



Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework



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1. INTRODUCTION

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (DfE, 2018) sets out statutory guidance about how we safeguard and meet the needs of children and young people. This includes changes to local safeguarding arrangements whereby Local Safeguarding Children Boards will be replaced with Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships).

In Cumbria, we recognise that safeguarding children cannot be achieved in isolation and all our partners are committed to working together to provide leadership and joint accountability across Cumbria to provide protection, support and representation for those in greatest need. This means that we will understand our communities, how we are currently performing to the best that we can be, and to share this to develop our services and staff to generate improvements.

This document outlines how the partnership will manage the performance of safeguarding children services in Cumbria, assure itself of the quality and impact of those services and enable their continuous improvement. It also describes how independent scrutiny, will challenge us as a 'critical friend' and provide an objective overview of the effectiveness of our arrangements to safeguard and protect children.

To support the delivery of the Partnership's vision, we have developed an approach made up of two essential components. The first focuses on scrutiny and challenge taking place through the work of the sub-groups, the partnership Board and the Partnership Team. The second, through the commission of an Independent Scrutineer, is to provide an objective overview of the effectiveness of our arrangements to safeguard children.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework is to help us deliver continuous improvement in the quality of services delivered by partners for children and young people, by knowing ourselves better and having evidence of the impact of what we do and to make our current arrangements around performance management, quality assurance and scrutiny more effective. The framework has been developed to:

- Ensure partners meet statutory requirements
- Ensure consistency of safeguarding practice
- Identify and share good practice
- Ensure children and young people's outcomes are improved
- Provide evidence of effective partnership working.

This enables us to know that what we are doing is supporting better outcomes for children, young people and families in Cumbria.

3. PRINCIPLES

Our Scrutiny and Assurance Framework is based on a number key principles that guide our approach to understanding how well our safeguarding system is delivering for the children of Cumbria. These principles are:

- **Child Centred Practice.** A child centred approach requires professionals to ensure they are working with children and young people rather than working alongside them. The partnership will ensure that children and young people have opportunities to participate and collaborate in the work of the Partnership and that the voice of children is embedded in multi-agency practice.
- **High support high challenge.** Systems that develop and promote a culture of high support and high challenge will enable working environments where growth and learning is accelerated.
- **Promoting Practice leadership.** Leadership is distributed across the partnership and inherent in effective leadership is the desire and willingness to learn and develop both individually and organisationally. Involving practitioners in the continuous learning process of quality assurance and scrutiny in a supportive and challenging way, will build practice leadership capacity across the partnership.
- **Restorative approach.** An important shift in the quality assurance and scrutiny process will be to adopt the approach of 'working with' rather than 'doing to'. This will not only apply to practitioners but also to children and families and wider stakeholders, who will all be involved in the quality assurance process and scrutiny events. This will lead to strengthening relationships not only across the partnership but also with children and families.
- **Promoting a culture of continuous learning.** The reflective and analytical approach to quality assurance and scrutiny underpinning this framework will create the environment for learning, recognising the way systems influence each other and the benefits of working together rather than in individual agencies. Shared learning enables systems to solve problems more efficiently.

4. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The partnership has delegated responsibility for the operational oversight and delivery of Quality Assurance. This includes;

- Monitoring performance utilising a full range of Quality Assurance Processes
- Escalating areas of concern arising from Quality Assurance activities to the Board
- Building a good understanding of how safe children are in Cumbria and where we need to improve
- Utilise Performance Management to identify trends and understand the context which may impact on performance
- Using local intelligence and national best practice to inform our approaches, strategies and plans to improve performance and outcomes for children and their families
- Providing evidence of the quality and impact of our work on the outcomes of children and their families in Cumbria which will feed into the scrutiny events

- Reflecting on practice; listening, learning and leading on improvements
- Testing the impact of improvement work on an ongoing basis

The relationship between the subgroups is important to highlight. The Case Review Subgroup is responsible for ensuring the recommendations from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and local learning reviews are completed. The Missing, Exploited and Trafficked subgroup is responsible for quality assuring and driving the partnership approach to child exploitation. The Learning and Improvement subgroup is responsible for ensuring that learning from quality assurance and scrutiny is embedded in practice.

All the subgroups are accountable to the CSCP Partnership through reporting directly to the Business Group and Board. The Chairs will provide regular progress reporting to the CSCP on the work of the group using the agreed impact template.

The responsibilities of individual agencies in relation to dissemination of learning, scrutiny and assurance activities is outlined in the purpose of the groups and reinforced through the role descriptors for chairs and members of sub-groups and for members of the Partnership Board.

5. APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SCRUTINY

There are four elements to this framework:

- ✓ Feedback from Professionals
- ✓ Feedback from Children and Young People and Families
- ✓ Quantitative Information
- ✓ Qualitative Information

The evidence gathered from the four other elements of this framework provides the structure by which CSCP scrutiny and challenge takes place.



The 4 specific elements have activity associated with them which are explored in more detail below.

