

Summary of section 11 standards - 75% compliance is regarded as being acceptable

1. Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding children.

85% compliance (overall)

There appears to be a high level of commitment to children's safeguarding across all agencies. Senior management appear to take their responsibilities seriously and 16 agencies reported a senior manager with ultimate responsibility for safeguarding children within their organisation. Those that did not name a senior manager will be required to do so as soon as possible.

2. A clear statement of the agency's responsibilities towards children is available to staff.

80% compliance (overall)

Only one agency reported that they did not have a current safeguarding children policy. Evidence was submitted by 7 agencies and of the agencies that had a current written policy, 83% reported their policy is reviewed on a regular basis and that staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities (4 provided evidence of this). Policies should be available and easily accessible to all frontline staff but it was unclear from the audit, how staff accessed policies and procedures within their organisation. 11 of the agencies who completed the audit had complaints and whistleblowing policies. 14 agencies stated that they had in place a current policy for managing allegations against staff. Evidence was uploaded in 10 cases. In light of the recent Lampard inquiry and its subsequent recommendations all agencies should have these policies as a measure of best practice.

3. A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

82% compliance (overall)

Accountability and governance arrangements appear to be clearly embedded within the majority of agencies particularly those that work predominantly with children, however even those agencies who work primarily with adults stated that they had performance review, appraisal and supervision policies in place which were compliant with national and local safeguarding children guidance. 10 agencies reported that staff supervision, appraisals and PDR's took place on an annual basis with 4 providing evidence. This suggests that the workforce is increasingly "thinking families" and is recognising the impact of parental stressors and behaviours on children and young people. Embedded lines of accountability ensure that staff members working with families are aware who to approach for support and supervision and that they recognise their own responsibilities around safeguarding children.

4. Service development takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare.

72% compliance (overall)

The overall score fell just below the adequate threshold. Whilst 13 agencies scored 75% and over, 2 agencies scored 50% and 1 at 25% in relation to service plans considering the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Safeguarding children should be considered in all service development as a way of ensuring that services benefit the whole family and are child and young person cognisant. Those agencies that scored low in this standard will require support to develop a culture of embedding safeguarding children into their service development programme and will be required to complete an action plan.

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5. Service development is informed by the views of children and families.

69% compliance (overall)

This standard scored below the adequate threshold overall. 13 agencies scored 75% and over, 2 agencies scored 50% and 1 agency scored 25%. 11 provided a written account and 4 provided evidence. Involving children in service development is a relatively new phenomenon and one which is not yet embedded into practice. The DSCB has taken a lead in involving children in the development of local services. They have arranged a board “takeover” day and involved them in the DSCB business planning workshop. This gave young people the opportunity to inform board members about what was important to them and how the board could work with agencies to ensure that children felt safe. This also contributed to the development of the DSCB priorities for 2015 to 2017. There was evidence of good practice from some agencies; however those who did not achieve an adequate rating will require support to involve children and young people in the development of services and will be required to complete an action plan.

6. Individual case decisions are informed by the views of children and families.

50% compliant (overall)

The percentage of compliance on this standard is somewhat erroneous and misleading. Some of the agencies who completed the audit are involved in commissioning rather than providing services directly and so the response and compliance rates may be skewed. For future audits it should be clear that this standard refers only to those agencies who undertake direct work with children and families. Despite this anomaly 8 agencies scored 75% and over, 4 agencies reported this is not applicable to their service, two agencies did not respond and 2 scored 50%. Of the agencies for whom this question was applicable and who responded, 7 provided some evidence, 2 being of a good standard. Further investigation will be required to determine which agencies scored 50% and offer support to them to ensure that case decision making is child and family focussed.

7. Effective interagency working enabling information sharing to service users.

69% compliance (overall)

The need for effective multi-agency working and information sharing in order to secure improved safeguarding outcomes is clearly stated in a number of reviews, policy documentation and statutory guidance. Sub optimal interagency working is highlighted in numerous serious case reviews which demonstrate the tragic consequences of poor multi-agency communication and collaboration. Within Dudley 10 agencies scored 75% and over in respect of children being made aware of their right to be safe, 4 scored 50% and 2 stated this is not applicable to their service. The very fact that the 2 agencies who reported that this did not apply to their services are members of the DSCB, will require further examination to determine what contact they have with children and families. 9 agencies gave an account of how they met this standard and three uploaded evidence. 12 agencies scored 75% and over, 4 scored 50% in relation to providing information in a format that can be easily understood by all service users. 10 gave a written account and two uploaded evidence. It is positive that agencies recognise the need to ensure that children and families are in receipt of appropriate information that they can understand.

