

# Principles for Audit

## Evaluating multi-agency working in Kirklees

### 1 Introduction

*Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2010) provides for Local Safeguarding Children Boards to evaluate multi-agency working through joint audits of case files. Multi-agency audits provide an opportunity to consider the involvement of different agencies, and identify the quality of practice and lessons to be shared in terms of both multi-agency and multidisciplinary practice.

In Kirklees, this work will be of particular relevance to the:

- Evaluation and Effectiveness workstream, given their responsibility for monitoring member agencies effectiveness in terms of their work to safeguard and promote welfare of children and young people; and achieving consistently high standards in safeguarding through evaluation and promoting continuous improvement; and
- Serious Case Review workstream – given their responsibility for establishing a means of monitoring and auditing the actions of all agencies against recommendations and intended outcomes.

As such, it is considered appropriate for these workstreams to agree general principles for undertaking audits of case files, and establishing task and finish groups to undertake a specific audit.

### 2 General Principles

The Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB):

- recognises that partner agencies undertake their own audits of practice and will focus on multi-agency and multidisciplinary interventions. Any issues identified for a single agency during the course of that audit will be reported back to that agency;
- recognises that managing performance of particular staff members is the sole responsibility of their employing agency and will, wherever possible, ensure that audits focus on systemic issues rather than individual practice;
- will ensure that audits:
  - have a clear focus and clearly defined terms of reference;
  - focus on current practice, considering interventions that have occurred within the last 12 months (maximum). Precise timeframes will be established by terms of reference;
  - consider interventions that are within the remit of Kirklees agencies; and

- include a focus on the welfare of the child, other children living in the household, timeliness, communication and engagement with families or other significant adults.

### **3 Establishing an Area of Practice to be considered for Audit**

Audits may be identified through Serious Case Reviews; S11 audit; Child Death Overview process; other workstreams; and/or other areas as identified by the Board. The KSCB Unit will develop a programme of audits, which will be approved by the Evaluation and Effectiveness workstream.

### **4 Establishing a Task and Finish Group**

The programme of audit will enable the workstream to consider which agencies should be represented on the task and finish group for each audit. Each group will include at least one officer from the KSCB Unit.

The relevant agency will be asked to nominate a suitable representative to participate in a task and finish group as required. Staff participating in the Task and Finish Groups will need allocated time to attend meetings and undertake work on behalf of the group to ensure that audits are completed within agreed timescales.

### **5 Establishing a Terms of Reference for the Audit**

The Task and Finish group will establish a clear terms of reference for the audit. This will include, as a minimum:

- The goal of the audit – what is the group trying to find out about multi-agency working?
- What specific aspect of the intervention will be considered? To include, as a minimum, a focus on the welfare of the child, timeliness, communication and engagement with families.
- Which agencies will be asked to provide information? What information will be required?
- How many cases will be considered?
- Who will be responsible for undertaking which tasks, including collating the final report for the Board?
- What is the timeframe for completing the audit?

### **6 Undertaking the Audit**

The Task and Finish Group will be required to meet and consider cases as a Group.

It is proposed that audits consider a random sample of cases. The Task and Finish Group will need to determine how many cases they wish to consider as part of the audit and which agencies will be approached for information. They can then ask agencies to provide a list of all relevant cases within a particular time period. The

group will then need to randomly select the appropriate number of cases from within this list.

It is recognised that this process may identify some cases that require specific attention as a result of good practice or areas for development. The KSCB Unit has an established process for conducting Good Practice Reviews, and is currently developing a process for reviewing cases that do not meet the Serious Case Review criteria but may identify lessons for multi-agency working. This process will be developed in consultation with relevant workstreams and ultimately approved by the Board.

## **7 Audit Findings**

The findings of the audit will be collated and presented to the Evaluation and Effectiveness workstream for quality assurance purposes. Quality assured audit reports, which will include recommendations if appropriate, will then be shared with the Board and relevant workstreams.