



city & hackney
safeguarding
children board

Section 11 Audits

June 2015 (Updated August 2016)

"Working Together to make children safer"

Introduction

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key persons and bodies to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging its functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that the services they contract out to others are provided having regard to that need.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) requires Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of organisations' implementation of their duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) has a key role in achieving high standards in safeguarding and promoting welfare, not just through coordinating services but also through evaluation and continuous improvement. For example, by asking individual organisations to self-evaluate under an agreed framework of benchmarks or indicators and then sharing results with the Board.

The CHSCB has developed a safeguarding audit tool to help organisations to undertake their own quality assurance process in regard to safeguarding and child protection. We believe it is also a good opportunity to present your agency's progress in improving safeguarding arrangements and sharing examples of good practice.

Audit findings will enable the CHSCB to better understand where the needs and gaps are in safeguarding children and young people across different agencies.

Improving the way key people and bodies safeguard and promote the welfare of children is crucial to improving outcomes for children.

Jim Gamble
Independent Chair, CHSCB

Agency Involvement

The following agencies are statutorily required under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to take part in audit work:

- local authorities and district councils that provide children's and other types of services, including children's and adult social care services, public health, housing, sport, culture and leisure services, licensing authorities and youth services;
- NHS organisations, including the NHS England and clinical commissioning groups, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts;
- the police, including police and crime commissioners and the chief officer of each police force in England and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in London;
- the British Transport Police;
- the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies;
- Governors/Directors of Prisons and Young Offender Institutions;
- Directors of Secure Training Centres;
- Principals of Secure Colleges; and
- Youth Offending Teams/Services.

Statutory agencies are also required to administer the audit tool to their commissioned services and oversee the ensuing action plans.

Individual schools in City of London and Hackney undertake an audit of safeguarding arrangements under Section 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002.

Non-Statutory Agencies

The audit programme includes private, voluntary sector and community and faith-based sector organisations who do not provide commissioned services on behalf of any of the statutory agencies.

Whilst Section 11 does not place statutory obligations on these organisations, it represents a *standard of good practice* and will help organisations improve their arrangements in keeping children and young people safe.

The Audit Tool

The CHSCB has developed a self-assessment audit tool based on the 8 key features outlined in statutory Section 11 guidance¹ and the Safe Network Core Standards² produced by the NSPCC. The key requirements from Section 11 guidance are:

1. Senior leadership commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare;
2. A clear statement of the organisation's responsibility towards children is available to all staff;
3. A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
4. Organisational improvement takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed by the views of children and families;
5. Training on safeguarding is provided for all staff working with or in contact with children & families;
6. Recruitment, vetting procedures and allegations against staff;
7. Multi-agency working, and
8. Information sharing.

The self-assessment tool takes an electronic format and generates an action plan for agencies/schools.

The tool requests auditors to self-assess how well they are meeting elements of standards by scoring 'Not met', 'Partly met' and 'Fully met'. If the rating is 'Fully met', agencies must provide evidence to support the score.

If the rating is 'Not met' or 'Partly met', agencies are asked to provide information on what plans are in place to meet or improve upon the current standard with timescales. Auditors are also instructed to identify a lead person to monitor the implementation of the action plan and to provide feedback and evidence against agreed action plans.

Some elements of the audit questionnaire are only aimed at statutory agencies. Further information on completing the tool can be found in the accompanying 'Guidance' document.

Oversight of Audit Work

Auditing of safeguarding arrangements falls within the remit of the Learning and improvement Framework which is actioned and monitored by the Quality Assurance sub-committee. Initial findings will be reported into this sub-committee before dissemination of key themes to the members of the Executive Group and the CHSCB.

¹ Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (2007)

² Safe Network Standards: Core standards and guidance for safeguarding children in the voluntary and community sector (2010)

Audit Cycle

The audit programme follows a two year cycle which provides *annual reassurance of safeguarding standards and arrangements*.

In year one, the audit tool is completed by all organisations. To triangulate organisational responses, an annual safeguarding survey is also issued to staff members electronically.

An extraordinary meeting of the Quality Assurance Sub Group will be scheduled to review audit returns from selected organisations and/or sectors. The purpose of this additional layer of scrutiny is to provide constructive challenge and feedback to organisations on their self-assessment, identifying areas for improvement and where additional evidence is required to support the organisation's findings.

The QA Sub Group will use an intelligence-led approach to determine the organisations / sectors that will be considered as part of this process. Intelligence gathered through the learning and improvement framework, alongside local knowledge of organisations (including commissioned organisations) will be considered to assist the QA Sub Group identify the relevant s11 returns to review.

In year two, Chief Executives / organisation leaders are given the option of signing a statement of compliance or re-auditing their organization by means of peer review, alongside the annual safeguarding survey.

At the time of signing the statement of compliance, statutory organisations will be requested to submit details / evidence against any standard(s) self-assessed as 'partially met' in the full audit which is now deemed 'fully met'.

Further Resources

This guidance has been designed to provide an overview of the audit tool and programme of work. Separate guidance has been compiled to help organisations undertake the audit and can be found, along with a template of the audit tool, on the CHSCB website.

For further assistance, please contact the CHSCB Business and Performance Manager on 0208 356 4175 (sandra.reid@hackney.gov.uk).

Appendix 1: Two-year programme of audit work

