



Calderdale
Safeguarding
Children
Partnership

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY & ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

**“HOW DO WE KNOW CHILDREN IN CALDERDALE ARE SAFE
AND OUTCOMES FOR THEM ARE IMPROVING?”**

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Version Control

V1 – December 2019

New Quality Assurance Framework (adapted from previous LSCB PMQA Framework).

V2 - June 2020

Updated with Holistic Report Template

V3 - November 2021

Amendments to meet website accessibility standards

2. Introduction

This Calderdale Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) Independent Scrutiny and Assurance Framework explains how we monitor joint working arrangements in Calderdale to assess whether they are working effectively to keep children safe. This framework is used so that we can independently scrutinise multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to:

- highlight areas of good practice;
- highlight areas which require improvement;
- examine how effective arrangements are for practitioners;
- decide what we need to examine in more detail;
- determine what difference the CSCP has made to outcomes for children and to practice;
- support and challenge partners to improve practice; and
- inform standards and agreements for joint working;

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 outlines the responsibility for Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs). LSCPs are tasked to 'use data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of services to safeguard children, including early help'. LSCPs should 'ensure that independent scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement'.

3. Principles of Independent Scrutiny and Assurance

The following principles underpin all activities defined in this framework:

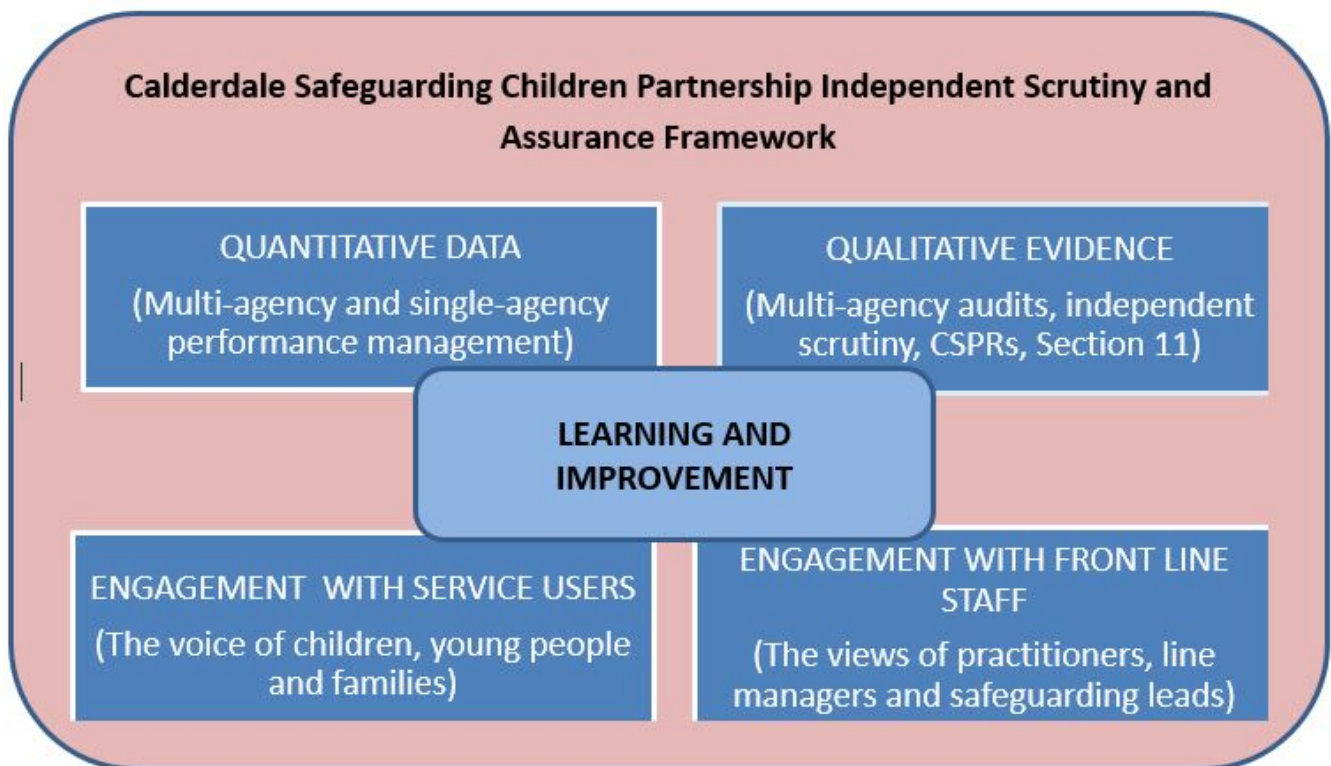
- Recognise that any system, including safeguarding systems can only manage and reduce risk, not eliminate it. Systems are made up of numerous variables that constantly change and consequently fully appraising and managing risks of each variable is a complex task.
- Make use of relevant research and case evidence to inform findings.
- Invite families, including children to contribute to learning and reviewing opportunities; providing clarity of how they will be involved and manage their expectations appropriately and sensitively;
- Place the child at the centre of the process;
- Seek to understand why individuals and organisations operate in a particular way;
- Involve practitioners and managers in the learning activities in order to understand practice from their viewpoint;
- Ensure there is transparency about the way data is collected, analysed and shared;
- Take into account confidentiality and data protection;
- Share learning and any associated changes to practice whilst maintaining confidentiality;
- Implement processes to measure and monitor how changes and improvements have been embedded to ensure they make a real impact on improving outcomes for children.

