

Learning and Improvement Framework

2014/15

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# Introduction

Working Together to Safeguard Children[[1]](#footnote-1) reinforces the duty of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and provides a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children[[2]](#footnote-2). Chapter 3 outlines the responsibility to have in place a clear framework to monitor the effectiveness of local services, and to maintain a local learning and improvement framework which is shared across organisations who work with children in the area.

The aim of this framework is to enable Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB) to ensure these responsibilities are met:

1. Be clear about its responsibilities;
2. Assess the effectiveness of help being provided to children and their families, including early help;
3. Ensure children and young people are effectively safeguarded;
4. Local partnerships are clear about where services and practice needs improvement and how resulting action plans will lead to sustainable improvements;
5. Learn from experience, both good and problematic;
6. Improve services and outcomes for children and young people.

# BBSCB Commitment to Learning and Improvement

LSCBs can only do this if every individual and every agency puts children at the centre, works collaboratively to common standards, and that any changes made are informed by evidence, understanding of local need and thorough examination of the right information.

BBSCB is committed to a culture of continuous learning and improvement and through this framework will ensure that:

* reviews are conducted regularly, and not only on cases which meet statutory criteria, considering what has happened but also why, and taking action to learn from findings;
* we make effective use of the richness of the qualitative and quantitative intelligence that is already within the local area;
* a proportionate approach to performance management and quality assurance is maintained which assures us that early help and safeguarding is effective, but makes the most of opportunities for a whole area approach of analysis of particular themes and issues (such as Neglect);
* challenge is provided to front line practice in all agencies in the local area as well as leadership, governance and guidance, which is evidence based;
* actions will be monitored and ensure they result in lasting improvements to safeguarding and early help services.
* there is transparency and accountability to the public as well as the professional world.

Whilst some aspects of this framework build on existing practice, we want to improve transfer of learning and it’s impact and in developing this framework, there is an opportunity to consider further how we learn and find out how we can ensure that learning from evidence and reviews can be most effectively embedded in practice.

In essence, we are committed to knowing:

* Are we doing the right things?
* Are we making a difference?

# Roles and Responsibilities

BBSCB will ensure that the framework is monitored and quality assured through its newly formed Learning and Improvement Standing Group of the Board. This will replace the previous joint performance management sub group with Central Bedfordshire. This group will commission a number of task and finish groups or work streams and when necessary the serious case review panel.

In addition to BBSCB’s responsibility for children and young people in Bedford Borough, we will ensure cost effectiveness and collaborative working with neighbouring areas and Safeguarding Children Boards on common topics with shared task and finish groups or work as appropriate.

Whilst the responsibilities of different parts of the Board and it’s partners are outlined below, it is expected that everyone will contribute to provision, analysis of a full range of evidence to demonstrate that practice is informed, modified and sustainably improved by data, feedback, research and intelligence about the quality of services and the experiences of children, young people and families who use them.

**3.1 Learning and Improvement Standing Group**

The purpose of the BBSCB Learning and Improvement Standing Group is to manage the provision, analysis and dissemination of the range of evidence to an agreed annual plan:

* Review and embed the performance and quality assurance work stream of the 2013-16 Business plan;
* Develop challenging and rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluating the impact of services on safeguarding primarily through S11, multi-agency and thematic audits;
* Agree core indicators that ensure that the BBSCB are clear who the vulnerable children of Bedford are;
* Collect, analyse performance information in relation to all aspects of safeguarding, identifying themes and areas requiring action and report these quarterly to the BBSCB according to forward plan;
* Through the Serious Case Review (SCR) and other multi agency reviews and audits and Child Death Overview (CDOP) processes, use appropriate methodology to assess how the actions of professionals are influenced by the organisations and systems in which they are working. To ensure that lessons learned from these reviews are implemented and positively impact on the improvement of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
* Share best practice by bringing together expertise in different bodies, endorsing and quality assuring training and creating effective ways of disseminating learning to the multi agency workforce.

