding to the specific theme. Once a notification to the Director of Children's Services has been received that a JTA is being conducted, it is expected to be completed within 3 weeks.

The upcoming JTA Themes as released by HMIC are as follows:

- Children living with mental health issues (June 2019)
- Prevention and early intervention (2020)
- Older children in need of help and protection, and contextual safeguarding, including exploitation (2021)

There is not a guarantee that Sandwell will be asked to take part in any of the upcoming JTAs, however, the information published from the JTAs will be used to inform SCSP's business plan and quality assurance work.