Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership

Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework 2023 - 25

Contents

CSCP Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework v1.0 – May 2023

1. Introduction

The Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) is committed to learning and improving; it scrutinises and challenges local safeguarding arrangements and practice in order to ensure the quality of the multi-agency work being undertaken with children and families in Coventry is effective, and to improve services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the city.

The Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework aims to deliver improved outcomes for children in Coventry by using a wide range of key quality and performance, aligned to the CSCP priorities, that are scrutinised and challenged through a robust, systematic process. This will provide assurance to the Partnership Board and the CSCP Executive Group that the quality of work undertaken in Coventry is to a sufficient standard. The framework will also ensure that the CSCP is able to meet statutory requirements as laid out in Working Together 2018 and The Children's and Social Work Act 2017.

The Partnership has three main priorities; each priority has a set of actions to ensure they are delivered, and a quality assurance schedule to test their implementation and outcomes for children and families in Coventry.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the framework is to draw together the various sources of learning from across the Partnership. The framework provides the mechanism for the Partnership Board and the CSCP Executive Group to understand what the strengths and areas for development are in safeguarding activity in Coventry, understand what works to deliver positive outcomes for children, and to improve the quality of services and outcomes for children through a cycle of continuous improvement.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

This framework is for the CSCP, partner agencies and all local organisations who work with children and families who are expected to endorse this framework and embed it into their organisational and workforce learning and development policies. In addition, partner agencies and local organisations are responsible for:
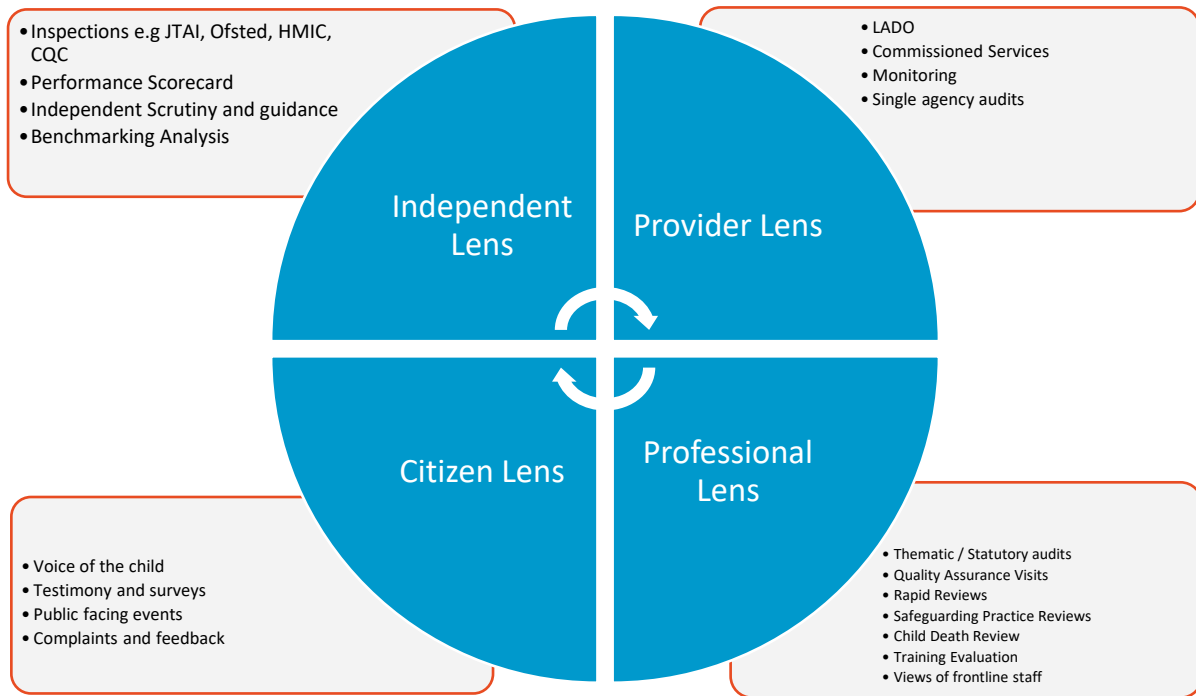
- Providing staff and other resources to deliver the framework
- Contributing to audits and reviews of practice undertaken by the CSCP
- Ensuring that staff are told about lessons learnt from these reviews of practice and have the opportunity to change the way they do things
- Feeding back on action taken as a result of recommendations from audits and reviews
- Ensuring that lessons learnt from these reviews of practice are embedded into practice