3.2 The Board

The responsibility of the Board is well defined within Working Together. Their role through the learning and improvement framework is to be assured through a range of evidence that policies and service provision is based on robust evidence of need and best practice; safeguarding and early help in the local area are effective; and there is continuous learning and improvement.

The responsibility of all agencies which make up the Board and Board members is to:

* ensure provision of good quality information across the ten elements of the framework from their organisation in a timely manner;
* ensure sufficient time is given prior to each meeting and during meetings to consider any reports or information presented;
* participate in meeting discussions in a manner which provides appropriate challenge and support without blame;
* ensure they feedback to relevant people and gain support within their own organisation;
* undertake any actions agreed.

3.3 Other BBSCB sub groups

Sub groups of the Board cannot work in isolation and there will be some areas of shared work or focus. Having agreed methods of communication and understanding will ensure evidence is shared and triangulated, and groups are able to contribute to the annual plan effectively. These are essential elements of a learning and improvement framework. For example, training data from the workforce group may be considered alongside audits and performance analysis to determine whether training has made a difference and vice versa.

3.4 Information and Quality Assurance Officers

Staff within partner agencies will provide timely robust information (qualitative or quantitative) together with operational supporting commentary as agreed, ensuring the Board is aware of any changes to performance indicators or reporting in their agency which may affect information required by the Board, and to offer suggested alternative intelligence which may better support the needs of the Board in undertaking their role in assessing effectiveness of early help and safeguarding.

3.5 BBSCB Independent Chair

The Independent Chair will ensure that the Learning and Improvement Framework is working effectively, and any non-compliance is investigated so that support or challenge can be provided as needed.

# 3.6 Overall Structure

# A diagram of how the structure fits together is provided overleaf.

**Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board – Structure for Learning & Improvement**

**BEDFORD BOROUGH STRATEGIC GROUPS**

**HWB / CHILD HEALTH AND WELL BEING GROUP**

**CCG**

**CSP (SAFER COMMUNITIES DELIVERY BOARD**

Data, assurance reports, shared agenda items

**BEDFORD BOROUGH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN STRATEGIC BOARD**

**Independent Chair: Jenny Myers**

Annual Report

Business Plan

Regular agenda items at meetings

**BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON CHILD DEATH OVERVIEW PANEL**

**Chair: Gerry Taylor**

Analysis of trends

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Training evaluation, workforce data, skills audits

**HEALTH**

LAC & CP assessments, audit reports

**EDUCATION**

Analysis of trends, admission data

**EVIDENCE FROM PRACTICE, ANNUAL OR OTHER REPORTS**

* Performance Data
* Single and Multi-Agency Audits
* Thematic audits, analysis and reviews
* Section 11 audits
* Section 175/157 audits
* SCRs
* CDOP
* LADO
* Private Fostering
* C

**DOMESTIC ABUSE PARTNERSHIP**

Data and Trend Analysis

**LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT STANDING GROUP**

**Independent Chair**

Regular meetings, reports to LSCB and wider communication

**SERIOUS/COMPLEX CASE REVIEW PANEL**

**(AS AND WHEN BASIS)**

**Chair: Jenny Myers**

Detailed learning

**PAN BEDFORDSHIRE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & MISSINH STARTEGIC GROUP**

**Chair: Karena Thomas**

Data and Trend Analysis

**PRACTITIONERS FORUM**

# The Learning and Improvement Framework

There are ten elements to the framework which are interconnected, providing the evidence which will help us to fulfill our responsibilities:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Case Reviews | 1. Serious Case Reviews |
| 1. Child death reviews |
| 1. Multi agency practice/partnership reviews (including reviews of child protection incidents which fall below threshold for SCR) |
| Audits and Data | 1. Section 11 audits |
| 1. Single agency audit & performance data |
| 1. Multi-agency audits |
| 1. Performance information to the Board |
| 1. Themed reports |
| Feedback | 1. Feedback from the workforce and workforce development |
| 1. Feedback from children and families and communities |

Further description and purpose of these are described below.

