

1 Summary

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on 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.

One of the roles of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) and North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adult Board (NYSAB) is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and to advise organisations on ways to improve. All organisations are therefore asked to complete a biannual self-assessment audit to provide evidence of how they comply with Section 11 when carrying out their day-to-day business.

2 Methodology

The audit process was completed using two different tools. The first being a review tool for those partners who completed the audit in 2021-22; the second being a full audit for those who did not participate in the previous audit. The review tool comprised of two questions.

- what changes have taken place since the last audit?
- identify areas for improvement.

Agencies are asked to assess whether they met the criteria 'fully', 'in place with some areas for development' or 'not in place – action required'. A total of 21 audits were returned and analysed, 16 being review audits and 5 being full audits.

3 What is working well?

Of all the audits that were submitted and reviewed, no partner identified any area as 'not in place – action required'.

- Partner organisations shared they have strengthened safeguarding leadership structures to ensure effective quality assurance and governance is in place which includes procedures for escalation, regular case file auditing and clear reporting procedures.
- Partners have developed safeguarding supervision practice to include more "face to face" sessions and reflective peer support sessions with an increased focus on staff wellbeing.
- It was found that partners have enhanced safeguarding guidance including developing their policies on equality, diversity and inclusion, safer recruitment and Persons in a Position of Trust (PiPoT).
- Partners shared mandatory safeguarding training is delivered, evaluated and reviewed against local and national learning with some training taking place virtually and some "face to face".
- Most partner organisations have developed channels or platforms to capture the voice of children, young people and adults, and have used this to shape the delivery of services.
- Most partner organisations gave assurance of multi-agency partnership working including participation, engagement, collaborative working across the Board and Partnership in North Yorkshire to deliver on key agendas for safeguarding children, adults and community safety. Many partner organisations stated that multi-agency working was embedded in safeguarding training delivery.

4 What are the areas for improvement?

- Assurance is required regarding the content of 'in house' and commissioned training delivery. In addition, some partner organisations stated they wanted to know more about what partnership training was available for them to promote to the wider workforce. (See recommendation 1).
- Individual agencies capture the voices of children, young people and adults however this isn't always shared with partners. Sharing this would gain valuable insight from practice and highlight any emerging themes/trends that are captured by the voice of people with lived experience. (See recommendation 2).
- Several partners have identified the need to embed training on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards within their respective organisations (DoLS). (See recommendation 3).
- Learning from audits needs to be further shared and embedded across the workforce (See recommendation 4).
- Several partners have stated that they want to promote multi-agency safeguarding policy and procedures that are on the NYSCP and NYSAB respective websites, to the wider workforce. (See recommendation 5).

5 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been shared with the NYSCP Executive and Practice and Learning Subgroup (PLS).

1. There is a need for greater understanding across the partnership in respect of what safeguarding training is being delivered and the impact this training is having on practice across the workforce. It is recommended that NYSCP and NYSAB develop a reporting structure for agencies to provide further assurance as to the quality and impact of safeguarding training at their respective sub-groups. Safeguarding training will be promoted via social media, e-bulletins and websites.
2. Hearing from children, young people and adults should form part of standard safeguarding practice and should be used to develop strategic plans. Consideration as to how this practice can be enhanced will be given at the NYSCP and NYSAB respective sub-groups.
3. Promotion of North Yorkshire Council's training and learning offer for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) training to partner organisations.
4. Learning from individual partner audits should be fed back into partnership subgroups and agencies should provide assurance that learning from multi-agency audits is fed back into individual agencies.
5. Key updates made to safeguarding policy and procedure via the NYSCP and NYSAB are promoted to single agency workforce e.g., through bulletin, intranet pages etc. Continue to liaise with partners regarding the most effective and impactful ways to share information.

6 Next steps

- A review of any single agency actions that were identified in the audit has been completed, and any actions that require support from the partnership will be brought to the Practice and Learning Subgroup for consideration.
- Learning from the audit will be disseminated to partners via this briefing and through a NYSCP business unit updates masterclass.
- A task and finish group will be established to design the new audit tool that will be completed in 2025.

7 Resources

Children Act 2004 (legislation.gov.uk) (section 11)

Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) (chapter 4)

There are a range of national and local resources and guidance which can support professionals via the NYSCP website:

NYSCP (safeguardingchildren.co.uk) Procedures, Practice Guidance and One Minute Guides

NYSCP (safeguardingchildren.co.uk) Training

NYSCP (safeguardingchildren.co.uk) Learning for Professionals