



city & hackney
safeguarding
children board

Multi-Agency Case Audit Process

July 2014 (Updated September 2017)

Introduction

When partner agencies and individual professionals engage in case auditing, it helps us know ourselves.

It helps us understand the effectiveness of front-line practice in protecting children and young people, how well the lessons of Serious Case Reviews and other reviews of practice have been learnt; and what the impact of locally delivered training has been.

Importantly, it allows us to identify good practice and ask questions about whether things could be done differently to improve the safeguarding system.

The remit of the CHSCB covers the entire journey of the child or young person; from first identification or contact, all the way through to statutory intervention.

The range of any multi-agency case auditing process reflects this journey; with the selection of themes for audit being guided by other information captured through the CHSCB Learning & Improvement framework - including knowledge arising reviews, performance data, staff feedback and importantly, the views of children, young people and their families.

The focus of this work needs to compliment that undertaken by individual agencies.

The Quality Assurance (QA) Sub Committee will oversee the audit process as well as drawing together other information required as part of the Learning & Improvement Framework.

Approach

Proposed themes for audit work will be identified by the QA Sub Committee. Audits will be themed according to key lines of enquiry agreed by the Board that arise as a result of quality assurance work, data or learning reviews. The audits will ensure that the LSCB has a view across the child's journey, but the focus will be on the effectiveness of safeguarding (i.e. child in need, child protection and early help near the threshold for child in need).

- Two audit sessions will take place each year.
- Each session will examine 5 cases within Hackney and 3 cases within the City.

At the point of case selection agency leads will be asked to identify, where appropriate, which of the children, young people, parents or carers can be engaged for feedback.

The CHSCB Team will be responsible for notifying agencies of cases to be audited and there will be an obligation on all agencies to review their involvement with the case within a defined time period. This should include scrutinizing files, talking to practitioners concerned and completing the CHSCB multi-agency audit tools that have been agreed for use in Hackney and in the City.

Each audit will be given to a lead in the agency to complete or allocate. No audit should be completed by the case holder or the line manager with casework responsibility, in order to maintain independent scrutiny.

On completion, the audits will be quality assured by the LSCB and returned if they are not sufficiently robust, or comprehensive. There is an expectation that single-agency audits are securely stored on file for future access.

Three cases are selected for deep-dive work and a multi-agency meeting scheduled with agency leads and front-line staff to review the practice and agree findings and recommendations. This meeting will be independently chaired by a member of CHSCB to ensure scrutiny, rigor and challenge of all partners.

A report detailing systemic findings will be made available for the QA Sub Committee to consider further and confirm the lessons and actions required. Case specific actions are progressed by single agencies however if during the course of an audit there are any concerns about the immediate risk to a child/vulnerable adult or unsafe practice is raised, this information is escalated to the respective agencies for a response and assurance.

The findings will reflect a balance of good practice and areas of improvement. The findings will also be reported through to the Executive and Board.

Each audit will feed into the current action plan; with clearly identified outcomes and actions. The QA Sub Committee will monitor progress of these plans.

The outcomes of each audit will be disseminated through the CHSCB website / specific briefing newsletters and defined lunch-time seminars as appropriate. Themes and learning are embedded in multi- and single agency training.

Confidentiality and consent

The purpose of case audit work carried out by CHSCB is to quality assure the local systems and services in place for children. The audit work tests organisation systems and processes and how these are applied. This is a requirement for LSCBs and therefore audit work is commissioned by City and Hackney SCB.

To ensure that lessons are learnt effectively, information about the involvement of agencies in the subject child, sibling group and parents/carers life (for adult-focussed services) 12 months prior to the review need to be considered.

According to Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 *“All public sector agencies providing services to children, including local authorities and all NHS bodies, “must make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children”.*

The following principles are therefore applied:

- Consent is not required for this activity as it is a quality assurance process designed to examine whether organisational systems and processes are robust in protecting children.
- The audit work will be conducted by a service manager/ clinician who has a duty of confidentiality.
- Names of the subject child / family members will be anonymised in all paperwork.
- The learning from audits will be fed back to staff members/clinicians with the intention of strengthening safeguarding practice.
- There will be strict adherence to information sharing guidance and confidentiality requirements.

Multi-agency case audit process

The Quality Assurance (QA) sub-group selects a theme for the multi-agency case audit.

Cases are selected (5 in Hackney and 3 in City of London)

Children and young people / parents / carers to be engaged as appropriate.

Agency leads undertake an audit if they have had involvement **within the last 12 months.**

Involved practitioners/agency leads invited to attend a session to identify and explore themes and learning.

A report and action plan is produced and presented at the next QA sub-group. This group monitors action plan progress.

Lunchtime seminars/briefings scheduled to feed back learning from case audits to front-line staff.