| **Element** | **Description and Purpose** | **Reporting and**  **Timescale** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Serious Case Reviews** | To assure the Board that recommendations arising from the lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews are implemented and positively impact on the improvement of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. | Update to BBSCB as part of half yearly performance report |
| **Child Death Review Data** | To regularly update the Board on performance in numbers and analysis of preventable deaths of children and identify recommendations for action to reduce the number of preventable deaths | Annual full report to LSCB and notifications raised as required to LSCB. |
| **Partnership reviews** | Criteria for SCR considered but deemed not to reach the threshold.  Where referral gives rise to a concern around multi agency working and lessons need to be learned.  Timeframe of 8-12 weeks. | Update to BBSCB as cases arise.  Recommendations to BBSCB |
| **Section 11 Audits and annual reviews** | Self-assessment tool designed in partnership with Central Bedfordshire LSCB. Designed to assist LSCB partners to self-evaluate their own policies, procedures and activities in relation to safeguarding as defined in Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.  Helps agencies to reflect upon their practice, identify strengths and weaknesses and to develop an action plan to further enhance effectiveness. | Rolling bi annual programme of reports to BBSCB by partner agencies over 3 year cycle |
| **Section 175/157 Audits** | Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a statutory duty on the LEA, Governing Bodies of schools, and FE institutions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 157 of the same act places the same duty on Independent schools. Audit conducted by Safeguarding Learning and Quality Assurance(SLQA) Team and reported annually to Board via Learning & Improvement Group | Annual programme of audits.  Report to BBSCB |
| **Single Agency audits and data** | To assure the Board that members are monitoring their own Safeguarding practice effectively, this function provides independent scrutiny of targets and performance. Reports to the L&I group will identify any performance area which might be of concern to the Board, together with action being taken by the Agency. | Reports to BBSCB by single agency when requested |
| **CAF/Early Help Assessment Audits and data analysis** | To assure the board that multi-agency early help assessments are timely and effective in providing support to children and families. Number of audits per annum to be agreed. | Twice yearly update to Board via L&I group. |
| **Contact and referral audit (CRA) data** | Number to be agreed of cases selected at random per month to be audited by CYP managers. Findings and recommendations each month collated and reported by CYP quality assurance team. | Twice yearly update via L&I group as a standing agenda item |
| **Multi Agency Audits** | Bi-annual audits on at least six cases designed to assess the quality of work undertaken by all agencies where there are concerns about children throughout all stages i.e. Early Help, Referral, Assessment, Planning, Review and Management oversight and recording or others. Identify any areas which are working well and areas requiring improvement in practice or procedures, identifying which would benefit from a Pan Bedfordshire approach. | Annual report via L&I group to BBSCB. |
| **Peer reviews** | Learning from a range of planned peer reviews in conjunction with, or complementing audit activity within Bedford Borough, partner agencies. Learn from other organisations/areas peer reviews. This may include LGA peer reviews, regional peer sector-led reviews or other methods. | Various meetings ongoing throughout the year. |
| **Performance Data** | To regularly update the Board on areas of performance which the Board has identified as priorities for the year and other key data. Performance Information Specification (listing current data and what it may mean) revised in Sept 2013/4 in line with Munro recommendations, revised Working Together 2013 and current Board priorities. | Quarterly performance report to Board from L&I Group of key indicators, analysis and exception reporting.  Annual report to H&WB. |
| **Effective commissioning and learning from projects** | Ensure that any work commissioned by the Board (funded or non-funded) will have clear outline of work, resources required and plan to achieve our desired outcomes to an agreed timescale. Monitor during the project; evaluate at the end of the project; and ensure learning is taken forward into future work we commission. | Progress monitored by L&I group. |
| **Thematic Audits or performance reports** | To assure the Board on areas of particular concern or emerging themes identified by the Board from performance information.  Different mechanisms in which allow themes or current issues to emerge, which may lead to the need for a thematic audit or analysis report.  These are:-   * BBSCB network events with practitioners/front line staff - 2 times a year * Section 11 Audits and annual reviews/ * Complaints and inspection data | Progress reported to L&I group.  Findings reported to BBSCB. |
| **Listening and Learning from workforce and workforce development** | Gather views of workforce from all agencies through variety of means.  For example, **Pan-Bedfordshire Network Meetings**  This is a suggestion to be agreed by other LSCB/LA partners in Bedfordshire - event once a year primarily aimed at practitioners to share good practice, learning form reviews and audits and get feedback from the front line. The aim is to disseminate information and gain an understanding of current operational issues and safeguarding concerns to inform priorities across Bedfordshire.  Workforce development – training and workforce development activity and evaluation including impact on practice to be provided by Workforce Group | Reported to L&I group for assimilation to Board as appropriate. |
| **Listening and learning from child/ professional/ community** | To ensure the voice of the child and community is heard and we know children feel safe and their needs are met. Collection and consideration of existing feedback from single agencies, in audits, and any multi-agency methods as appropriate. | Reported to L&I group for assimilation to Board as appropriate. |
| **Emerging Issues Log** | Identifying emerging issues and horizon scanning, to manage risk and issues across the local area and all partners. | Reported to every Board meeting for review/action. |

