Solihull
Safeguarding
Children Partnership

Listening, Learning and
Improving Outcomes for
Children and Young People

RESPECTFUL CHALLENGE • ACCOUNTABILITY • LISTENING • LEARNING • INCLUSION

Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework

Contents

1. Introduction

A Partnership Approach to Quality Assurance

1.1 This Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Quality Assurance Framework demonstrates the approach to evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding children arrangements in Solihull.

1.2 The Quality Assurance Framework is central to Solihull's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The framework sets out the range of activities which will be used to assess the safeguarding response to children. It provides the basis for making improvements to the safeguarding system and, in turn, to improve outcomes for children and young people.

1.3 This framework is designed to underpin and facilitate the development of a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the whole children's safeguarding system in Solihull. It is based on:

- locally agreed priorities
- knowing our strengths, what we are doing well and doing more of it
- what children and young people say
- learning from national research
- an outcomes-based accountability methodology which asks:
  - how much did we do?
  - how well did we do it?
  - what difference did it make to outcomes for children and young people?
- a shared commitment to implementing and embedding improvement actions

1.4 Implementation of the framework requires trust between partners that:

- provides a high level of mutual support, sets ambitious expectations, and enables effective, constructive challenge
- fully involves professionals to contribute their perspectives without fear of being blamed for actions they took in good faith
- avoids the development of a 'blame culture'

1.5 The Quality Assurance Framework must be able to assure partners about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in order to drive improvements in:

- safeguarding arrangements and multi-agency working

- ensuring children and young people receive 'the right service at the right time'
- outcomes for vulnerable children and young people

Transparency and Public Accountability

1.6   In order to ensure transparency and public accountability quality assurance activity should include:

- the involvement of children, young people and their families
- independent and external scrutiny of the quality assurance activity and its impact on outcomes for vulnerable children and young people
- production and publication of the SSCP Annual Report evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Solihull

## Partner Agency Contribution

1.7   Partner agencies should contribute and respond to quality assurance activity in a timely manner. This will include:

- Identification of individual agency Quality Assurance Leads

  - provision of a quality assurance lead (Assurance and Review Group [ARG] member) who will participate in the multi-agency evaluation of data, audits, escalations from single-agency quality assurance activity and practitioner/service user feedback (see Appendix A for ARG Terms of Reference)
  - provision of an audit lead (Audit Group member) who will lead from a single agency perspective on practice audits and participate in the multi-agency analysis of frontline practice to identify learning themes (see Appendix B for Audit Group Terms of Reference)

- Engagement in the quality assurance activities on behalf of the Partnership

  - the reporting of data and provision of analysis and commentary on single-agency measures at agreed intervals as requested
  - scrutiny of the multi-agency dataset and identification of indicators of concern and emerging patterns and trends
  - escalation of concerns that emerge from single-agency quality assurance activity
  - engagement in the delivery of the SSCP multi-agency audit programme
  - monitor and provide assurance on single-agency actions arising from multi-agency audits

- Engagement in Rapid Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) or other multi-agency activity to learn lessons through:

  o the timely provision of high-quality information and analysis
  o participation by agency representatives at all levels in case reviews
  o a commitment to knowledge transfer, dissemination of learning and changes in practice which promote improved safeguarding outcomes for children and young people

- Contributing to understanding the effectiveness of safeguarding activity in Solihull through the sharing of findings from:

  o Single-agency inspections
  o Internal learning reviews
  o Single-agency quality assurance and audit activity
  o Feedback from children, young people and families

Learning and Improvement

1.8 Learning will be drawn from a range of sources and all SSCP member organisations have an obligation to provide relevant, detailed and up to date information as required. The Learning and Improvement Framework sets out the approach to embedding the learning derived from the SSCP's quality assurance activity,

