North Yorkshire
Safeguarding Children Partnership

Section 11 Assurance Briefing (2024 - 2025)

What is the Section 11 Audit?

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Section 11 audit is a biennial assurance process that assesses how effectively partners are meeting this duty in practice.

Methodology

The audit assessed organisational compliance across nine thematic safeguarding areas through structured self-assessment returns. Agencies rated each criterion as 'fully met', 'partially met', or 'not met', supported by narrative evidence and improvement actions. Responses were analysed quantitatively via RAG rating, and qualitatively through thematic review of narrative submissions.

Of the 25 agencies invited to respond, 23 submitted a return, giving a response rate of 92%. In the remaining two cases, non-submission had been confirmed in advance.

What is working well?

The audit shows strong safeguarding arrangements across North Yorkshire and York, particularly in procurement, leadership, safer working practice, information sharing, the voice of the child, and workforce development.

- **Procurement, contracting and commissioning.** Safeguarding appears to be well embedded within procurement, contracting and commissioning arrangements. Ninety per cent of respondents assessed this area as fully met, with partner organisations describing safeguarding requirements being routinely reflected in commissioning frameworks, contract management and business planning
- **Leadership, governance and accountability.** Leadership and governance arrangements are strong across the partnership. All respondents reported a named senior executive or equivalent lead for safeguarding, and almost all identified a designated safeguarding lead or an equivalent governance arrangement. This is reflected in practice, including examples where safeguarding updates are routinely provided to trust boards through established senior leadership structures.
- **Policies, safer working and recruitment.** Partner organisations demonstrate a strong and consistent approach to safeguarding policies, safer working practice and recruitment. Returns indicate universal or near-universal compliance across key areas such as whistleblowing, management of allegations, information governance and safer recruitment. Where gaps were identified, these were limited in number and accompanied by clear improvement actions.

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- **Information sharing and data security.** Information sharing and data security are well established across most partner organisations. Respondents evidenced secure record keeping, good GDPR compliance, and a strong understanding of consent, lawful information sharing and risk assessment. In some organisations, this is reinforced through supervision, newsletters, induction and mandatory training, helping to promote consistent practice across the workforce.
- **Voice of the child.** Partner organisations shared strong evidence that the views of children are being actively sought and used to inform practice. Ninety per cent of respondents assessed this area as fully met, with examples including youth councils, surveys, accessible materials, interpreters and communication aids. In several cases, children's feedback has contributed to practical service improvements, such as new activities, quieter spaces and more accessible information.
- **Training and workforce development.** Workforce development is another area of strength. Mandatory safeguarding training is widely embedded across the partnership, with overall compliance reported at 95%. Most respondents described role-appropriate training at induction and at regular intervals, alongside evidence of ongoing review, quality assurance and continuous professional development.

What are the areas for improvement?

- **Governance, information sharing and escalation.** Although governance and information sharing arrangements are strong across much of the partnership, some services still need to strengthen designated lead arrangements, formalise information-sharing processes and ensure escalation procedures are fully embedded in day-to-day practice. In many cases, partner organisations have already identified these issues and are progressing actions to improve oversight, formalise local arrangements and strengthen workforce confidence.
- **Workforce capability and oversight.** The main workforce challenge is to strengthen consistency in training, supervision and contractor oversight. While mandatory training is widely in place, some respondents identified the need to improve access to multi-agency learning, strengthen quality assurance and better evidence impact. Supervision arrangements can also vary in some organisations, particularly for contractors and volunteers, however improvement work is already underway.
- **Preparing for adulthood, homelessness and co-production.** Responses indicate that transitions and homelessness arrangements are often viewed positively, but evidence suggests that some pathways remain informal and would benefit from greater formalisation. Similarly, consultation with children and adults is well established, but co-production is not yet consistently embedded in service design and decision-making. Partner organisations have recognised these areas and have already set out actions to strengthen practice.

Get in touch

If you have any further questions, or requests for additional resources or training please email us at nyscp@northyorks.gov.uk

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Reccomendations

The following recommendations have been shared with the NYSCP Executive and the Practice and Learning Subgroup (PLS). Learning from the audit will be disseminated to partners through this briefing and via NYSCP Business Unit updates.

1. Information sharing and data security. Partner organisations should strengthen and standardise information sharing practice by ensuring all relevant agencies are signed up to the North Yorkshire and City of York Information Sharing Agreement or have an agreed local addendum in place where national restrictions apply.
2. Training, competence and workforce development. Partner organisations should ensure that all staff working with children, including volunteers, contractors, apprentices, interns and agency workers, complete mandatory safeguarding training, with compliance monitored and recorded. The NYSCP Business Unit will continue to promote training, learning events and safeguarding resources to support consistent messaging across the partnership.
3. Preparing for adulthood, and homelessness pathways. Partner organisations should continue to develop transitional safeguarding protocols and formalise multi-agency transition pathways so that staff can recognise and escalate concerns at key transition points. The NYSCP will support this through links to the Safer Transitions Subgroup, shared learning and partnership updates.

Next Steps
The actions will be monitored through the PLS, (Practice and Learning Subgroup) and workplan for assurance.

Resources & Further Information

Children Act (2004), Section 11

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)

There is a range of both local and national guidance to support practitioners on the **NYSCP website** and **YouTube channel**

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