# Case Reviews

BBSCB will use a formal panel process for Serious Case Reviews and decide on other types of case reviews, practitioner forums or audits through the Learning and Improvement Standing Group. The Board itself may direct a review based on the outcome of reporting or emerging information.

For cases that are considered for Serious Case Reviews, the final decision if a case meets the Serious Case Review criteria will rest with the Scab’s Independent Chair. Decisions on whether to initiate a Serious Case Review should be normally made within one month of the Board being notified of the incident triggering the threshold and a panel constituted of core members will be set up and appropriate additional membership of the Panel agreed. Additional guidance and support for Serious Case Reviews is provided through BBSCB’s SCR Policy and SCIE training (October 2013).

For decision making on other forms of review, the decision will sit with the chair of the originating group, using existing reporting mechanisms to inform the Board of sub-group business.

It is the responsibility of all chairs and the membership of their groups to ensure that the review does not duplicate other processes and adheres to the principles outlined previously in this document.

Whilst the type of review conducted may differ, all will be conducted in a fair, impartial, thorough, and transparent way, and be undertaken in line with guidance provided in Working Together 2013.

# Quality Assurance and Audit

All front line practitioners, managers and service users should be aware of the required standards expected and to ensure they are provided. Supervision is one way in which quality assurance is checked.

Activities like auditing should not be seen as once off events but as part of a continuous cycle of planning, acting, doing and reviewing or from the learning perspective, identifying, capturing, sharing and using the new or refined knowledge. All elements of BBSCB activity, including auditing should inform and be informed by all information sources and elements.

Multi-agency audits should be solution-focused and conducted in a spirit of open learning with the intention of further improving outcomes for children. Action points from audit will be rooted in practice, so any changes arising are more likely to be owned and complied with by practitioners. Using audit as a cycle of improvement and not as a way of allocating blame will also have a beneficial effect on everyday interactions between practitioners from different agencies and will encourage challenge on ‘live cases’ to take place in an open minded way.

BBSCB will be the main commissioner of multi-agency audits, particularly for audits of Child Protection, Child in Need and Early Intervention cases. However, it is recognised that other Boards and people may also commission audits and BBSCB will try not to repeat what others have done but will gather the learning from existing audits undertaken.

A regular programme of multi-agency audits will be established each year and publicised and audit priorities will be identified in accordance with issues affecting the local area or areas raised through routine performance monitoring.

The performance and quality assurance sub-group will receive, analyse and provide information on audits as part of its regular performance report to the Board.

A record of audits undertaken and their effectiveness will be kept centrally by the BBSCB Business Manager to ensure quantity of audits, areas covered, results and learning from audits is monitored and reported to the Board, and they are revisited to establish if improvement made. This will include regular single agency audits and multi-agency audits carried out by the BBSCB and may include information on the theme of the audit, participating agencies, where the information is shared, resulting recommendations and evidence of changes to practice arising out of the audits.

# Performance data

In addition to case reviews and audit activity, we will gather and utilise a range of other data to assist in measuring quantity and quality:

* Effort: inputs including workforce and resource information (including training, skills), service/support availability; outputs such as how much did we do and how well did we do it.
* Effect/Outcomes: is anyone better off and ‘what difference have we made?’

An example of these ‘quadrants’ from Outcomes Based Accountability[[3]](#footnote-3) is provided below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | QUANTITY | QUALITY |
| EFFORT | **How much did we do?**   * Number of CAFs * Number of referrals to children’s social care * Number of children subject of CP Plan * Number of SCRs | **How well did we do it?**   * % of complaints * % multi-agency cases rated as good or better * % workforce who have received CP training by BBSCB |
| EFFECT/ OUTCOME | **Is Anyone better off?** | |
| * Rate of A&E attendance caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries. * Number of care leavers in employment, education or training | * % of families reporting improvement at the end of CAF. * % re-referrals to children’s social care |
| LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT | **What can we learn, how will we share this, what will we do to improve and when will we know we have?**   * Target setting and monitoring * Action plans * Communications from the Board to relevant partners, public or other via different methods, including web, workshops, dissemination via Board members * Follow up audits or activity planned | |

Sources of this data may be in the form of:

* key performance indicators and other statistics
* Listening to and learning from the workforce, receivers of services, and communities
* themed reports on a specific topic which include a variety of information. Appendix D provides a set of questions and information required in developing the discussions and report and learning from it.

We will consider a range of data and for qualitative and quantitative information look at trend (what is our performance compared to one, two, three years ago); forecast/target – where do we think we will be or want to be and by when and tell the story behind the data.

Appendix A provides an ***overview of BBSCB current priorities*** and Appendix B provides an ***Performance Information Specification*** describing current key performance indicators and other supporting intelligence, together with challenge questions and hypotheses for further investigation, for BSCB to consider as appropriate. These two documents will be amended as annually, as priorities and indicators change.

# Bringing the elements together

On a quarterly basis, the Learning and Improvement Standing Group will produce for the Board:

1. a scorecard with commentary from relevant service areas and an overview of current performance.
2. a summary report to the Board of any activity across the ten elements of the framework, including case reviews and audits in the period on an ad hoc basis or from the forward plan, and recommendations for action. This may also include any performance issues from individual agencies escalated to the Learning and Improvement Standing Group (exception reporting).

A diagram of the process is provided below;

# Success Criteria – what does good look like?

Knowing whether the right outcomes have been achieved and the right quality of service provided can only be measured if there is a ‘desired picture’ for each service/content area which can be compared against the ten elements of the framework.

‘Good’ may look different depending on where the organisation or service’s current performance is, and whilst there may be minimum acceptable standards, setting targets or success criteria will largely depend on:

* minimum national/legislative standards and requirements
* historic performance and trends
* performance of similar/other organisations or services (benchmarking)
* forecasting or ‘horizon scanning’ what is likely to happen in the organisation or local area that may affect future performance (e.g. changes in resources, economy, population, legislation).

BBSCB will strive, when assessing performance and setting improvement targets, to take into account national and local factors such as Ofsted inspection judgements, examples of good practice, and learning from high-performing LSCBs and individual agencies.

Reviews of individual cases, or an audit on a number of cases, can also be selected on the basis of good practice, to help identify learning, disseminate the learning and embed into practice the characteristics that lead to good outcomes for children and their families.

For our current evidence base, expectations are included in the specification in Appendix B but it is envisaged this will be reviewed annual to ensure there is a focus on outcomes and continuous improvement.

# Sharing Learning and Achieving Improvement

The framework will be reviewed at least annually or when new legislation and key drivers come into being. We will consider what changes are emerging in the next 12-18 months to ensure the framework reflects those aspects that BBSCB should be driving and the local area is prepared for changes through the BBSCB.

Our processes supporting the framework will be based on robust evidence, lessons learnt and key messages and we will share findings of reviews and our analysis of performance, and assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding and early help with professionals.

We will promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement through:

* Feedback from workforce and front line practitioners, and dissemination to them through workforce development activities and training
* Written communication providing knowledge transfer such as ‘One minute briefings’ to all agencies staff from the L&I Standing Group

# How We Will Implement Our

**APPENDIX A**

# Learning and Improvement Framework

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Action by (who) | Timescale |
| 1 | Gather information from all BBSCB partners what their current arrangements are for performance management, and data they collect under the current priorities. | LISG | End October 2013 |
| 2 | Ensure capacity required to support BBSCB Business Manager in performance management and QA functions, co-ordination of the L&I framework. Relevant expertise and capacity is provided from Bedford Borough Council strategic services. | J Myers | End October 2013 |
| 3 | Multi-agency information leads workshop with Central Beds and Luton – partners together to look at Ofsted requirements, LG Inform, information sharing, intelligence about the local area and from each agency. | 3 Pan-Bedfordshire LSCB Chairs | End November 2013 |
| 4. | Create a ‘data development agenda’ – of intelligence that would be useful but is not yet available. Initially, this may include district councils, housing, and child poverty. | TBA |  |
| 5 | Agree key measures, including with partners providing the information, and initiate data collection in an agreed scorecard and report format for the Board. | LISG | End October 2013 |
| 6 | Plan wider communications with other groups and agencies such as MAPPA and Cafcass to tell them about the LSCB performance management framework and open channels for sharing information. | LISG | End March 2014 |
| 7 | Populate Forward Plan with other Boards/groups such as Early Help Board. | LISG | End December 2013 |
| 8 | Consider pan-Bedfordshire core common SCR procedures followed by individual methodology to assist partners covering more than one board | LISG | December LISG 2013 |
| 9 | Collate from all agencies their current audit plans and audits recently undertaken so effort and focus is not duplicated, and BBSCB plan for auditing is targeted. | LISG | December LISG 2013 |
| 9 | Agree programme of multi-agency audits and QA timetable with partners and peer review support where appropriate. Set up method for collecting/recording audit information centrally | LISG | December LISG 2013 |
| 10 | Sign off by Board and commence implementation of framework. | Strategic Board | 12th December 2013 |

**Key Measures:**

* Improvement in key measures in quarterly performance reports

**Key Measures:**

* All actions in BBSCB business plan are on track or completed to timescale.
* Robust annual report produced which evidences improvement
* % Board members attending meetings in line with ToR for each group.

**Supporting Evidence:**

* Section 11 audits
* Data about the board (cost, attendance, views of workforce)
* Inspections
* Effectiveness of SCRs and reviews undertaken.

**Supporting Evidence:**

* Numbers/rates of CAF, CP, LAC, DV incidents, Offenders,
* Referral and assessment data analysis
* Audits
* Early help data

**Supporting Evidence:**

* Audits – views and wishes
* Analysis of performance data by specific groups
* Complaints analysis

**Key Measures:**

* Early Help measure (to be defined)
* % Re-referrals to child’s social care
* Number of children subject of a CP plan

**Key Measures:**

* % audits undertaken which state the views and wishes of the child have been included
* Reduction in complaints in each agency

**2013-16 Priorities**

**Supporting Evidence:**

* Analysis of audit programme and outcome of learning.
* Improvement in key measures in quarterly performance reports

**1: Are we improving**

**efficiency and effectiveness**

**of the Board to ensure focus**

**on local need and**

**safeguarding**

**priorities?**

**4: Is Performance**

**Management and**

**QA effective and an**

**integral part of learning**

**and improvement?**

**3: Is the voice**

**of the child heard**

**across agencies,**

**their wishes and feelings**

**asked for and specific**

**needs of young people**

**responded to, including**

**CSE?**

**2: Are there**

**multi-agency**

**agreed thresholds**

**for intervention**

**and is Early Help effective?**

APPENDIX A

**How will we know?**

1. <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Sections 11(4), Section 14 and Section 16 of The Children Act 2004 and Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Mark Friedman, *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough.*

   www.resultsaccountability.com [↑](#footnote-ref-3)