Summary of section 11 standards - 75% compliance is regarded as being acceptable**8. Staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or in contact with children and families.****78% compliance (overall)**

All staff that come into contact with children and young people have a responsibility to safeguard them from harm. In order to fulfil those responsibilities good quality training is essential. Both multi agency and single agency training is delivered within Dudley. Under s11 of the Children Act 2004, all agencies that working in children protection must ensure, as employers that the people who work for them, paid or unpaid, are competent and confident to carry out their responsibilities to safeguard and promoting children and young people's welfare. All agencies must ensure that their staff receive a certain level of basic safeguarding training regarding being aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and knowing how to respond to children and young people that they are worried about. The s11 audit demonstrated an overall compliance rate of 78%, however 2 agencies scored below 50% on having an induction process that familiarizes staff with policies and procedures. 15 agencies gave a written account of the induction process with 6 providing evidence. Returns demonstrated that 15 agencies scored 75% and over in relation to providing training for staff and volunteers working with children and 1 scored 50%. 12 agencies scored 75% and over regarding staff and volunteers being trained to recognise signs of abuse and neglect and 4 scored 50%. 12 scored 75% and over on disseminating outcomes and findings from reviews and inspections to appropriate staff and volunteers and 3 scored under 50%. Training is currently under review within Dudley and will need to be mindful of the above findings.

9 Safer recruitment.**77% compliance (overall)**

The Lampard inquiry into the abuse of individuals by Jimmy Savile make 14 recommendations for the NHS, the Department of Health and wider government and reviews Savile's role as both a volunteer and a fundraiser. The 14 recommendations from the report focus on safer recruitment, development of policies for the management of visits by celebrities and fundraisers, the review of voluntary services arrangements within NHS trusts, safeguarding training and processes, appropriate DBS and barring list checks and to ensure that these are monitored by appropriate regulators and inspectors. This standard is particularly relevant at the present time and following high profile cases of institutionalised abuse of children and the impending Goddard Inquiry. The audit findings demonstrated that not all agencies had robust recruitment processes particularly around verification of identity and qualifications, also around checking history and experience. It was positive that all agencies undertook DBS checks when appropriate. However whilst many agency managers had completed recruitment training, fewer had completed the safer element.

Summary of section 11 standards - 75% compliance is regarded as being acceptable**10. Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.****69% compliance (overall)**

From the audit returns, 15 agencies scored 75% and over and 1 scored 25% demonstrating that that their organisation has identified principles of working with children and their families, for all staff to work to. Most agencies reported that staff appeared to understand when to discuss a concern about a child's welfare with a manager with only two agencies scoring 50% or below. Around staff understanding of thresholds for making a referral or raising a CAF, agencies were less compliant with 6 agencies scoring 50% or below. Also compliance was not as good around staff understanding of the early help strategy which provides services to children and their families in order to prevent escalation into the child protection arena and 6 agencies scored 50% or below. 2 agencies reported that staff did not have access to inter-agency guidance and procedures. With regards to staff participation in multi-agency meetings and forums to consider individual children 3 agencies scored below 50% and 2 agencies considered this to be not applicable. Issues around contractors who work with children being section 11 compliant were raised with 5 agencies scoring 50% or below and 6 reporting that the standard was not applicable. This should be a priority area for consideration.

11. Effective inter-agency working and information sharing in order to ensure safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.**68% compliance (overall)**

Effective interagency working is the basis of all good safeguarding practice. On the whole agencies were confident that their staff knew how and when to share information to safeguard and protect children. Only 2 agencies scored 50% or below. Data appears to be shared appropriately with relevant agencies with only 2 agencies scoring 50% or below. However outcome evaluation from a child's perspective scores quite low with 7 agencies reporting that this was not applicable and 4 agencies scoring 50% or below. Only 4 agencies scored 75% or above. More agencies were compliant with a programme of internal review that enables them to continuously improve the protection of children and young people from harm or neglect and half of the agencies scored over 75%.