The implementation and sustainability of the framework is the responsibility of the CSCP Audit & Performance (A&P) Subgroup; this group will maintain and develop the framework responding to local and national policy and agenda. They will also retain responsibility for reporting progress to the CSCP on a quarterly basis.

4. Four Lenses Approach

The framework is based on a four lenses approach to ensuring the CSCP has in place a continuous cycle of quality assurance and improvement. Organisational intelligence is gathered from four perspectives, or lenses, and is turned into action to improve through the '*plan, do, review*' cycle of continuous improvement.

The diagram below shows the types of information viewed under each of the lenses:

Independent Lens
- Inspections e.g JTAI, Ofsted, HMIC, CQC
- Performance Scorecard
- Independent Scrutiny and guidance
- Benchmarking Analysis

Provider Lens
- LADO
- Commissioned Services
- Monitoring
- Single agency audits

Citizen Lens
- Voice of the child
- Testimony and surveys
- Public facing events
- Complaints and feedback

Professional Lens
- Thematic / Statutory audits
- Quality Assurance Visits
- Rapid Reviews
- Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Child Death Review
- Training Evaluation
- Views of frontline staff

Independent Lens

Information in this area comes primarily from the CSCP Performance Scorecard and from benchmarking and contextual data. The Performance Scorecard is created quarterly for the CSCP by the Audit and Performance subgroup. The learning from inspections, although only available after an inspection occurs, also provides valuable information about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Provider Lens

Services for children and young people are provided by a range of providers: statutory bodies, the voluntary sector and private businesses. Information in this area comes from these providers. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) provides regular information to the CSCP through their annual report and updates to the CSCP Executive Group. This information is useful in understanding how service providers are keeping children safe. Any services for children that are provided as a commissioned service should be subject to contract monitoring. Contract monitoring activity can also provide safeguarding intelligence and is reported to the Audit and Performance Subgroup.

Professional Lens

CSCP routinely collects information about safeguarding and outcomes for children from a range of professionals, through a range of activities. Appendix 1 provides a comprehensive list of other types of professional challenge that are used to inform the quality assurance and continuous improvement process.

The Audit and Performance subgroup oversee the audit programme which provides additional learning opportunities.

Quality Assurance Visits are another approach to ensuring the CSCP has in place a continuous cycle of quality assurance and improvement. The CSCP Executive Group, Coventry Children's Services Leadership Team and Lead Member form a visit team and spend time within a particular service area, which affords them the opportunity to gain further assurance in relation to the functioning of that service and creates a clearer line of sight between senior leaders and frontline practitioners. The visits are focused on specific key lines of enquiry and include direct observations, dip sampling and discussions with staff.

Safeguarding Practice Reviews are a significant element of the professional perspective and are managed by the Safeguarding Practice Review subgroup. All reviews are carried out in accordance with the principles laid out in Working Together 2018.

Training evaluation has previously been recognised as a strength for the CSCP and this is managed through the Implementation subgroup. The tools used show that participants regularly change their practice as a result of training, and how this can impact on outcomes for children.

The Safeguarding Together Action Group (STAG) is comprised of frontline staff and team managers from organisations across the city. The purpose of this forum is to capture the views of practitioners, to share learning from local and national reviews, to look at the effects of action on frontline practice, to increase awareness of new policy and procedures and to identify emerging safeguarding issues across the City. The Safeguarding Together Action Group meet 3/4 times per year for approx. 2 hours each meeting.

Regular staff surveys are also conducted which demonstrate how staff understand and apply safeguarding policy and practice.