4. The Independent Scrutiny and Assurance Framework

The Five Elements of Independent Scrutiny and Assurance

1. **Quantitative data:** Performance management information including statistics, performance measures, outcomes, analysis, trends and comparator data.

2. **Qualitative evidence:** Independent Scrutiny from experts in the field, university research etc, Multi-Agency Audits, Section 11 self-assessments and challenge events, single agency case file audits, practice and partnership reviews, Child Death Overview Panel activity, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Local Learning Lessons Reviews, Deep Dives and information from best practice and research elsewhere.
3. **Engagement with service users:** Feedback from children, young people, parents, carers and families which can confirm or challenge the position found through quantitative data and qualitative evidence. This helps to triangulate the information to reach accurate conclusions.
4. **Engagement with front line staff:** Feedback from practitioners and managers to triangulate and support or challenge the quantitative and qualitative evidence; practitioner focus groups, feedback from training events and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews capture evidence from front line staff of what is working well in practice and what areas need to be examined or changed.
5. **Learning and Improvement:** The evidence gathered from the four other elements of this framework provides the structure by which CSCP scrutiny and challenge takes place. This can result in recommendations for changes to policies, procedures, guidance and joint working arrangements. It can also inform the CSCP training programme, communication messages and single agency practice changes.



CSCP Holistic Assurance Programme

This section describes the approach to scrutiny which provides opportunities to take a co-ordinated view across all intelligence and evidence.

A programme of self-assessment activity will focus on specific thematic areas of activity. The areas chosen will potential areas for inspection, providing assurance about how well children are safeguard in Calderdale. The following programme is an example of the schedule of activity:

Multi-agency task & finish groups gather intelligence and undertake analysis of safeguarding practice in Calderdale (using a tool based on Appendix 1). Holistic self-assessments based on all aspects of this framework

would produce an objective critical reflection which will be used to drive improvement. The following table explains what types of evidence can be used. The list is indicative and not exhaustive.

Types of Evidence/Assurance

The following examples are how the CSCP can seek assurance to accurately and independently evidence how services safeguard children:

Quantitative

Single and multi-agency Performance Management Data

Data provides evidence of performance; Indicates areas for improvement activity / further investigation; Allows acknowledgement of good performance.

Rolling Reports

Factual briefings from Service Leads, describing how practice safeguards children and what actions may be taken to improve. This informs the CSCP about specific areas of interest e.g. Children Looked After, LADO findings etc. See Appendix 2.

Single Agency Exception Reports

Single Agencies to update the CSCP on any areas of deteriorating performance.

Child Death Overview Report / Findings from Child Death Reviews

These reports provide information about performance in numbers of preventable deaths of children and identify recommendations for action to reduce the number of preventable deaths.

Qualitative

Independent Scrutiny

Objective independent scrutiny by a person or persons who do not have any associations with Calderdale agencies on specific areas of practice delivery or performance.

Peer Review

Evaluation of practice and impact by peers who do not have associations with Calderdale. Peer Review offers a critical friendship role providing objective and independent scrutiny and analysis of practice.

University Research

Academics research, review and offer feedback on aspects of performance.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

CSPRs highlight good practice and areas for improvement. Recommendations would positively impact on the improvement of services and improve outcomes for children.

Local Learning Lessons reviews

Cases which give rise to a concern around multi agency working and lessons needing to be learned OR cases where good practice is identified and can be shared.

Section 11 Audits (joint with Safeguarding Adult Audits)

Self-assessment tool designed to assist CSCP partners to self-evaluate their own policies, procedures and practice in relation to safeguarding as defined in Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. These are set against agreed standards, undertaken annually and includes all organisations and groups who work with children.

Multi Agency Case File Audits

Audits designed to assess the quality of work undertaken by all agencies where there are concerns about children throughout the child's journey i.e. Early Help, Referral, Assessment, Planning, Review, Management

oversight and recording. Identify areas which are working well and areas requiring improvement (a copy of the templates used during MA Audits can be obtained on request).

Single Agency Audits

To assure the CSCP that organisations are monitoring their own Safeguarding practice effectively, this function provides independent scrutiny of targets and performance. Reports identify any performance area which might be of concern, together with action being taken.

