

Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership

Learning & Improvement Framework



2022-2025

Introduction

The Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) is a learning partnership, and through its statutory functions, it reviews, scrutinises, and challenges local safeguarding arrangements and practice in order to improve services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Southampton. To support this work, the SSCP has a quality assurance framework, co-operating with the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton (HIPS) areas, and has developed this Learning and Improvement framework which is aligned with the HIPS partnership areas.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)¹ states that:

The purpose of local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families

The SSCP strongly supports the view that:

“Learning is relevant locally, but it has a wider importance for all practitioners working with children and families and for the government and policy-makers. Understanding whether there are systemic issues, and whether and how policy and practice need to change, is critical to the system being dynamic and self-improving”.²

This Learning & Improvement Framework is shared across local organisations who work with children and families, so that there is a growing understanding of what works well to improve outcomes for children and families. Conversely, when things have gone wrong the learning will be shared to enable service improvement to reduce the risk of future harm to children. The framework will apply to all safeguarding partners and relevant agencies in their delivery and monitoring of workforce development activities. It will inform single agency frameworks to ensure connectivity and compatibility. It is important that organisational learning resulting from this framework is dynamic, cyclical and a multi-layered process that informs the SSCP’s wider strategic planning framework and determines current and future priorities.

This Framework focuses on learning for members of the Safeguarding Children Partnership, but in line with the importance of taking a family approach and sharing learning across Partnerships and Safeguarding Boards, it should be noted that there is also local learning available from the [Southampton Safeguarding Adult’s Board](#) and via [Domestic Homicide Reviews](#).

Thanks and acknowledgement go to Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership for the basis of this Framework.

¹ Chapter 3, para 8 [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

² Chapter 4, para 3 [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

Roles & Responsibilities

The Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) supports local organisations and agencies to work together in a system which ensures children and young people are safeguarded and their wellbeing promoted. This Learning and Improvement Framework provides an approach to help create a culture and practice of continuous learning and to provide a clear line of sight on what is working well and what needs to be improved.

It is expected that all Safeguarding Partners and relevant agencies support the communication and dissemination of learning from single agency and multi-agency reviews and audits, and will:

- Evaluate and determine what themes and practice issues need to be prioritised for action, specifically considering what needs to be: -
 - Created – (what needs have emerged, or gaps have been identified)
 - Stabilised – (what is known to be working well, or has potential)
 - Changed – (what needs to improve or be different)
- Disseminate key learning messages through single or multi-agency learning resources and briefings
- Ensure that lessons learnt from multi-agency and single agency reviews and audits are embedded into practice through building a culture of learning and enquiry – such as through management and peer group support
- Demonstrate use of the Learning Improvement Framework in triangulation of evidence from previous and subsequent audits
- Apply professional challenge and curiosity to help create development of practice, source further information on specific issues and appreciate perspectives of others
- Provide adequate resources for staff to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, including provision of safeguarding and reflective supervision, and relevant learning and development opportunities
- Provide their staff with mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with safeguarding and child protection responsibilities, where to access advice and support, and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare, and multi-agency working processes
- Ensure completion of Keeping Children Safe/Section 11 Assessment (by relevant services including commissioned services), to evidence standard of compliance with their safeguarding children duties, and thus enabling partners and agencies to hold one another to account effectively
- Submit contributions to the SSCP Annual Report relating to key safeguarding activity, data and emerging themes.

Principles for Learning & Improvement

SSCP partner agencies are expected to apply the following principles to learning and development for their practitioners:

- To take part in and conduct reviews and audits act to evaluate the safeguarding system, and to coordinate and orient a view for agencies and individual practitioners
- To design and commission the above to ensure that outcomes to influence collective and individual behaviour and practice improvement
- Partners participate in the process to enable understanding and coherence across the system, including sharing from single as well as multi-agency audit activity and reviews
- Reviews, audits and learning and development activity appreciates what is working well and what needs to improve
- Partners support and demonstrate a culture of professional curiosity and challenge; to be both respectfully challenging and challenged
- Reviews, audits and learning and development activity generates improvement and a restorative, reflective approach
- That reviews, audits and learning and development is effectively evaluated; evidencing what works, why and in what contexts
- That activity facilitates and utilises information and feedback in the system including from frontline practice, families, and the child's lived experience.