Citizen Lens

Capturing the voice of the child, whether directly or indirectly, is an important element of evaluating outcomes for children. Coventry CSCP seek to hear the voices of children young people and do this via a group they have created called 'Your Voice Matters' aimed specifically at engaging young peoples' voices in safeguarding strategy for the city and typically meet with one school each quarter.

There is also a range of other activity that will feed information into the quality assurance process including surveys and complaints.

5. Quality Assurance Framework

Quality assurance means assessing the quality of the work we undertake to safeguard children and understanding the impact of this work in terms of its effectiveness in helping to keep children and young people safe, improve outcomes and making a positive difference to their lives. Effective quality assurance will contribute to a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

It is essential that the multi-agency work conducted is evaluated and monitored to continually drive and improve performance, identify areas for development, evidence best practice, and provide effective challenge to all partners to improve the lived experience of Coventry children.

To deliver effective and impactful quality assurance there are three key work strands:
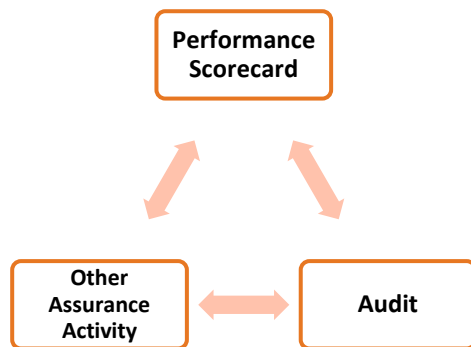
1. The production of a quarterly Performance Scorecard which measures several key performance indicators linked to Partnership priorities.

2. A planned programme of audit activity which focuses on statutory audits (Section 11 and Section 175/157) and thematic audits, chosen by the Partnership linked to the priorities, in response to identified areas of concern or as a result of inspections or Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

3. Other assurance activity via the A&P subgroup to provide assurance of best practice and areas of learning to the Partnership Board and Executive Group. This can include monitoring and sharing single agency audits and ensuring that partners have effective quality assurance processes in place.

The role of partner agencies is crucial to the success of the quality assurance work of the CSCP, and agencies will be expected to submit performance data and respond to multi-agency audit requests within the agreed timescales.

5.1 Performance Scorecard

The Performance Scorecard is populated by the Quality Assurance Manager on a quarterly basis and taken to the A&P subgroup for consideration and refinement before being presented, by the Quality Assurance Manager, to the Partnership Board. The data should derive from all partners represented at A&P and actively provide assurance that work is improving outcomes for children across the city and allow for appropriate support and challenge to partners on their performance, on both an individual and multi-agency perspective. Partners are also required to provide a brief narrative/commentary alongside their data which affords the A&P subgroup and Board members with context, accurate interpretation of the data and a deeper understanding of the what the data is telling us about the effectiveness and impact of work with children and families.

The Performance Scorecard key indicators should align with the CSCP priorities to ensure that the data collected can provide assurance around areas of concern; this makes the Performance Scorecard a dynamic and evolving document, and it should be updated after each re-set of Partnership priorities. The scorecard indicators can also be updated at any time, provided the amendment(s) are approved by a quorate A&P subgroup and formally recorded in the meeting minutes.

5.2 Audit Programme

Multi-agency audits provide a valuable means of identifying strengths and areas of good practice alongside key lessons for improvement; having a systematic auditing process in place allows the CSCP to monitor the quality of practice and target areas that require further development.

