SECTION 11 OF THE CHILDREN ACT 2004
SELF ASSESSMENT AUDIT
2014/15

Report to Leeds Safeguarding Children Board for the period
1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Children Act 2004 requires Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to ensure that organisations have safeguarding arrangements in place, which are overseen and audited by senior managers, trustees and management committees. Section 11 of the Act confirms what these arrangements are and forms the basis of the self assessment. This year has also seen assurance given by Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of each organisation and acknowledgement of their corporate responsibilities.

This report sets out the main findings from the 2014 Section 11 self assessments completed by statutory organisations within Leeds. A report for 3rd Sector and private organisations will be published separately.

The report gives an overall picture of organisations’ assessments of where they are strong and where they need to improve their safeguarding arrangements or standards to ensure the work they undertake with children and young people up to the age of 18 takes into account their safety and welfare.

Findings

It is clear that partners fully acknowledge the importance of ensuring compliance with Section 11 and have clearly demonstrated a journey of improvements since their previous Section 11 assessment in 2012/13.

The key themes identified as requiring review or improvement by organisations included:

1. **Standard 4.2**

   Four out of 11 organisations identified that seeking the views of children and families when the organisation is developing a new service or piece of work is an area for development.

2. **Standard 5.6**

   3 out of 11 organisations need to ensure that staff are encouraged and required to attend child protection and safeguarding training (as appropriate).

3. **Standard 9.5**

   4 organisations out of 11 needs to ensure that children are being made aware of their right to be safe from abuse.

All partners that submitted a Section 11 self-assessment also provided an action plan on how they will address all areas that they have identified as requiring improvement or review.
Section 11 Challenge Proposal 2014

The Performance Management Sub Group (PMSG) will follow up the Section 11 audit with a process of challenge which will look to explore in depth, partner agencies section 11 returns. The PMSG have set up a working group to further develop the section 11 process within Leeds to ensure it is embedded at the very centre of each organisations ethos. Members of the PMSG will use their knowledge of Section 11 of the Children Act and other local audits/inspections to ensure a consistency of high organisational safeguarding standards across the city.

The Section 11 challenge will see members of the PMSG visiting partner organisations to:

- Explore key areas within partners Section 11 self-assessment returns and review the evidence partners used to reach their own judgement
- Speak to both senior managers and front line practitioners to ensure Section 11 responsibilities are embedded and understood throughout the organisation

This challenge event will be undertaken during November/December 2014 and following the visit each agency will receive a short report on the findings. A further follow up visit will be undertaken 6 months later to check the implementation of each agencies action plan and/or themes identified following the visits by the Performance Management Sub Group (PMSG).

Recommendations

As a result of the findings from the 2013/14 Section 11 self-assessments the following recommendations are made:

All organisations that completed the self assessment:

- All organisations that identified areas for improvement should implement their own action plan and report back on their progress to the Performance Management Sub Group in December 2014
- All partners to support the PMSG in its implementation of the Section 11 challenge process during November/December 2014.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Safeguarding children and young people

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 states “The Local Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.”

Underpinning this co-operation and effectiveness are the duties placed on agencies under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard children and young people.

Section.11 of the Act confirms what these arrangements are and forms the basis of a self assessment tool completed by organisations in Leeds.

The government’s guide to interagency guidance for keeping children and young people safe, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013, sets out the responsibilities for all organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people with whom they work.

Similarly commissioners and funders should require organisations to assure them of their safeguarding arrangements as part of tendering and contract compliance processes.

The Chair of the LSCB also requested written assurance from the CEOs of partner agencies confirming their obligation to Section 11 responsibilities.

1.2 Self-assessment tool

To support partners in measuring their compliance the Business Unit has developed a new online Section 11 audit tool using the same format as previous years to ensure consistency. It is designed to help organisations assess where they need to improve their safeguarding arrangements, or standards, and to ensure the work they undertake with children and young people up to the age of 18 is:

- As safe as possible
- Compliant with legislation

The online Section 11 audit tool has been designed with key features such as:

- Auto save feature
- A help menu system
- Option of logging out and updating as required
- Ability to print out the Section 11 document at any stage
- Generation of an action plan based on the responses given
1.3 Purpose of the report

This audit brings together the findings from self-assessments completed in 2013/14 by statutory organisations within Leeds. Wherever possible, comparisons have been made with the findings from the 2012/13 self-assessments.

2.0 METHOD

2.1 Standards

The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board’s self assessment sets a minimum level of safeguarding standards an organisation needs to have in place, and should complement and underpin, rather than replace, other standards or procedures. The headings or the standards within the assessment are taken from the ‘Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of The Children Act 2004’ and include:

Standard 1: Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare

Standard 2: A clear statement of the organisation’s responsibilities towards children is available for staff and volunteers

Standard 3: A clear line of accountability exists within the organisation for work on the safeguarding of children

Standard 4: Developments within the organisation take account of the need to safeguard children and are informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families.

Standard 5: Training on the safeguarding of children for staff and volunteers working with or, depending on the organisation’s responsibilities, in contact with children and families

Standard 6: Safer recruitment

Standard 7: Effective inter-agency working to safeguard children

Standard 8: Staff are aware of the information sharing procedure for their organisation

Standard 9: Work with individual children and their families

2.2 Sample

Eleven Section 11 Self Assessments were considered from statutory organisations represented on the LSCB.

Probation are in the process of restructure and a Section 11 audit will be requested once this has been completed.
2.3 Organisations completing the audit

The following organisations completed a section 11 self-assessment in 2013/14.

- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust
- Leeds South and East, Leeds West, Leeds North Clinical Commissioning Group
- West Yorkshire Police
- Leeds YOS
- Leeds and York Partnership NHS Trust
- Leeds City Council Children's Services
- East Moor Secure Children's Centre
- HMP and YOI Wetherby
- Leeds Adult Social Care
- Cafcass (although not named as an organisation to which Section 11 applies but contributes as an LSCB partner)
3.0 RESULTS

The chart below gives an overview of the responses given to all 9 standards. These indicate that the majority of standards have been met. Further assurance will be required through the LSCB peer review challenge event where LSCB partners will look at the evidence and explore the rationale to further clarify partners’ responses.

The chart below gives an overview all partner responses given to all 9 standards by percentage.

3.1 Summary of Section 11 standards

**Standard 1:** Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare

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1.1 Is there a named senior person in your organisation to champion the safeguarding of children?

1.2 Is there a system in place that allows your organisation to take safeguarding ideas and initiatives forward and enables changes in practice and in the workings of the organisation?

Standard 1 was fully met by all organisations completing the Section 11. This means that at organisational or strategic level, senior managers demonstrate leadership and take responsibility for the actions of their staff that are providing services for children, young
people and their families. Senior managers will also champion the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people within their organisation. This is an important commitment for all organisations.

| Standard 2: A clear statement of the organisation’s responsibilities towards children is available for staff and volunteers |
|---|---|---|
| **Scoring Summary** |
| 91% standards met | 9% partially met | 0 |

2.1 Is an accessible safeguarding policy in place which sets out clearly the responsibilities of staff and volunteers for safeguarding children, including when and how to act on safeguarding concerns?

2.2 Do staff and volunteers have access to all the organisation’s relevant policies and procedures, e.g. on the internet or in a staff handbook? (1x amber)

2.3 Do staff, including volunteers, have clearly identified responsibilities for safeguarding children? (1x amber)

2.4 Are staff informed of their professional boundaries and know when and where to pass on information? (1x amber)

2.5 Are effective complaints procedures in place for children, staff, volunteers and other people where there are concerns that safeguarding has not been taken into account? (1x amber)

2.6 Are there policies which include reference to the importance of listening to children and responding appropriately? (2x amber)

Standard 2 requires that all organisations should have effective policies and procedures on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the importance of listening to children. These policies and procedures should be accessible and understood by all staff including volunteers. Compliance to this standard was 91%. Areas for improvement are ensuring that volunteers are fully aware of the relevant policies and procedures. Notably two ambers were given in regards to having polices which reference the importance of listening to children.
### Standard 3: A clear line of accountability exists within the organisation for work on the safeguarding of children

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<td>95% standards met</td>
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3.1 Are safeguarding priorities contained in the organisation’s main or strategic plan/s?

3.2 Does the organisation have policies and procedures that clearly show how to report welfare or safety concerns about children?

3.3 Are safeguarding responsibilities included in job descriptions and or volunteer responsibilities?(1x amber)

3.4 If appropriate is safeguarding routinely discussed in supervision and included in staff appraisals?(1x amber)

Standard 3 requires organisations to be clear who has overall responsibility for the contribution to safeguarding. Responsibilities for safeguarding should operate at 3 levels.

- Individual responsibilities (which can be encompassed through job descriptions)
- Professional responsibilities which are governed by codes of conduct for different disciplines and;
- Operational responsibilities which must clearly states the clear lines of accountability throughout the organisation to senior office level

Organisations identify compliance within 95% of Standard 3. Areas for improvements are ensuring that safeguarding responsibilities are included in job descriptions/volunteer responsibilities and ensuring that safeguarding is routinely discussed in supervision and appraisals.
**Standard 4:** Developments within the organisation take account of the need to safeguard children and are informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families.