Feedback from Professionals

We make use of a number of mechanisms to engage with staff including:

- ✓ Surveys of all staff from across the partnership are conducted by the CSCP and any relevant outputs from this are used by the partnership.
- ✓ CSCP Practitioner Forums are partnership forums. There are 6, one in each geographical district, that meet bi-monthly, and offer all staff the opportunities to discuss particular issues raised through other mechanisms such as feedback from the staff surveys or learning from multi-agency audits

Feedback from CYP and Families

We understand the importance of listening to stakeholders and the valuable insight and learning opportunities presented by direct feedback.

We have developed a range of mechanisms for gaining input and feedback from Children and Young People and their Families, and these arrangements are summarised below:

- ✓ Direct voice of the child gathered via the multi-agency audit process
- ✓ Feedback from compliments or complaints
- ✓ Engagement and feedback from children and families as part of Scrutiny learning events
- ✓ Engagement, input and feedback from children and young people through the Safeguarding Youth Voices group

Quantitative Information

We use a range of quantitative information to build our intelligence base.

The CSCP has a scorecard in place which includes performance indicators to manage and monitor:

- ✓ Numbers of children at each of the thresholds which ensures the right children are supported in the right way
- ✓ The timeliness of interventions to ensure that when children need an assessment this is done within good time both for the child and in line with statutory requirements
- ✓ Outcomes for children following any intervention, which helps us to understand that work is having the right effects.

A number of CSCP sub-groups also have individual scorecards these include: The Hub Programme Board; Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children Strategy Group.

Where possible we use our national comparators (other areas that are like Cumbria) to benchmark our performance and ensure we are performing in a way that matches or exceeds the averages. We use this information to set targets to ensure continuous improvement.

When we agree to collect particular information and design a new performance indicator, we first baseline our performance and then use this, and comparator information to ensure we set realistic but stretching targets.

The performance is presented in monthly or quarterly scorecards, which are reports showing detailed performance for the past year, with quarterly performance for previous years, with comparator information where available, against milestones and the target. The report has detailed commentary from the responsible officer that describes how any under-performance is being addressed. This information is used by the CSCP Business Group to manage and monitor performance to ensure we can act quickly where performance is not as expected.

Qualitative Information

Quality Assurance activity is well-embedded within the CSCP through mechanisms such as the area safeguarding groups, multi-agency audit, the bi-annual Section 11 audit and peer reviews. A summary of qualitative information sources is below:

- The CSCP partner agencies are all subject to inspection. We share learning from inspections and work together as partners to ensure we use this valuable intelligence in our planning.
- There three Area Safeguarding Groups thematic practice deep dives, which feed into the wider scrutiny challenge process.
- CSCP sub groups can undertake themed audits e.g. the MET subgroup undertake CE and missing themed audits. The findings of these audits are reported to the Board – and further shared with frontline staff through regular newsletters, the CSCP Practitioner Forums, the website and is further used by the Learning and Improvement subgroup of the CSCP to be reflected in any training or briefings and to ensure our policies remain appropriate and supporting good practice.
- Section 11 audit is conducted bi- annually with regular questions so that we can track progress and other supplementary questions based on key issues identified through other intelligence mechanisms.
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) both local and national provide a valuable source of learning and lessons learned are published on the CSCP website and disseminated appropriately within individual agencies. Implementation of the recommendations is monitored via the CSCP Case Review Group.
- The Child Death Overview Panel provide bi-monthly updates and an annual report to the Board this helps identify recommendations for action to reduce the number of preventable deaths.

6. INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY

As outlined in *Working Together*, Independent scrutiny is part of a wider system that includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections.

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 Cumbria.
- to ensure the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases
- to provide objectivity and act as a constructive 'critical friend' promoting a culture of reflection and continuous improvement
- to evaluate 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
- to report to the safeguarding partners any recommendations from their scrutiny and assurance activities

Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership has appointed an Independent Scrutineer to support implementation of its arrangements through impartial challenge and advice. The Independent Chair scrutinises local child practice review decisions, monitors and, where appropriate, challenges progress against the delivery of the partnership's business plan. As Chair of the Partnership Board, the Lead Partners and Independent Chair will drive business delivery, providing direction for the partnership.

The Independent Scrutineer will lead the Partnership's planned scrutiny learning events and provide reports reflecting on the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding practice and make clear recommendations; to assist the partnership to improve safeguarding outcomes for children and families in Cumbria.

Approach to scrutiny

Scrutiny will be a multifaceted and systemic approach which brings together and triangulates evidence of single and multi-agency practice, identifies what is working well and where there are concerns in relation to multi-agency practice both at an operational and strategic level.

The scrutiny approach will provide a more in-depth analysis to evaluate the impact of the partnerships work and measure how effective current multi-agency work is, at safeguarding children and improving their outcomes. It will also:

- Inform us about how well multi-agency training and learning from audits and serious case reviews has landed and is embedded in practice.
- Aid the Partnership's understanding of what supports good safeguarding practice and what is preventing improvement.