Engagement with Service Users

Feedback from Service Users

Engagement with children and families to gain their views; this includes gaining service user feedback from partner agencies.

Case Studies

Case Studies are used when the CSCP can evidence the impact of Assurance activity. The Case Studies are used to triangulate this evidence.

Young Advisors

Young Advisors, as representatives of the CSCP, actively seek out the views, wishes and knowledge of other young people to inform CSCP decision making, or to report on multi-agency working practice in Calderdale.

Complaints / Compliments

Complaints and Compliments from Children, Young People and Families collated through Single Agencies, feed to the CSCP through Exception / Rolling Reports.

Engagement with Front Line Staff

Practitioner Focus Groups

Feedback from practitioners to triangulate data, audit or CSPP activity.

Section 11 Partnership Learning Events

The Section 11 Partnership Learning Events (formerly known as Challenge Events) allow attendance of practitioners with managers enabling sharing of working practices at a detailed level to increase mutual understanding between partners. The Events are an opportunity for agencies / services to provide safeguarding peer support and challenge, and to explore opportunities for collaborative working

Multi Agency Reflective Practice Sessions

Combined training with gaining feedback about front line activity from front line practitioners.

Observations

Observations of joint working arrangements

Dispute Resolution Process

This evidence is gathered by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) and reported to the CSCP through the IRO Annual Report.

5. Governance

The work of the CSCP is steered by local and national intelligence and learning e.g. local priorities and national policy. Three key partners from the Police, Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group direct the CSCP through an Executive Group, which also consists of representatives from voluntary and education sectors. A Manager and Secretariat supports the work of the CSCP and helps to coordinate the sub groups who deliver against the priorities for the CSCP Executive.

The CSCP aligns itself and influences the strategies and priorities from other strategic partnerships such as:

- the Safeguarding Adult Board
- the Community Safety Partnership
- the Health and Wellbeing Board
- the Family Justice Board
- the Domestic Abuse Strategic Group

The structure of the CSCP and its sub groups can be found on the [website](#).

6. Accountability

Chapter 3 (paragraph 28 - 29, p76) of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 states that all organisations who work with children must comply with information requests from the CSCP:

- ‘Safeguarding partners may require any person or organisation or agency to provide them, any relevant agency for the area, a reviewer or another person or organisation or agency, with specified information. This must be information which enables and assists the safeguarding partners to perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including as related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.
- The person or organisation to whom a request is made must comply with such a request and if they do not do so, the safeguarding partners may take legal action against them’.

7. The CSCP Executive

The CSCP Executive has an open, honest and learning culture. Executive members recognise that scrutiny of information and evidence relating to the performance of partners across the “child’s journey” is central to being an effective LSCP. The CSCP Executive will receive independent scrutiny and assurance reports to enable triangulation, praise for good practice, challenge and to obtain a holistic picture of how well children are safeguarded in Calderdale.

8. Showing Impact

There are plans to introduce a mechanism for gathering evidence of how the CSCP and its partners are making a difference to outcomes for children and young people and their families; this Impact Log will be a crucial in the next stage of development of the CSCP.

9. Appendix 1: CSCP Thematic Assurance Report

Thematic assurance reporting allows a holistic picture to be constructed for CSCP priority areas.

Thematic Report on *CSCP Priority Area*

1. What do we know (What does the data tell us?)

Performance Management data including: *indicator report reference number and headline data*

2. What does the quality assurance tell us? (audit)

Audits including:

Multi Agency Monthly Audit, CSCP Multi Agency Audits.

3. What the Front Line Practitioners Tell us:

Staff engagement including:

Concerns from Soft audit with Front Line Practitioners:

Strengths from Soft audit with Front Line Practitioners:

4. What is the voice of the child telling us?

Engagement with children and young people

5. Gaps in knowledge for the CSCP (and how we can fill these)

6. Areas for development

7. Next steps / Actions for the CSCP Partners:

10. Appendix 2: Annual Schedule of Rolling Reports

The following rolling reports are presented to:

CSCP Executive

- Private Fostering
- MAPLAG
- Early Intervention & Prevention
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- IRO Annual Report
- Conference Chair Annual Report – Child Protection
- Child Death Overview Panel
- Prevent
- Children Looked After annual report
- eHNA
- Children affected by Domestic Abuse, Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage
- Trafficking/Modern Day Slavery
- Section 11 / Safeguarding Adults Audit

Quality Assurance Subgroup

- Section 11 / Safeguarding Adults Audit
- Young Advisors

Learning & Improvement Subgroup

- Multi-Agency Training

Contextual Safeguarding/ Risk and Vulnerability group

- Children Missing Education
- Mental Health & Emotional wellbeing
- Child Exploitation
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour