



## Children's Safeguarding Board Practitioner Briefing

### Briefing Number 1: Section 11 Audit

#### Section 11 Audit - What is it?

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough safeguarding children board carry out a bi annual section 11 (Children's Act 2004) audit, to ascertain if agencies are safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Agencies were asked to complete and submit a self-assessment section 11 audit tool and alongside this, practitioners of those agencies, were asked to complete an anonymous survey (Survey Monkey) to gather their views and thoughts about some of those questions contained within the audit. Overall 1042 people responded to the survey. Both the completed audits and the results of the survey were then examined in greater detail during a 'Section 11 Challenge Day', which took place in November 2017; allowing agencies to share good areas of practice and to effectively challenge each other on those areas which need improving upon.

#### What did we find out?

- **Adults.** An agency's provision maybe adult specific but adults often have children living within their household and we all have a 'duty' to safeguard children and young people. Working either directly or indirectly with children, young people and adults at risk, as professionals, we should all be trained to be aware of potential safeguarding issues and know what to do if we see them (i.e. make appropriate referrals).
- Agencies such as; the voluntary sector, licencing, housing, leisure and district councils work with families and need to be aware of how to safeguard children and young people. These agencies are a valuable source of safeguarding information and are often our eyes and ears of what's happening in a child's life.
- Agencies do have **clear guidance and policies on safeguarding children**, though 5% of people who completed the survey, did not know where to find them. Agencies need to keep policies / procedures up to date and accessible for staff. As a practitioner find out where your agency's safeguarding policies / procedures are stored are they available on the agency / internal intranet?
- All agencies have a strategic **safeguarding lead**, though 10% of staff did not know who their safeguarding lead was to go to for information, advice and support. Find out who your safeguarding lead is and what their contact numbers and details are, speak to them if you have a safeguarding concern. Agencies could post safeguarding lead details in staff working areas or confirm where they can be easily found electronically.
- Both the section 11 audit and the staff survey informed us that those practitioners who work with children and families and may have to deal with safeguarding issues are able to **access supervision** for support. It is acknowledged that supervision for agencies can take different forms and for some partners, within the section 11 audit, they identified that they are working on improving access to supervision.
- Although, the section 11 tool and the staff survey supported that agencies have a commitment to **interagency working and understand the roles and responsibilities** of other organisations; it was identified that; there are some practitioners who state that either 'they' or 'other's' are not aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Working together is an important part of keeping children safe; practitioners and managers need to be; trained and aware of what their roles and responsibilities are and to find out what their partner agencies do to safeguard children and young people.

- The majority of agencies and staff, who completed the survey, reported that they felt **confident** in identifying the **signs and indicators of child abuse** and knew how **report a safeguarding concern**. If you are unsure access safeguarding training and utilise your safeguarding lead for support.
- Agencies and staff know how to **escalate their concerns** if they are not happy with how a child protection / safeguarding case is being dealt with. Find out where your agency / safeguarding boards escalation policy is situated.
- All agencies who work with children and families should; have an 'Acceptable User Policy', for all members of staff to adhere to regarding the use of equipment and technology and ensure that all staff are aware / trained about **online safety** and how to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. Both policies and training should be updated annually to take into account new technological developments.
- Agencies need to support staff to be culturally competent and to have confidence when working with children and families. **Cultural competence** is wider than one protected characteristic (i.e. includes disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, mental health etc).(see Briefing 2)
- **Voice of the child**. Practitioners need to find out what 'life is like for the child' and to either be **professionally curious** by asking them or to observe the surroundings in which a family lives (i.e. how does the child react to parents). Being aware of child and adolescent development informs how best to communicate with a child and to adapt practice accordingly.
- Agencies stated that **safeguarding training** is available for all staff, though 8% of staff said that they had not accessed safeguarding training over the past three years. Practitioners and managers need to ensure that they access safeguarding training to keep up to date on local and national priorities and referral routes. 20 % of staff stated that their agency's safeguarding training had not contained information about local thresholds. Single agency training should refer to local threshold documents and how to make appropriate early help and child protection referrals.
- Most agencies have a policy / procedure for handling and recording **allegations of abuse against staff** and volunteers'; though 5% of staff *did not know* how to report concerns about a member of staff. Practitioners and managers need to know where to find policies that contain information regarding the Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO**) and understand how to report any concerns.
- Agencies state that **information on safeguarding** children is shared appropriately, though 7% of staff, who completed the survey, did not feel confident about sharing information particularly when consent had not been given. Staff need to be aware of; the seven golden rules for information sharing and advice written within local threshold documents.

#### **Further Information:**

Safeguarding Board Websites:

<http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/children-board/>

<https://www.cambslscb.co.uk/>

Safeguarding Training:

<http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/availabletraining/>

<https://www.cambslscb.co.uk/multi-agency-training/>