



UNDERTAKING AN AUDIT AS PART OF THE SURREY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMME

February 2018

1. What is the purpose of audit?

What is an audit?

- ✎ Audits form part of our quality assurance process. It provides a means of finding out whether the service is following guidelines and or applying best practice in a particular area. It is a systematic process that involves: defining standards and criteria, collecting data and analysing the findings.

Why conduct an audit?

- ✎ Audits are undertaken to ensure that policy and procedures are being followed. It provides evidence of best practice and can demonstrate the quality of work to external bodies and inspectors. It also allows areas of weakness to be identified and acted upon.
- ✎ The process of doing the audit can be as beneficial as the outcome because it provides staff with the time and space to reflect critically on practice and, in the multi-agency audits carried out by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB), the opportunity for agencies to learn from each other.

Who should be involved?

- ✎ It is good practice to involve people with a range of different perspectives within the audit group, representing a spectrum across the workforce.
- ✎ For multi-agency audits there should be involvement from partner agencies in developing the audit methodology and deciding on the kinds of issues the audit should address from the perspective of partners
- ✎ Wherever possible the audits should be informed by the views of children, parents and carers and the workforce.

2. The SSCB programme and the role of the Quality Assurance Sub-Group

The audit programme

- ✎ The SSCB Quality Assurance and Evaluation subgroup will devise an annual programme of audits that seek to assure quality in key areas of safeguarding activity

based on the SSCB priority areas (please see SSCB Business Plan for further information).

✎ The SSCB subgroups may be asked to suggest and support audits in the same way as the Quality Assurance and Evaluation subgroup. The topics will be selected by issues/questions raised by:

- Inspection/review processes
- Complaints
- Serious Case Reviews/Case reviews
- Learning and Improvement framework
- SSCB priorities

✎ Some of the recent SSCB audits include:

- Domestic Abuse Audit
- Neglect Audit
- Missing Children and Return Home Interview Audit
- Early Help/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Audit
- Family Support Programme Audit
- Re-audits as required
- Dip audits and surveys