1.9 The SSCP governance arrangements support the cycle of improvement: Driving Priorities – Commissioning Action – Reviewing and Analysis – Embedding Learning to Improve Practice
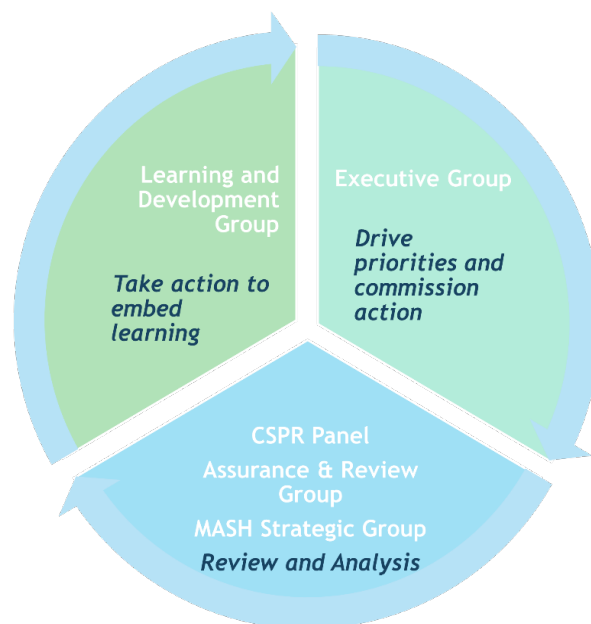
1.10   The learning, which comes from a range of sources, is developed to make proposals for improvements to the Executive Group, which then commissions work from the sub-groups to implement changes to safeguarding practice in Solihull.

1.11   The experiences of children and families support the evaluation of what needs to improve. Direct feedback from young people and parents/carers will be sought through multi-agency audits and complaints/compliments processes.

Using Learning Proactively

1.12   Learning will be used to understand what we do well and do more of it. It will also be used to challenge constituent partner agencies to improve practice and to make positive, sustainable changes to services.

2. Components of the quality assurance framework

2.1   Learning is derived from a range of activities and sources. The following diagram shows these sources:

3.   Multi-agency audits

3.1   Each year the Assurance and Review Group (ARG) will agree a work plan which includes a programme of multi-agency audits.

3.2   Delivery of the audits sits with the Case Audit Group which reports into the Assurance and Review Group (ARG). The final overview report will be approved by the SSCP Executive Group.

3.3   The methodology for each audit will be agreed at the start of the process by the Case Audit Group. Typically, this will involve cases being identified from specified criteria related to the focus of the audit. Each partner agency is then requested to audit its own involvement using an agreed audit tool. Partner agencies will share their findings and agree the overall evaluation of multi-agency practice which feeds into an overview report.

3.4   The methodology for each audit will specify what is expected of the agency representatives taking part and this will include the following general principles:

- A senior manager will be asked to sign-off the audit findings for their own organisation
- Consideration to be given to the most appropriate mechanism for gaining feedback from young people and their families to inform the findings
- Individual agencies will be asked to identify any immediate learning for their own organisations and to raise this with their respective strategic leads
- Action will be taken to escalate any concerns about individual children which emerge as a result of the audit process

3.5   The guidance for the production of multi-agency audits is located at: https://www.safeguardingsolihull.org.uk/lscp/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/12/Guidance-for-Audits-v0.7-SSCP.pdf

3.6   Multi-agency learning from audits will be developed into an action plan. Actions may be a combination of both strategic and operational changes and consideration will be given to how the impact of actions will be evaluated.

3.7   Any immediate learning from the audits will be summarised in a learning briefing by the Learning and Development Group and disseminated widely across the partnership.

Section 3: Multi-agency audits

3.8   Strategic leads in partner agencies will be asked to:

- Review their operating processes to ensure that learning is reflected in single-agency procedures
- Consider how they will quality assure whether learning has been embedded into frontline practice
- Ensure that learning is communicated across their workforce

4. Single-agency audits and self-assessments

4.1   Each partner agency should have in place auditing arrangements to assess the quality of their day-to-day safeguarding work. The Assurance and Review Group (ARG) will ask partner agencies to escalate findings from single-agency audits where these identify implications for the safeguarding of children in Solihull. Consideration will then be given at the ARG to any specific action that is required by the SSCP to address issues of concern.