Identification of need

Identification of local safeguarding learning and improvement needs will be achieved through use of different approaches and informed by different data sources. The drivers and demand to understand particular issues may arise from:

- Serious or significant local safeguarding incidents
- National safeguarding issues or incidents
- Local statutory inspections (what works or needs improvement)
- Quantitative data highlighting patterns of performance and practice, risk, and demands on services
- Agreed safeguarding priorities

In order to review and assess practice standards, effectiveness of working together and processes, the following approaches and methodologies will be used:

- Audits – multi-agency thematic audits will be programmed and prioritised by the Safeguarding Practice Improvement Group and include consultation with practitioners and service users. Single-agency audits are also carried out and can inform the SSCP audit programme and priorities.
- Keeping Children Safe/Section 11 Assessment – each Safeguarding Partner and relevant agency are required discharge organisational functions, and any service it contracts out to others, with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This is a duty set out in Chapter 3 Working Together 2018 and Section 11 Children's Act 2004. The agency self-assessment (Keeping Children Safe/Section 11 Assessment) is a means to question and

connect different aspects of an organisation's safeguarding practice and culture. Gaining insight into organisational safeguarding standards and approaches can:

- Enable reflective practice at a strategic and operational level
- Identify good practice as well as areas for development within each organisation
- Provide insight across the safeguarding partnership, feeding into learning and improvement at a single and multi-agency level.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRS)

Outcomes from CSPRS will contribute toward safeguarding partnerships priority planning, learning and development programme, policies, and procedures. Further information is available in the Learning from Experience section on the following pages.

Overview

This framework seeks to promote a culture of learning and continuous improvement. The building blocks to this framework are:

Learning from multi-agency data and scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from multi-agency data • Learning from Safeguarding Practice Improvement Group (SPIG) 	7 7
Learning from Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews • Identification of learning 	10 11
Improving Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding Learning in Practice • Evaluation of Learning 	11 12
Front line Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front line visits • Training feedback • Staff surveys 	13 13 13
External learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Research & Safeguarding Child Practice Reviews • Strategic Partnership Feedback • Inspection Feedback • Themed Reports 	13 14 14 14

Learning from multi-agency data

SSCP oversees an agreed dataset that monitors multi-agency child protection arrangements and enables the Partnership to support and challenge partners for their performance. The SPIG reviews agency data on a quarterly basis and refreshes the set of indicators annually, ensuring that the Partnership remains responsive to emerging safeguarding issues and can evidence the impact of its work.

The multi-agency dataset is aligned to the SSCP business plan and is aligned to the following themes:

1. Safeguarding practice improvements in priority areas for the SSCP; Neglect, Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding, Child Sexual Abuse
2. Ensuring learning, recommendations and actions from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Serious Case Reviews and thematic audits are implemented and embedded.
3. Child Sexual Abuse – a new strategy, implementation plan and training for practitioners

The dataset and reporting to the SSCP Board and subgroups will meet the following principles:

- **Scope and relevance** – the dataset will demonstrate the performance of the partnership in terms of its strategy to improve outcomes for children across all priority areas
- **Integrity** – the dataset will be timely, accurate and reliable
- **Trends** – there will be clear explanations of upward or downward trends
- **Targets** – performance against national and local targets is included as appropriate
- **Comparisons** - relevant comparisons are made with other areas and/or organisations
- **Confidence** – analysis focusses on whether good performance will be sustained into the future
- **Actions** – analysis identifies opportunities to strengthen practice

Learning from Safeguarding Practice Improvement Group (SPIG)

SSCP undertakes an annual Safeguarding Practice Improvement programme, including multi-agency audits, focussing on the quality of front-line practice. This work is coordinated by the SSCP Team. This activity is also informed by feedback by recommendations from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and national inspections.

Learning from SPIG is disseminated to front-line professionals via a range of mechanisms including SSCP practitioner briefings. In undertaking audits and reviews, SSCP is committed to the following principles in that we will:

- Avoid excessive or unnecessary checks
- Target quality assurance to ensure it is more effective

- Encourage professional multi-agency challenge
- Adopt a thematic approach aligned to business plan priorities and emerging issues
- Use the JTAI Framework and outcomes of JTAI inspections to clarify the standard of practice that is required
- Involve children, families, and front-line workers in audits in appropriate ways
- Identify and share both good practice and opportunities for improvement and ensure that recommendations are addressed and monitored to deliver improvements to services

Audit reports are presented to the SSCP Board to ensure operational and strategic oversight of front-line practice. Progress against recommendations is overseen by the SPIG.