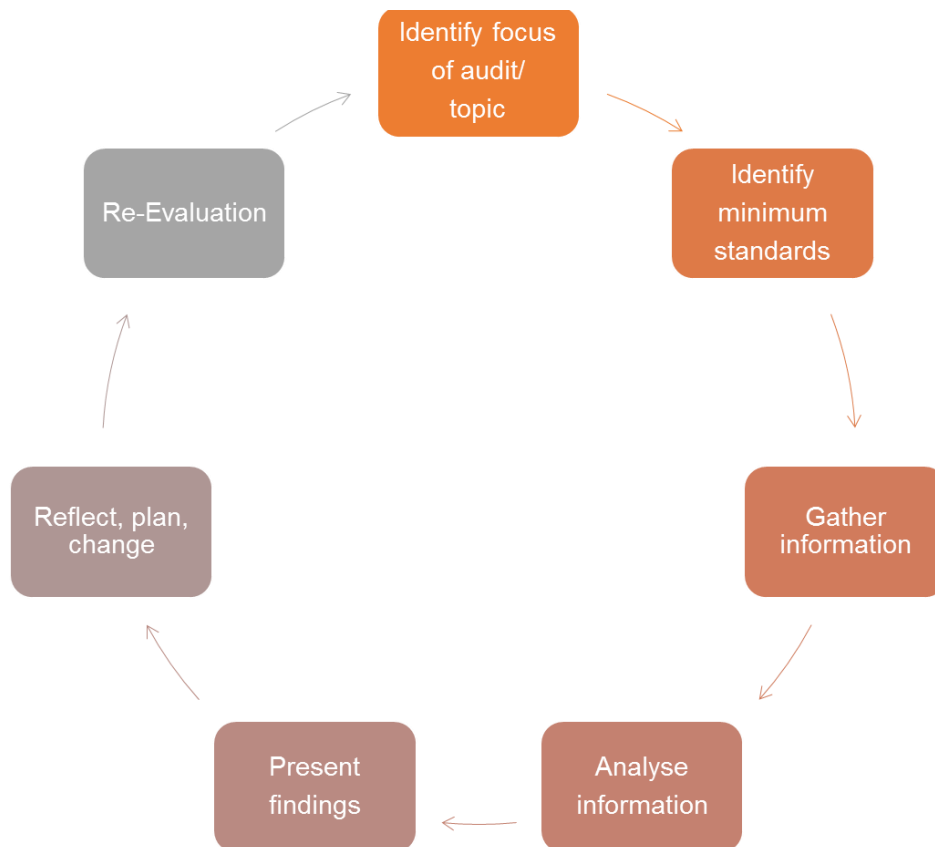
Overseeing audit activity

✎ The Quality Assurance and Evaluation subgroup will oversee each audit by:


- Commenting upon and approving the scope for each audit to be undertaken
- Commenting and approving the report for each audit before a summary is submitted to the Board
- Quality assuring the action plans arising from audits to ensure that they are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound (SMART) and there is a clear understanding about what actions will be taken forward, by whom and when.

✎ Where appropriate, action plans can be developed and monitored by another SSCB subgroup, any other relevant multiagency group or specific task and finished group based on the focus and findings from the audits. The Quality Assurance and Evaluation subgroup has the overall responsibility oversee the process.


3. Undertaking an audit



The audit method and tool

 The audit method is decided based on the focus and the topic of the audit. The scope of the audit, the standards and aims are explored by the SSCB Quality Assurance and Evaluation Officer in consultation with the SSCB Quality Assurance and Evaluation subgroup and relevant practitioners to decide on the best way to conduct the audit. This should include case review, audit tool, sample size, consultations with the workforce and where possible ascertain the views of children and families. The methods of the audit includes case file studies, focus groups, questionnaires, structured interviews and surveys.

The report

 The analysis and findings are presented in a report following Signs of Safety format and language and should include quantitative and qualitative information where relevant. The following headings should generally be used:

- > Introduction – the reasons for the audit, the background and National issues. If it is a re-audit what were the issues from the last audit.
- > Methodology – how was the audit undertaken, who was involved in the planning group, which agencies were involved. What tools were used? Were Children, families/carers and workforce involved? How?
- > What's working well - this should summarise the results of the audit drawing out strengths

- > What are we worried about - this should summarise the results of the audit drawing out weaknesses
- > What needs to happen - this should include recommendations for further work
- > Main findings – present main findings including questions/standards used, this can include qualitative and quantitative information
- > An action plan

Action Plans

- ✎ Each audit should have its own action plan which should be agreed by the relevant commissioning group. The action plan should be SMART and outcome focused

Reporting

- ✎ The report should be shared with the SSCB Quality Assurance subgroup, and then with other relevant groups and SSCB full board. A summary bulletin is also published in the SSCB website.

4. Information Governance

- ✎ Working Together 2015 says that in order to fulfil its statutory function under regulation 5 a Local Safeguarding Children Board (in this case the SSCB) should use data and as, a minimum, should:

- Assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help
- Assess whether SSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations set out in chapter 2 of this guidance (Section 11 audit)
- Quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identify lessons to be learnt
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

This supports information sharing to allow the data for audit to be shared.

The majority of agencies who constitute the Board and sub groups are signed up to the Multi Agency information Sharing Protocol (MAISP)

Audit information must be sent to secure emails or encrypted. Each agency is responsible for their own information security once the audit information has reached them

Completed audit forms should be kept until the audit report is completed and agreed by the Quality Assurance and Evaluation subgroup.

The completed audits must be kept secure and then destroyed.

In order to be effective each agency must take responsibility for the distribution of the findings of the audit as relevant to their area of practice. A lead member within each agency should have the responsibility for this task.

Where the audit has involved contributions from parents and children's the relevant outcomes and actions should be shared with them.

Dissemination of Findings

In order to be effective the SSCB will share findings in accordance with the [SSCB Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Each individual agency takes responsibility for the distribution of the findings of the audit as relevant to their area of practice.

Where the audit has involved contributions from parents and children's the relevant outcomes and actions should be shared with them.