The CSCP aims to conduct a maximum of 4 multi-agency thematic audits each year (one per quarter) reviewing specific areas aligned to the Partnership's priorities and emerging safeguarding themes in Coventry. The annual audit programme will be discussed and agreed by the A&P Subgroup before any audits commence.
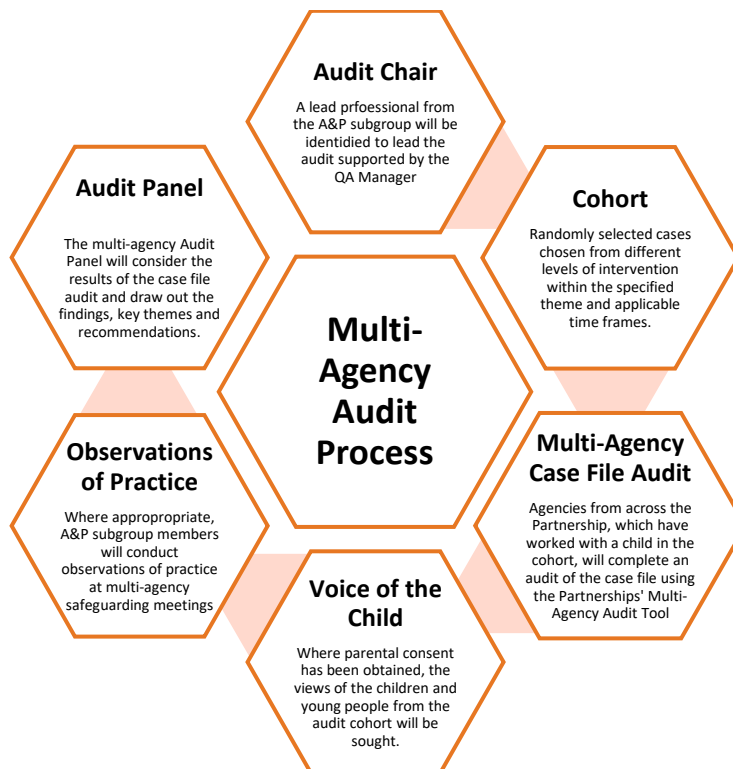
The CSCP is also responsible for co-ordinating statutory Section 11 (bi-annual) and Section 175/157 (annual) audits; this includes setting the audit questions, receiving the submissions, analysing the data, and producing a report that includes recommendations and/or actions for each agency.

The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for collating and analysing the results from all audit activity and producing the final audit report which goes to the Audit Chair for sign-off. The report then goes to the Subgroup for their consideration and final amendments, and once agreed the final report is presented at the Partnership Board meeting.

5.2.1 Thematic Audit Methodology

Thematic audits will follow the same general framework and use the standard CSCP Key Lines of Enquiry (*Appendix 2*) designed to encompass a multi-agency approach, allow for triangulation of data, review the effectiveness of practice, and capture the legal requirements of all agencies in supporting and protecting children.

Multi-Agency Audit Process:

Audit Chair
A lead prfoessional from the A&P subgroup will be identidied to lead the audit supported by the QA Manager

Audit Panel
The multi-agency Audit Panel will consider the results of the case file audit and draw out the findings, key themes and recommendations.

Cohort
Randomly selected cases chosen from different levels of intervention within the specified theme and applicable time frames.

Multi-Agency Audit Process

Observations of Practice
Where approropriate, A&P subgroup members will conduct observations of practice at multi-agency safeguarding meetings

Multi-Agency Case File Audit
Agencies from across the Partnership, which have worked with a child in the cohort, will complete an audit of the case file using the Partnerships' Multi-Agency Audit Tool

Voice of the Child
Where parental consent has been obtained, the views of the children and young people from the audit cohort will be sought.

5.2.2 Section 11

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'.[1]

Section 11 audits are completed bi-annually in line with the regional approach using the CSCP online audit tool. Partner agencies are required to complete the self-evaluation of their compliance against the standards; it is the responsibility of partner agencies to ensure that they complete the audit on time and that the information provided is accurate.

The Quality Assurance Manager will co-ordinate this audit and complete the report for the A&P subgroup to approve before presenting the report at the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership Board meeting.

Agencies are also expected to report on progress of improvements to their safeguarding procedures during the previous 12 months.

5.2.3 Section 175/157

Section 175 and Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 require school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 175 of the Act covers local authority schools, whilst section 157 puts the same responsibility onto private, free and independent schools.

The CSCP is required to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in schools and undertake this audit annually using the online audit tool. The Quality Assurance Manager will work in conjunction with the Safeguarding in Education Advisor to support schools in thorough and timely audit completion. The findings are analysed, and report written with suggested improvements made to assist schools who have not yet reached the required standard.

5.3 Other Assurance Activity

The CSCP may decide to undertake an impromptu audit at any time; this would normally be the case following a Rapid Review or Safeguarding Practice Review highlighting areas of concern or following receipt of other information indicating areas for quality assurance focus.

If such work is requested, the A&P subgroup must consult the audit schedule and decide on the priority area to be quality assured. Timings must be considered in relation to other audits being undertaken by the QA manager and Partnership agencies to ensure no clash of timings, and that staff are not being asked to complete too much audit activity simultaneously.

The Executive Group may request a report for any other area of concern which comes to light; this may stem from an emerging theme or Performance Scorecard data. The Quality Assurance Manager will undertake this work to a clear deadline, and with an understanding that any requests for information will be short and concise, with a focus on providing a broad-spectrum approach rather than a 'deep dive' into information (e.g., Enquiry Panel).

Should the A&P subgroup decide more extensive information is required from any partner then the agency lead should take that request back and arrange for either:

- A report to be prepared ready for the next subgroup meeting, or
- For agency representative to attend the next meeting to give a presentation on their area and take questions from A&P subgroup members.

The Executive Group or A&P may make any other requests for quality assurance work within the parameters of the group scope and purpose, utilising the role of the Quality Assurance Manager and agency leads to ensure CSCP priorities are investigated, managed, and met. An example of this is the Position Statements which were requested from partner agencies during the Covid-19 pandemic, and Quality Assurance Visits to specific areas.

5.4 Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAIs)

A Joint Targeted Area Inspection is a multi-agency inspection which is conducted by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation). A JTAI focusses on a particular theme and inspects the partnership work of all agencies in the area to form an opinion of positive work being done and any gaps in provision.

JTAIs are unannounced and evaluate the partnership response to all forms of abuse, the quality and impact of planning and assessments, how/whether children are protected and the leadership and management of this work. They will also look at how effective local safeguarding partnership arrangements are.

The inspection team will usually include four inspectors from Ofsted, including an education inspector, four inspectors from HMICFRS, and three from CQC and HMI Probation. An Ofsted inspector will lead the inspection. All inspection documentation and organisation is led by the Local Authority lead with whom the Lead Inspector will regularly liaise. This is usually the Director of Children's Services and any other individuals they may nominate. Partners will supply their information directly to a Local Authority Single Point of Contact who will be responsible for ensuring it reaches inspectors without delay.

Once a notification to the Director of Children's Services has been received, it is expected the JTAI will be completed within 3 weeks.

The Ofsted Logistics Group and the Audit and Performance Subgroup have oversight of the JTAI process as it is a multi-agency inspection which reflects on all agencies across the partnership. There is a preparation plan in place which includes identifying the cohort, partners completing self-assessment audits and a focus group to identify good practice and areas for improvement to inform a city-wide action plan.

5.5 Recommendations, Actions and Learning

It is important that the Partnership uses performance data and outcomes of audits to learn, improve practice and assess the impact of changes resulting from audit findings on children and young people and their families.

At the end of each audit or piece of quality assurance work, a set of concise and appropriate recommendations will be made that aim to drive improvement and influence future practice. The
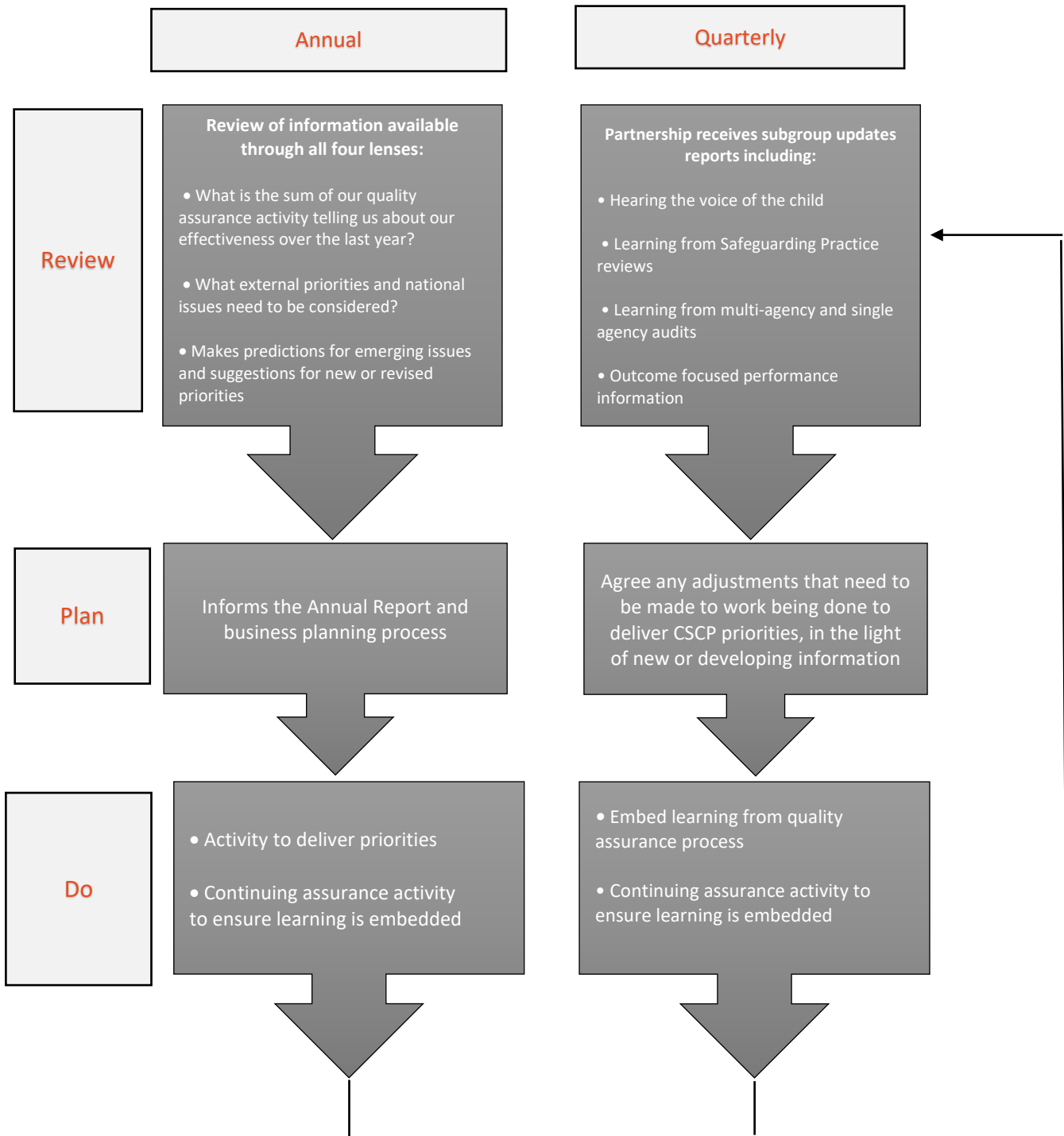
recommendations will be formulated into a SMART Action Plan and the implementation of this will be monitored by the A&P Subgroup until completion.

The A&P subgroup will also consider the most appropriate and effective ways for sharing the learning from each thematic audit across the Partnership. This could include several approaches:

- Development of One Minute Guides
- Webinars
- Presentations at relevant forums
- CSCP newsletter, website and social media platforms
- Safeguarding Together Action Group (STAG)
- Used to inform and update multi- agency safeguarding training

6. Continuous Improvement

The framework enables the CSCP to take a broad view of learning across the Partnership. It will enable the Partnership to make informed decisions at a strategic level to ensure continual improvement in safeguarding practice and outcomes for children. Regular review of learning will allow the Partnership to make informed plans for their activity which leads to things being done differently and better. This cycle of continuous improvement works on both an annual and a quarterly level and ensures that learning becomes embedded in front line practice. The table below outlines how the cycle works:

Annual	Quarterly

Review

Review of information available through all four lenses:	**Partnership receives subgroup updates reports including:**
• What is the sum of our quality assurance activity telling us about our effectiveness over the last year? • What external priorities and national issues need to be considered? • Makes predictions for emerging issues and suggestions for new or revised priorities	• Hearing the voice of the child • Learning from Safeguarding Practice reviews • Learning from multi-agency and single agency audits • Outcome focused performance information

Plan

Informs the Annual Report and business planning process	Agree any adjustments that need to be made to work being done to deliver CSCP priorities, in the light of new or developing information

Do

• Activity to deliver priorities • Continuing assurance activity to ensure learning is embedded	• Embed learning from quality assurance process • Continuing assurance activity to ensure learning is embedded

Appendix 1: Professional Lens Information List

Type of Activity	Description	Who	Reporting
Safeguarding Practice Review	Where abuse or neglect is known or suspected and either: 1) a child dies; or 2) a child is seriously harmed and there are concerns about how organisations or professionals worked together to safeguard the child.	Partner agencies Relevant organisations Independent Reviewer Safeguarding Partnerships Office	Safeguarding Practice Review (SPR) Subgroup to CSCP
Child Death Review	A review of all child deaths up the age of 18	Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)	CDOP to CSCP
Multi-agency Thematic Audit	Audit of practice relating to a specific safeguarding issue (case sample)	Partner agencies Relevant organisations Safeguarding Partnerships Office	Audit and Performance (A&P) Subgroup to CSCP
Single-Agency Audit	Audit of practice (case sample)	Partner agency	Audit and Performance (A&P) Subgroup
Section 11 Audit	Self-assessment of an organisation's safeguarding arrangements and practice (Section 11 of the Children Act 2004)	Partner agencies	Audit and Performance (A&P) Subgroup to CSCP
Section S175/175	Annual self-assessment of all schools in Coventry reviewing the effectiveness of their arrangements for safeguarding children in relation to their duties under S157 and S175 Education Act 2002, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2020 and Working Together 2018	All primary and secondary schools (including academies), independent schools, free schools, special schools, colleges, the hospital education service, and extended learning centres	Audit and Performance (A&P) Subgroup to CSCP

Quality Assurance Visits	Quality Assurance visits to a specific area to gain further assurance and create a clearer line of sight between senior leaders and frontline practitioners	The CSCP Executive Group	CSCP / Execs via Audit and Performance (A&P)
National research, SPRs, etc	Key messages from research, other CSCP's SPRs	Safeguarding Partnerships Office	CSCP
Dissemination of learning	Multi-agency training programme.	Partner agencies Relevant organisations Safeguarding Partnerships Office	CSCP via Implementation Subgroup
	CSCP briefings and communication strategy.	Partner agencies Relevant organisations Safeguarding Partnerships Office	CSCP
	Safeguarding Together Action	Partner agencies - frontline practitioners Relevant organisations Safeguarding Partnerships Office	CSCP
	Publication of Safeguarding Practice Review final reports	CSCP	CSCP
	Single agency training	Partner Agencies	Implementation Subgroup
	Single agency briefings and other communication strategies.	Partner Agencies	Relevant Subgroup
Actions to improve practice	Single and Multi-agency action plans from case reviews.	Partner agencies Relevant organisations Safeguarding Partnerships Office	CSCP via SPR Subgroup
	Single and Multi-agency action plans from case audits.	Partner agencies Relevant organisations Safeguarding Partnerships Office	CSCP via A&P Subgroup
	Single and Multi-agency action plans from Section 11 audits.	Partner agencies Relevant organisations Safeguarding Partnerships Office	CSCP via A&P Subgroup
	Actions arising from reporting to CSCP/A&P Subgroup	Partner agencies Relevant organisations Safeguarding Partnerships Office	CSCP via A&P Subgroup

Appendix 2: CSCP Standard Key Lines of Enquiry

Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership
Multi-Agency Audit Tool

Date of completion:	
Name of Child:	Gender:
Date of birth:	Age:
Address:	
Agency ID Number (LCS ID, NHS number etc)	
Case Status:	
Agency completing audit:	
Name and role of auditor:	
Audit scoping period:	

Family Composition (and other significant children/adults in the child's immediate family network)

Name	Age	Relationship to Child	Lives in household?
			Choose an item.
			Choose an item.
			Choose an item.
			Choose an item.
			Choose an item.

 Summary

Brief Case Summary *(provide a brief summary of your agency's involvement with the child AND the individuals listed in the family composition and any pertinent history that would help inform this audit)*

Key Lines of Enquiry

Identification of risk/need	What worked well?	Areas for development
- *Was risk/need identified, understood and responded to in timely way?* - *Were referrals timely, good quality and in line with RHRT?*		

Assessments	What worked well?	Areas for development
- *Have robust and up-to-date assessments been completed for this child and are risks, needs, strengths and protective factors clear?* - *Have individual needs and circumstances of the child been considered?* - *Does the assessment use a Signs of Safety approach and considers the whole family including fathers and significant males?* - *Are assessments informed by a chronology, family history and information from partner agencies?* - *Does the assessment demonstrate professional curiosity?*		

Decision-making	What worked well?	Areas for development
- *How effective and timely is the decision making for this child/young person? Is there clearly recorded rationale for decisions made?* - *What difference is this making for this child - is this improving their situation?* - *Has overall decision making by the multi-agency group resulted in keeping the child/young person safe from further harm?* - *What research/evidence based practice has been used to inform practice/decision making?* - *Is there evidence of management oversight?*		

Plan	What worked well?	Areas for development
- *Is there a co-ordinated, up to date multi-agency plan with clear objectives/outcomes? Is it SMART?* - *Has a Lead Practitioner been identified? Is there evidence of relational practice* - *Is the plan dynamic? Has been amended in light of emerging need and risk?* - *Are their clear roles for each agency within the plan?* - *Is it sufficient to address risk and needs in relation to abuse? Is it making a difference?* - *Are actions by all agencies progressing in a timely manner or is there evidence of drift and delay?* - *Is case recording clear, comprehensive, reflective of work undertaken?* - *Is it clear how progress will be evaluated and regularly reviewed and is management oversight evident?*		

Multi-Agency Working	What worked well?	Areas for development
- Is there evidence of effective coordination between agencies including information sharing, communication and joint working? - Are there any barriers to joint working and information sharing? - Are all relevant agencies engaged and in attendance at multi-agency meetings? - Is there evidence that the range of Early Help services available is understood by professionals? - Is there evidence of professional challenge and/or formal escalation where appropriate?		

Voice of the Child	What worked well?	Areas for development
- Is the voice of the child evident? - Is there a good understanding of the child's lived experience? - Has the child been involved / engaged at all stages including assessment, planning and attendance and contribution at meetings - What difference has the consideration of the child's voice and their lived experience made for the child and their family?		

Family/Parental Engagement	What worked well?	Areas for development
- *Is there evidence that a family/community network is identified (including fathers/significant males) and established in the best interests of the child at the earliest opportunity?* - *Is there evidence that professionals have built trusted relationships with the child and their family?* - *Are the family appropriately involved in assessments, plans and interventions?* - *Is there evidence that the Early Help support available is well communicated to parents?*		

Equality, Diversity and Identity	What worked well?	Areas for development
- *Has the impact of diversity been considered? (culture, ethnicity, identity, disability, faith, language etc)* - *Is this understood, addressed and recorded?*		

Impact of involvement	What worked well?	Areas for development
- *How has intervention/involvement improved outcomes for this child/young person?* - *What difference has this made to the child and their family?* - *Are actions taken by agencies reducing risk?*		

Case Grading

Please give the case an overall grade:

Overall case grade	Exceeds Good / Meets Good / Does Not Meet Good Yet
Auditors rationale for judgement	
Is there any good/innovative practice that should be highlighted?	
Do you have any suggestions for practice improvement for your agency or the multi-agency partnership working with children and families	

Recommended Improvement Actions

Please record any actions for your agency and/or the Partnership identified by the auditor. Include any timescales and person/s responsible:

Action (SMART)	By Whom	By When	Progress/update