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<td>88% standards met</td>
<td>12% partially met</td>
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4.1 Does the development of new services or pieces of work take safeguarding children into account?

4.2 Are the views of children and families sought when the organisation is developing a new service or piece of work? (4x amber)

4.3 Are services and new pieces of work developed to ensure equal access for all sectors of the community?

Standard 4 highlights the importance of listening to children and young people and ensuring their voice is heard and acted upon. It is essential that children and young people are both considered and consulted when developing pieces of work or provision. In the 2012/13 Section 11 audit only 34% of organisations were compliant. This year's audit has seen considerable improvements with 88% of organisations compliance to this standard. The key area for improvement is Standard 4.2- gaining the views of children and young people when developing a new services or piece of work.

**Standard 5:** Training on the safeguarding of children for staff and volunteers working with or, depending on the organisation's responsibilities, in contact with children and families

**Scoring Summary**

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<td>87% standards met</td>
<td>13% partially met</td>
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5.1 Is safeguarding included in the organisation's induction programme for staff and volunteers? (2x amber)

5.2 Are the areas detailed in the guidance notes, covered within your organisation's safeguarding induction programme? (1x amber)

5.3 Do staff and volunteers attend LSCB training, or in house introductory safeguarding
training? (1x amber)

5.4 If the organisation provides its own introductory safeguarding training, does it meet the standards and requirements of the LSCB as outlined in The West Yorkshire LSCB Single Agency Introductory Safeguarding Training Self Audit Checklists? (1x amber)

5.5 Do you keep records of the safeguarding training attended by each volunteer or staff member? (2x amber)

5.6 Does your organisation ensure that staff are encouraged and required to attend child protection and safeguarding training (as appropriate)? (3x amber)

5.7 Is safeguarding included in the organisation’s induction programme for staff and volunteers?

5.8 Are the areas detailed in the guidance notes covered within your organisation’s safeguarding induction programme? (1x amber)

It is essential that staff should have an understanding of both their role and responsibilities and those of other agencies to ensure effective multi-agency collaboration. Within this standard there was 87% compliance. Areas for improvement are Standard 5.6- ensuring that all staff are encourage to attend appropriate child protection and safeguarding training and Standard 5.5- that the organisation keeps up to date records of all staff that have attended.

### Standard 6: Safer Recruitment

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<td>94% standards met</td>
<td>6% partially met</td>
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6.1 Does the organisation have a safer recruitment policy in line with Leeds Safeguarding Children Board procedures?

6.2 Do all staff working with vulnerable people have DBS checks that have been updated within the last 3 years? (2x amber)

6.3 Have people within the organisation who are involved in the recruitment and selection of staff attended safer recruitment training provided by the LSCB or attended an equivalent course?

6.4 Does the organisation have procedures for workers to pass on concerns about staff and
volunteers to managers, or an identified person in a position of responsibility who deals with, or responds to allegations made against staff?

6.5 Is there a named senior officer/s or a person in a position of responsibility who ensure allegations are passed to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)?

6.6 Does the organisation ensures staff or volunteers are aware of the procedures for dealing with allegations made against staff? (2x amber)

It is essential that all organisations have robust recruitment and vetting procedures to help prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people. This also includes processes to pass on concerns about staff and when to pass on information to the local authority designated officer. Standard 6 had 94% compliance. Areas for improvement are ensuring staff and volunteers have had the necessary DBS checks and are aware of how to deal with allegations against staff.

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<th>Standard 7: Effective inter-agency working to safeguard children</th>
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<td><strong>Fully Met</strong></td>
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<td>88% standards met</td>
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7.1 Is your organisation regularly represented at safeguarding forums, meetings or Child Protection Conferences if invited?

7.2 Do staff and volunteers understand when to make a referral to Children Social Work Service? (2x amber)

7.3 If appropriate do staff know when to under-take or make a referral for an Early Help Assessment formerly known as CAFs? (1x amber 1x red)

This standard involves agencies and staff working together to improve outcomes for children and young people and ensuring this work is effective. Having a workforce that is skilled in identifying children’s issues and developing an appropriate response to address them as is having clear commitment by partners in attending relevant multi-agency meetings is essential. 88% compliance was seen in this standard. The key areas for improvement are ensuring that staff understands when to make a referral to children’s social care and know when to undertake an early help assessment.
Standard 8: Staff are aware of the information sharing procedure for their organisation

Scoring Summary

8.1 Do staff and volunteers understand when and how to share information if they have concerns that a child may be being abused or needs additional services?

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Effective arrangements for safeguarding should include having systems, standards and protocols for sharing information about a child and their family within each agency and between agencies. There was 100% compliance in this standard which has seen an improvement from 75% since the previous Section 11 audit.