4.2   It is critical that partner agencies escalate significant risks identified by their audit activity. This should include any concerns about capacity where demand exceeds the organisation's ability to respond in a timely way to the safeguarding needs of children. Failure to escalate will leave the safeguarding partners with blind spots around the experiences of children in Solihull.

4.3   Partner agencies will be required to complete self-assessments at agreed intervals and to report their evaluations into the LSCP. Examples of self-assessments include:

- S11 Audit (compliance with S11 duties to co-operate under 2004 Act)
- S175/157 Audit of Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools and Colleges
- Exploitation Self-Assessment
- Neglect Self-Assessment

4.4   Overview reports on the returns provided by partner agencies will be considered by the ARG. Any recommendations for further action will be made to the SSCP Executive Group.

5.   Multi-agency dataset

5.1   Headline data provides the safeguarding partners with a line of sight on aspects of frontline practice and on the wider safeguarding system. This is provided by:

- a dataset which relates directly to the MASH response to new referrals
- a set of high-level measures reported by a range of partner agencies

5.2   The task for the safeguarding partners is to consider data which is both process-driven (what we do and how much we do) and also outcome-focussed (the impact of what we have done; the difference we have made).

5.3   Oversight and analysis of multi-agency data assists the SSCP to:

- Identify trends in prevalence or demand for services
- Identify pressure points in the MASH response to new referrals
- Benchmark Solihull against national data to evaluate whether it is an outlier or in line with national trends
- Identify aspects of practice which require further interrogation

5.4   The multi-agency dataset has been developed building on the model used by the NSPCC in its' annual reports 'How safe are our children?'.

5.5   The dataset will be reviewed and revised over time and currently includes performance measures from the following organisations:

- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- West Midlands Police
- Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care Board
- Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals Birmingham
- South Warwickshire Foundation Trust
- Solihull Youth Justice Service
- Solihull Community Housing
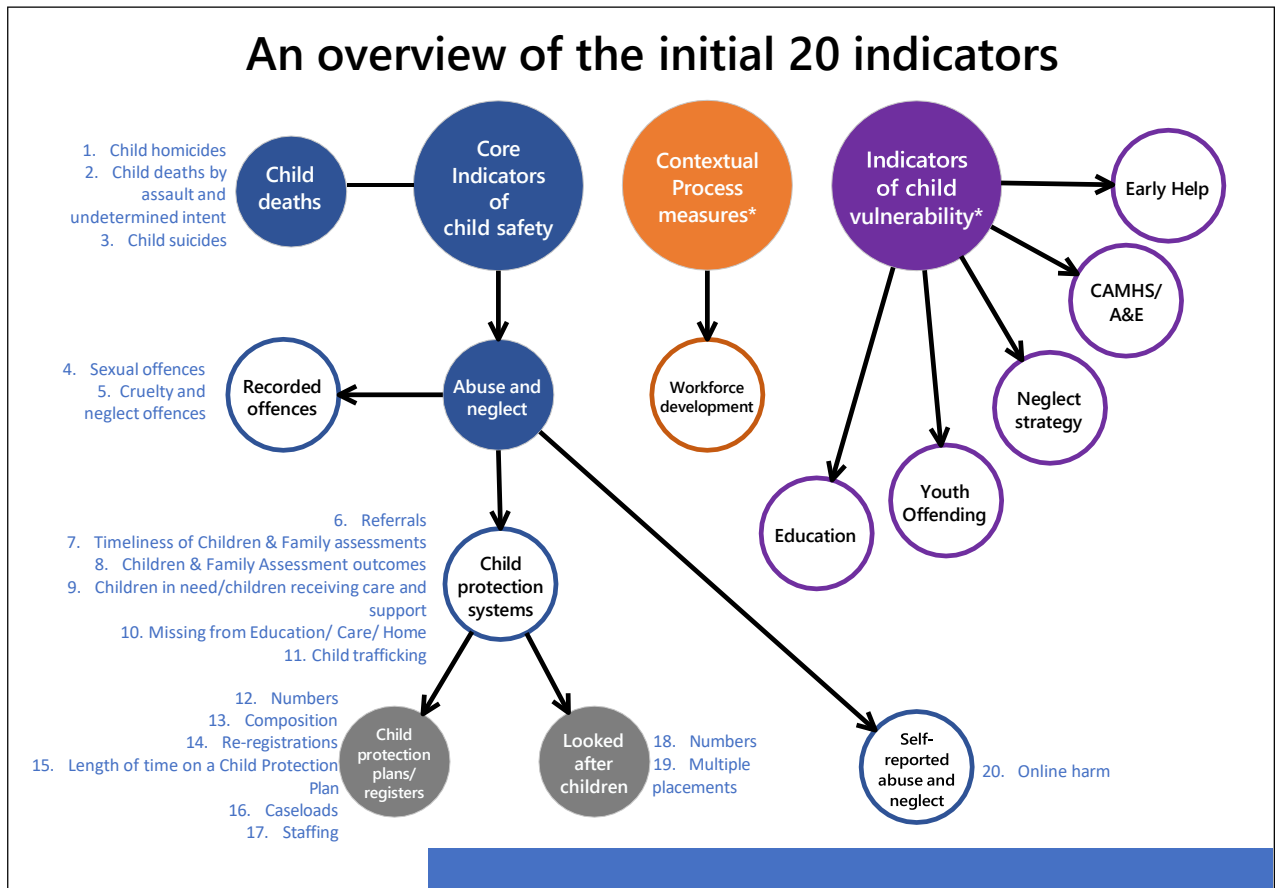- Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Unit

An overview of the initial 20 indicators

1. Child homicides
2. Child deaths by assault and undetermined intent
3. Child suicides

Child deaths

Core Indicators of child safety

Contextual Process measures*

Indicators of child vulnerability*

Early Help

CAMHS/ A&E

4. Sexual offences
5. Cruelty and neglect offences

Recorded offences

Abuse and neglect

Workforce development

Neglect strategy

Education

Youth Offending

6. Referrals
7. Timeliness of Children & Family assessments
8. Children & Family Assessment outcomes
9. Children in need/children receiving care and support
10. Missing from Education/ Care/ Home
11. Child trafficking

Child protection systems

12. Numbers
13. Composition
14. Re-registrations
15. Length of time on a Child Protection Plan
16. Caseloads
17. Staffing

Child protection plans/ registers

Looked after children

18. Numbers
19. Multiple placements

Self-reported abuse and neglect

20. Online harm

Diagram 1: *Diagram showing multi-agency indicators identified at the first phase of development*

5.6   Reporting by partner agencies is requested on a quarterly basis along with analysis and commentary to enable interpretation of the data.

5.7   The ARG will identify from the data any issues which require further interrogation and, if necessary, will ask for assurance about how any risk(s) are being mitigated by the data owner. Any significant concerns will be reported to the SSCP Executive group.

6.   Reviews of cases following serious incidents and child deaths

Rapid Reviews

6.1   The Local Authority has a duty to notify the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel of any serious incidents which occur in its local area and to inform the SSCP. A rapid review will then be co-ordinated in order to:

- Gather facts about the case
- Agree any immediate safeguarding actions
- Consider the case against the criteria for CSPRs
- Identify any immediate learning which can be acted upon and agree how this will be shared
- Decide what steps should be taken next, including whether or not to undertake a child safeguarding practice review
- Complete the rapid review template and agree the recommendation

6.2   Learning from serious incidents will contribute to the evaluation of effectiveness of the local safeguarding children arrangements.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

6.3   A child safeguarding practice review (CSPR) will be undertaken when a child or young person under 18 dies or is seriously injured and abuse and/or neglect is suspected or known to be a factor, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect them. These reviews are a statutory duty under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and the outcomes and lessons learned from CSPRs should be published.

6.4   The West Midlands CSPR Toolkit includes details of the referral process, methodologies, and templates for completing the CSPR process.

6.5   The Solihull CSPR Panel considers all CSPR referrals. If undertaken, a rapid review will come to a view about whether a case meets the criteria for a CSPR. The Independent Scrutineer will scrutinise the decision made at the rapid review on behalf of the named safeguarding partners.

Child Death Review Panel

6.6   The Birmingham and Solihull Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) will review the deaths of all children in the local area to determine if the death

was preventable and whether there are any modifiable factors to prevent similar deaths occurring in the future.

6.7   Learning from the child death process will be reported to the SSCP via the Assurance and Review Group (ARG).

7. The voices of children, young people, families, and frontline practitioners

7.1   There is an expectation that partner agencies will have in place processes to understand the experiences of children, young people and their families who receive their services. The SSCP is particularly interested in the experiences of children, young people and their families who are in need of support and/or protection. We will also use national feedback on particular vulnerable groups, surveys done by individual agencies as well as any bespoke surveys we have undertaken as part of a deep dive.

7.2   This framework places an expectation on partner agencies to escalate via the Assurance and Review Group (ARG), any specific safeguarding risks arising from direct feedback from children, young people, and families.

7.3   The SSCP's multi-agency audit process will ensure that young people and parents/carers are provided with an opportunity to provide direct feedback on their experiences of services. Feedback from family members, including compliments or complaints in relation to safeguarding issues, enables safeguarding partners to triangulate the findings of auditors looking at frontline practice.

7.4   The SSCP will also consider feedback from staff by looking at staff surveys such as the annual survey of social workers.

8.   Inspections and peer reviews

8.1   Some partner agencies will be subject to formal inspection or peer review. There is an expectation that partner agencies will report to the Assurance and Review Group (ARG) by exception, any headline findings from inspections which represent a risk to multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements in Solihull.

8.2   Any urgent and serious issues which arise from inspections or peer reviews may need to be escalated to the safeguarding partners with immediate effect.

9.   Complaints and Compliments

9.1   Each partner agency must have in place arrangements for monitoring complaints and a system for cross-referencing with safeguarding records. Partner agencies are required to escalate to the Assurance and Review Group any emerging themes from complaints data that have implications for the effectiveness of the local multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements.

9.2   It is equally important that the safeguarding partners are sighted on compliments which indicate good practice.

10.   Independent Scrutiny

10.1   The role of the Independent Scrutineer is to act as a critical friend to the safeguarding partners through the provision of support, guidance, and challenge to promote the effective delivery of their statutory functions.

10.2   A programme of scrutiny activity will be commissioned by the safeguarding partners, to be coordinated and overseen in partnership with the Independent Scrutineer. This should draw on a range of sources, which may include section 11 audit, self-assessment, peer review and mutual challenge and support through regional mechanisms.

10.3   The findings of this scrutiny activity will be reported to the Assurance and Review Group (ARG) and – where appropriate – to the Executive.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

Assurance and Review Group

1. **Role and Function of the Assurance and Review Group**

The Assurance and Review Group will deliver the SSCP's Quality Assurance Framework through the monitoring and review of performance information from a range of sources, interrogating further, when necessary, to provide a level of assurance to the delegated safeguarding partners in respect of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Solihull. This includes but is not limited to:

- Audits (including multi-agency audits, S11 audit and S157/175 audit)
- Assurance reports from partner agencies and in respect of multi-agency development work where this relates to SSCP priorities
- Multi-agency performance data
- Inspections and Peer Review findings
- Voice of the Child/Service User Feedback
- Practitioner Feedback
- National and regional developments which promote best practice

The group will identify emergent themes and patterns and monitor progress where targets for practice improvements have been identified with a view to;

- providing assurance to the delegated safeguarding partners about the robustness of practice
- making recommendations about specific work streams to improve practice

Proposed work streams will in the main reflect the SSCP priorities and support agreed outcomes.

Through the identification of practice issues, the Assurance and Review Group will support the process of driving continuous improvement in multi-agency working in Solihull.

This will be achieved by:

- Scrutiny of assurance reports from partner agencies on their safeguarding activity, as required;

- Interrogation of data provided by partner agencies in respect of safeguarding activity in Solihull;

- Multi-agency auditing activity on agreed practice issues;

- Monitoring multi-agency action plans in response to findings from audit activity;

- Ensuring that practice is compliant with multi-agency procedures and/or identifying any gaps in procedures;

- Considering direct feedback from children, parents/carers and practitioners as part of the multi-agency audit process and indirect feedback provided to partner agencies by service users, e.g., via their respective complaints procedures;

- Identifying multi-agency learning from its quality assurance activities and the key messages for dissemination across the wider partnership by the Learning and Development Group;

- Contributing to the delivery of the SSCP annual report on the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements in Solihull.

2. Accountability

The Assurance and Review Group is accountable to the three named safeguarding Partners via the SSCP Executive Group.

The Assurance and Review Group will be responsible for producing a highlight report to each SSCP Executive Group meeting to include an overview of what is going well, recommendations for areas of improvement and a proposal for the work required.

3. Role of Chair/Deputy Chair

The Chair of the Assurance and Review Group should be a strategic lead representing one of the three named Safeguarding Partners: SMBC, WMP or Birmingham and Solihull ICB.

The Chair of the group will work closely with the SSCP Business Manager to prepare for meetings and set agendas.

The Chair will hold group members to account for attendance, engagement and the delivery of specific tasks.

The Chair will actively monitor individual attendance by group members and will report on this by exception to the SSCP Executive Group.

The Chair will provide progress reports to the SSCP Executive Group and will identify and report on any barriers to the delivery of the work plan and escalate identified risks.

The Chair will model appropriate behaviours and language at all times.

4. Role of Group Members

Each member of the subgroup is responsible for both working on behalf of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership in the delivery of its quality assurance function and for holding their own agency to account for its safeguarding children activity.

Group members to ensure they have the support of their line manager/organisation to fulfil the requirements of the role.

Group members will prepare for meetings and come ready to actively engage with discussions.

Group members will positively support with the completion of tasks between meetings when asked to do so by the Chair/Deputy Chair.

Group members will attend all meetings and, in the event that they are unable to do so, will identify a suitable person from their agency to attend on their behalf.

Group members will be expected to respond in a timely way to communications between meetings.

Group members will model appropriate behaviours and language at all times.

5. Frequency of meetings: Alternate months

6. Administration

Meetings will be administered by the SSCP Business Unit.

The agenda and papers will be circulated at least five working days ahead of the meeting.

Minutes will be produced and circulated within two weeks of the meeting.

7. Membership

Chair – Assistant Director, QA, Improvement and Partnerships
Deputy Chair – Director of Nursing (Quality and Safeguarding), Birmingham and Solihull ICB
Solihull Children's Social Care
West Midlands Police
NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board
Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust
University Hospitals Birmingham
Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
Solihull Community Housing
CAFCASS
West Midlands Fire Service
Probation Service
Voluntary Sector Representative
South Warwickshire Foundation Trust
School/Education/Early Years Representative
SSCP Project Officer
SSCP Business Manager

For information:
NHS England West Midlands
Councillor Gough, Children's Services, Education & Skills Scrutiny Board

8. Quoracy

Meetings will not be considered to be quorate unless there is representation from all three named Safeguarding Partners.

Reviewed February 2023

Appendix B: Terms of Reference
SSCP Multi-Agency Audit Group

1. **Role and Function of the LSCP Multi-Agency Audit Group**

The Audit Group has responsibility to implement and deliver the SSCP's annual multi-agency audit programme. This audit programme is aligned to local priorities, national and regional and local learning. The Audit group is chaired by the Head of Safeguards in Solihull Children's Services.

The purpose of this group is to support the work of Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) in ensuring the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding practice for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

This will be achieved by:
- Developing a robust programme of audits, taking account of the SSCP priorities and themes from local and national learning;

- Undertaking audits of multi-agency safeguarding practice, drawing on agencies' records to enable conclusions to be drawn as to the effectiveness of their safeguarding practice;

- Responding to concerns raised during the audit process in relation to particular children and young people and escalating this where necessary;

- Agreeing multi-agency agency action plans in response to issues identified in audits and key findings as well as seeking confirmation of single agency action plans;

- Making recommendations for change, supported by the evidence of audits e.g., awareness raising or procedural changes;

- Providing written reports for each audit undertaken, detailing the methodology, findings, conclusions, recommendations, and actions to be undertaken to improve practice;

- Identifying learning for specific agencies and ensuring this learning is fed back to relevant practitioners in their respective organisations;

- Seeking service user feedback for a number of themed audits throughout the year in order to triangulate the experiences of children and families with the audit findings.

2. Accountability

The Audit Group is accountable to the SSCP Assurance and Review Group who will monitor any findings identified by the audit group and interrogate where necessary to provide overall assurance to the SSCP and the robustness of practice.

Members of the Audit Group are also accountable to each other, their agencies and the SSCP for completion of actions as required for the delivery of the Audit group work programme.

3. Role of Chair

The Chair of the Audit Group should represent one of the three safeguarding partners: local authority, police, or health.

The Chair of the group will work closely with the SSCP Project Officer to prepare for meetings and set agendas.

The Chair will hold group members to account for attendance, engagement, and the delivery of specific tasks.

The Chair will model appropriate behaviours and language at all times.

4. Role of Group Members

Each member of the Audit Group is responsible for both working on behalf of the Safeguarding Children Partnership in the delivery of its learning and delivery function and for holding their own agency to account for its safeguarding children activity.

Members will have a clear understanding and knowledge of child safeguarding issues; they should be employed in a sufficiently senior position to ensure actions and issues identified are addressed robustly followed up and addressed.

Group members to ensure they have the support of their line manager/organisation to fulfil the requirements of the role.

Group members will prepare for meetings and come ready to actively engage with discussions. As well as ensuring the completion of various audits throughout the year.

Group members will positively support with the completion of tasks between meetings when asked to do so by the Chair/Deputy Chair.

Group members will attend all meetings and, in the event that they are unable to do so, will identify a suitable person from their agency to attend on their behalf.

Group members will be expected to respond in a timely way to communications between meetings.

Group members will model appropriate behaviours and language at all times.

5. Frequency of meetings

The frequency of meetings will be dictated by the audit schedule for the year, this is likely to equate to 6-8 meetings a year dependent on demand for completion of audits.

6. Administration

The SSCP Project Officer will take notes at each meeting.

The agenda and papers will be circulated ahead of the meeting and notes will be produced and circulated within two weeks of the meeting.

7. Membership

Members of the group include:

- Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board - Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Adults (Lead for Children) (Deputy Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Adults to deputise)
- Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust - Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Young People (Safeguarding Lead for Quality and Assurance to deputise)
- Education and Early Years – Senior Education Improvement Adviser (another Senior Education Improvement Adviser will deputise where necessary)
- Solihull Children's Social Care - Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager

- SWFT - Lead Nurse for Safeguarding Children (Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children to deputise)
- Probation Service – Senior Probation Officer (another Senior Probation Officer will deputise where necessary)
- Solihull Community Housing - Safeguarding & Community Safety Project Manager (Neighbourhood Services Manager to deputise)
- University Hospital Birmingham (UHB) - Team Lead for the Children's Safeguarding Team
- West Midlands Police (WMP) – Detective Inspector
- Solihull Youth Justice Service - Service Manager – Exploitation, Missing and Youth Justice (Team Manager – Wider Exploitation and Missing Team to deputise)
- Solihull Adults Social Care – Team Manager: Safeguarding (Exploitation Reduction Lead to deputise)

8. Quoracy

Meetings will not be considered to be quorate unless there is representation from the three named safeguarding partners: Local Authority, Integrated Care Board and West Midlands Police

Updated July 2023