From the analysis of the findings, the Independent Chair and Scrutineer will provide a report which makes a judgement on the effectiveness of multiagency safeguarding practice in the areas undergoing scrutiny. The report will identify good practice and make recommendations for

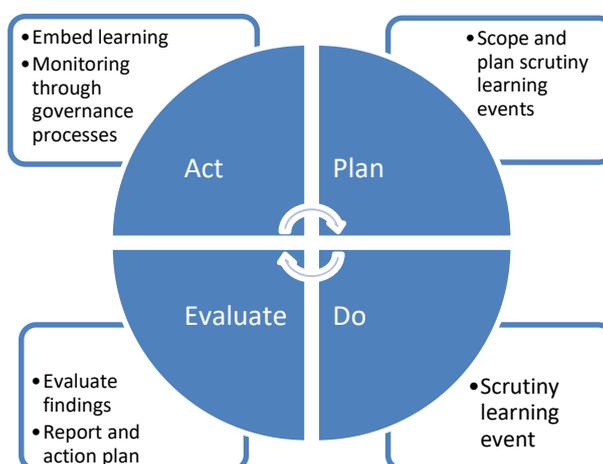
improvement, including any learning required to ensure professionals are effectively improving outcomes for children and young people.

Three scrutiny learning events will be undertaken over the course of the business plan (2 years) with a focus, in turn on each of the Board's three priorities. Appendix A sets out in detail the Scrutiny Learning Process

A successful scrutiny event will ensure it is learning with practitioners, enabling restorative learning with families and children and is developing a safe practice system for children and families.

The Scrutiny Learning Process

The scrutiny process is outlined in detail below:



Planning

The planning stage includes the scoping for the scrutiny learning event and the collation and triangulation of evidence prior to the scrutiny event.

a. Scoping – this will need to occur four months prior to the event

- The areas to be evaluated and measured within the scope of each scrutiny learning event will be identified
- The evidence to be gathered, analysed and presented via the area safeguarding groups (or other identified mechanisms e.g. audit, direct practice observation and data analysis will be clarified
- A plan of who will do what, timescales for completion and who will be present at the scrutiny learning events will be agreed
- The success measures for the scrutiny learning event will be discussed

b. Collating scoping evidence – 1 month before scrutiny event

- The findings and themes of all related audit and assurance work is collated and analysed
- The themes from the feedback events with YP, parents, practitioners and key stakeholders is collated and analysed
- The performance information relating to the learning event is analysed and the context understood
- The key areas both good and those requiring improvement, will be examined in depth at the scrutiny learning event are agreed.

- Any gaps are identified and decisions about how any gaps be addressed during the scrutiny learning events e.g. calling an agency in to provide more information will be clarified
- External information that can provide essential benchmarking e.g. national learning, research, evidence from statistical neighbours will be analysed to support the scrutiny learning events
- The analysis and triangulation of practice, benchmarking, feedback and performance will identify the key lines of enquiry for the scrutiny learning event

Practice Scrutiny learning events

- The events can take various forms e.g. a one-off event or a range of events
- The events will use the key success factors, the key lines of enquiry and the collated evidence to determine what is working well and where improvements need to be made.
- The events will seek to understand all the factors that support best practice and what prevents best practice from being embedded across the Partnership.
- A high support and high challenge culture will be required for learning events to be most effective.



Outputs from practice Scrutiny learning events

- The Independent Scrutineer will provide a report including a judgement on the effectiveness of practice to improve outcomes for children
- The report will highlight good practice, explains how the systems worked well together to embed this good practice and makes recommendations to ensure the partnership can learn from this and develop it further

- The report will identify area for concerns, makes recommendation on how these must be improved, the timescales required and who will be responsible
- A high-level action plan is produced which is owned and developed by the appropriate subgroup/s
- Action learning is developed to ensure that any change in practice identified from the scrutiny events is embedded in practice.

Overall effectiveness of the partnership

This scrutiny learning event will provide an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the partnership. It will follow a similar process to the practice scrutiny events identified above but will also include the following:

1. Self-evaluation completed by leads and independent chair/scrutineer- this could also be a peer evaluation or elements of both.
2. Feedback from leads, subgroup chairs and the partnership board on effectiveness of scrutiny events
3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of subgroups including membership, work plans and analysis of progress to deliver the CSCP business plan.
4. Feedback from practitioners, children and young people and parents on the impact of partnership work- the themes may include for example workforce development and the effectiveness of methods of engagement with children and young people.
5. An evaluation of the annual report and any recommendation for improvements
6. The effectiveness of the S.11 process and any recommendations for improvement
7. A review of the recommendations and actions plans from the two practice scrutiny events to ensure the recommendations and actions have been followed through and an evaluation of what difference this has made to practice
8. Any other emerging areas for the partnership

The output from the Overall effectiveness scrutiny learning event will include:

1. The Independent chair/scrutineer will provide a report including a judgement on the overall effectiveness of safeguarding partnership
2. Inform the priorities for the business plan for the following year.