Standard 9: Work with individual children and their families

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<td>91% standards met</td>
<td>9% standards partially met</td>
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9.1 Are staff aware of the roles of other professionals and organisations and understand the principles of working with children and families explained in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013?

9.2 Are assessments carried out with children and their families based on the principles defined within the West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding Procedures (see LSCB website)

9.3 Where appropriate are the principles of good practice for work with individual children and families included in training and induction programmes? (1x amber)

9.4 Does the organisation ensure its work is anti-discriminatory and provides equality of opportunity for individual children and families?

9.5 Are children made aware of their right to be safe from abuse? (4x amber)

The way in which staff work with children and young people and their families will differ depending on the function of each agency however, some common principles must be applied. This standard had 91% compliance improved from the previous Section 11 audit
where there was 70% compliance. Four organisations identified improvements in this area and have provided an action plan to address this shortcoming.

3.2 Summary of key areas for improvement

The following summary of the results pick out areas that have been identified as common areas for improvement by statutory organisations. It does not highlight areas that are specific to individual organisations; these will be fed back individually to organisations that will be expected to address the areas through their action plan.

Overall the self-assessments received show that for the nine standards set, necessary arrangements are in place (92%) for the majority of requirements needed to meet the standards. A number of areas have been identified as requiring review or improvement and a small number have been identified as needing further development

Below are common themes where organisations identified further work was needed to be fully compliant.

Standard 4.2 – Are the views of children and families sought when the organisation is developing a new service or piece of work

4 (36%) organisations stated that review or improvement was needed in seeking the views of children and families when organisations are developing a new service or piece of work. This is an improvement from the previous Section 11 audit where 40% of organisations identified weakness in this area.

Standard 5.5 – Does your organisation ensure that staff are encouraged and required to attend child protection and safeguarding training (as appropriate)?

3 (27%) organisations have identified that improvement is needed in ensuring that all staff are encouraged to attend child protection and safeguarding training.

Standard 9.5 - Are children made aware of their right to be safe from abuse?

Review or improvement is required by 4 (30%) organisations in ensuring that children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse. Action plans have been drawn up by partners to address this.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Improving the way key people and bodies recognise their responsibilities to safeguarding and ensuring that their organisations meet the requirements of Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 is crucial to improving outcomes for children and young people.

It is clear from the Section 11 self-assessments returned that partners have made considerable improvements in meeting their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. However, organisation should not view compliance with the Section 11 as the finished product and the audit tool only sets minimum standards. Organisations need to consider how they can improve further and push the boundaries of safeguarding within their organisation as well as forge even close relationships with partners
There has been a positive response by partners in adopting an online process. This provides a central point for all organisations Section 11 responses. The addition of a help function clarifies the expectations needed to achieve the minimum standards.

Further work is under way to ensure a broader understanding of non-statutory organisations safeguarding arrangements is under way facilitated by the new online Section 11 tool. This will be reported back to the LSCB in due course.

Section 11 Challenge Proposal 2014

The Performance Management Sub Group (PMSG) will follow up the Section 11 audit with a process of challenge which will look to explore in depth, partner agencies section 11 returns.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Progress against Previous Recommendations

As a result of the findings from the 2012 Section 11 self-assessments the following recommendations were made:

All organisations that completed the self assessment:

- Organisations should develop action plans in conjunction with the findings of this report and individual agency feedback and report back to the business support unit by July 2013
  
  Completed

- The self-assessment tool to be completed every two years with a yearly update to the LSCB Business Support Unit on progress being made on implementing the action plan developed.
  
  Completed

Improvements to the Section 11 audit process

- As part of the redevelopment of the LSCB website, an online version of the Section 11 audit should be built. This will broaden the reach to third sector organisations, raise awareness of the audit and provide an easier mechanism for organisations to complete the audit.
  
  Completed

- Leeds Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board will need to consider how it supports its partners in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements under Section 11 have been met
  
  Further work needed
Section 11 and the Commissioning Process

- Where a private, voluntary or independent organisation is commissioned to provide services on behalf of a statutory organisation, the agreement under which the arrangements are made should ensure that Section 11 compliance is taken into account and monitored.

**Completed**

- Each statutory organisation or body identified in Section 11 will provide the Performance Management Sub Group an outline on how they will seek assurance that the services they commission are meeting all responsibilities laid out under Section 11 of the Children Act.

**Further work needed**

5.2 **Recommendations for 2014/15**

All organisations that completed the self-assessment:

- All organisations that identified areas for improvement should implement their own action plan and report back on their progress to the Performance Management Sub Group in December 2014

- All partners to support the PMSG in its implementation of the Section 11 challenge process during November/December 2014.