Type	Description	Who	Reporting
Multi-agency audits	Multi-agency audits complement single-agency auditing. SSCP has an annual programme of multi-agency audits linked with the Business Plan priorities. The primary focus is to establish the effectiveness of front-line practice, what has worked well and where improvements, both single-agency and multi-agency, are needed. Recommendations are agreed and monitored by the SPIG. Front line professionals and managers are involved, and the 'voice of the child' and their lived experience is a key theme in the audit process. For all audits, consideration is given to how the 'voice of the child' will be included.	SPIG	SSCP via SPIG
Single agency audits	Single-agency case audits occur in most organisations as part of the assurance of their duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. The outcomes of single-agency audits can be requested by the SPIG Group where this is necessary to evidence the impact on practice of SSCP initiatives and other programmes of work.	SPIG	SPIG Group via partner agencies
Section 11 Audits	Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requires a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As part of our statutory duty to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, the SSCP undertakes annual monitoring of compliance with safeguarding standards. This is undertaken through self-assessment and panel evaluation of an agreed Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton (HIPS) audit tool. The purpose of the audit is to support Board partners in achieving compliance with safeguarding standards through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking assurance from partner agencies that services are compliant with safeguarding standards. 	SPIG	SSCP via SPIG

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling partner agencies to showcase areas of good practice where positive outcomes for children can be evidenced. • Enabling partner agencies to reflect on their safeguarding priorities and to identify areas for improvement. • Providing a feedback mechanism on progress against areas for improvement including any barriers to partnership working. <p>The Partnership operates a two-year cycle of self-assessment (year 1) followed by monitoring and tracking of action plans (year 2). In each year, the process is complemented by a survey of front-line staff to provide further intelligence. Members of SSCP's SPIG evaluate each agency's full self-assessment and feedback is provided via the Independent Chair.</p> <p>In year 2, SSCP request a written update regarding the Action Plans. A multi-agency safeguarding children conversation may also be undertaken, led by the three safeguarding partners.</p> <p>An overview of the Section 11 results is presented to the SPIG and SSCP Board, and key themes are included in the Partnerships' Annual Report, reflected in business planning, and used as evidence in regulatory reviews of the SSCPs.</p>		
Section 175/157 audits	<p>Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Similar requirements are in place for proprietors of Independent Schools under Section 157 of the Education Act 2002.</p> <p>The SCC Education Cross Phase Advisor undertakes annual monitoring of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in education settings as shown in the right-hand column. The findings are analysed with suggested improvements made to assist schools who have not yet reached the required standard.</p> <p>Follow-up site visits are undertaken to validate information provided during the audit and to gather evidence of good practice to share.</p>	Maintained, Academy and Independent Schools and post-16 education (named as Relevant Agencies by SSCP).	SSCP Board

Learning from Experience - Case Reviews

As required by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) safeguarding partners identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to their area. They must commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken.

Learning is gained from experience in case reviews as follows:

Type	Description	Who	Reporting
Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	Multi-agency statutory reviews for cases where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected; and The child has died or been seriously harmed. 	A reviewer who is independent of the case	SSCP via the Serious Incident & Learning Group (SILG)
Individual agency or management review	Reviews of safeguarding incidents where the concerns relate to practice in a single agency rather than the way that agencies worked together to safeguard children.	SSCP via the SILG for cases referred for consideration of a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.	Partner agencies (via the SILG)

SSCP apply the following principles to all case review work:

- There will be a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, identifying opportunities to draw on what works and promote good practice.
- The approach will be proportionate according to the scale and level of complexity of the issues being examined.
- Reviews of serious cases should be led by individuals who are independent of the case and of the organisations whose actions are being reviewed.
- Professionals will be fully involved in reviews and invited to contribute their perspectives without fear of being blamed for actions they took in good faith.
- Families, including surviving children, will be invited to contribute to reviews. They should understand how they are going to be involved and their expectations should be managed appropriately and sensitively. This is important for ensuring that the child is at the centre of the process.
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews will be published on the SSCP website (for at least one year) along with the Partnership Response to the review findings, to achieve transparency. The impact of CSPRs and other reviews on improving services to children and families and on reducing the incidence of deaths or serious harm to children must also be described in SSCP Annual Report and will inform inspections.
- Improvement will be sustained through regular monitoring and follow up so that the findings from these reviews make a real impact on improving outcomes for children.

Guidance for commissioning CSPRs has been developed by SSCP and ensures that all partner agencies understand their role in contributing to reviews. The guidance provides information on review criteria, governance processes and engagement with professionals and family members.

Learning from Experience – Identification of Learning

Identification of key learning is achieved through the function of the SILG. The SILG has a responsibility for monitoring recommendations made following completion of a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review and ensuring that the learning is cascaded to front-line professionals and informs service improvement and development. This is undertaken via a range of mechanisms including briefings, workshops, and multi-agency learning events.

Improving Services – Embedding Learning in Practice

To improve safeguarding practice, learning identified from reviews of practice must be embedded into current practice.

How	What	Who	Reporting
Dissemination of learning	SSCP’s fully funded multi-agency training programme including workshops, briefings, eLearning etc. Delivered face-to-face or virtually (e.g. webinars, eLearning).	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies.	SSCP
	SSCP online resources (e.g. Practitioner Guides).	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies.	SSCP via subgroup chairs and Partnership Team.
	Publication of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews reports.	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies.	SSCP via SILG
	Single-agency training, briefings, and other communication strategies.	Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies	SILG and SPIG
Actions to improve practice	Single and/or multi agency action plans developed to respond to CSPRs	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies.	SILG
	Single and/or multi-agency actions plans developed to respond to learning identified through case audits.	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies.	SPIG
	Single and/or multi-agency actions plans developed to respond to learning identified through the Section 11 self-assessment process.	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies	SPIG

	Actions arising from reporting to SSCP and SPIG Group.	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies	SSCP via SPIG Group
	Reviews of, and updates to, SSCP and HIPS multi-agency procedures to incorporate learning into practice.	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies	HIPS Executive via HIPS Procedures Group.

Improving Services – Evaluation of Learning

The aim of the activity outlined in this framework is to make a positive impact on frontline practice and improve outcomes for children in Southampton.

As part of its quality assurance activity, the SSCP evaluates the impact of its work. This provides assurance that front-line professionals benefit from SSCP resources and that partner agencies, through their SSCP Board members and subgroup representatives, promote a culture of continuous improvement. Evaluation includes:

How	Who	Reporting
Single and multi-agency audits informed by recommendations from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies	SSCP and SILG via SPIG Group.
Reporting on action plans arising from audits and reviews	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies	SSCP via the SILG and SILG
Formal evaluations of SSCP initiatives such as the development of resources/ programmes of work (e.g., ICON, Neglect Strategy and Toolkit).	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies.
Evaluation of the SSCP training programme including post-course feedback and monitoring of longer-term impact will be in place by Spring 2022.	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies	SSCP
SSCP Annual Report Provides the opportunity for Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies to provide narrative against the following criteria as outlined in Working Together: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers. An analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities. 	Partnership Team, Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies	SSCP via Partnership Team.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements. • Ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision. 		
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Front line visits

Agency Visits as part of Section 11

S.11 Safeguarding Conversations are led by the Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) with attendance from the SSCP team. The visits offer the opportunity to visit settings and engage directly with safeguarding leads and front-line staff. These visits provide the SSCP with the opportunity to look at a broad range of issues, including those that are agency-specific, and are informed by learning reviews, inspections, and audits. They also provide the opportunity to explore key themes arising from the bi-annual Section 11 self-assessments and online staff surveys that are completed by partner agencies.

Training Feedback

The SSCP commissions and delivers fully funded multi-agency training to complement single agency training. Feedback from delegates is captured through formal evaluation (e.g., surveys, focus groups) and reported to the SSCP. The SSCP is looking at ways to monitor the impact of training on practice at 3 and 6 months and this will be in place by Spring 2022.

Staff Surveys

The SSCP undertakes a range of staff surveys to support the delivery of the business plan objectives and to inform future work of the Partnership. Themes for the surveys are informed by SSCP priorities, learning from audits and recommendations from both local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Findings are reported to relevant SSCP subgroups and where appropriate, recommendations for further work are made.

External Learning - National Research & Safeguarding Child Practice Reviews

The SSCP uses learning from national research and published Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews to assist in improving local safeguarding arrangements. Key learning is shared with the Learning and Inquiry Group to identify further opportunities for improving practice and to support the Partnership with disseminating examples of best practice.

External Learning - Partnership Feedback

SSCP works closely with a number of other strategic partnerships including the Safeguarding Adults Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, Corporate Parenting Board etc through defined protocols that enable challenge, scrutiny and feedback to be given to the SSCP on its priorities and performance.

External Learning – Inspection Feedback

The safeguarding system receives scrutiny and challenge from national inspectorates including the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMRCFRS), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) and others. These inspections generate single and multi-agency action plans and are an important source of learning for the Partnership.

External Learning – Themed Reports

During each year, relevant reports will be produced for SSCP in respect of a range of safeguarding themes. The following list is not exhaustive and SSCP may request additional reporting on specific areas of service delivery.

- Multi-Agency Contributions to Child Protection Conferences (CPCs)
- Engagement with Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Engagement with Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)
- Management of Allegations against Professionals and Volunteers working with children
- Notifications of Private Fostering
- Elective Home Education

Monitoring and review of this Framework

This framework will be monitored by the Partnership Team and reviewed every three years to align with the SSCP Business Plan, or sooner in response to delivery of this framework, governmental guidance, and national agendas.

Approval Process

Version	Approval	Date
Final Draft	SPIG	28.03.22
Final Draft	SILG	08.02.22
Final Draft	SSCP	23.06.22

Review due: June 2025