



South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership

Section 11 Audit Report 2020-2021

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Introduction

The Section 11 self-assessment audit tool was circulated to all partners across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset in December 2020 to assess, monitor and evidence progress and achievements in relation to meeting safeguarding requirements. The Section 11 audit for 2020-2021 has taken place in the year when we have all been working under Pandemic restrictions with organisations facing considerably more demands on their time than in previous years. Consideration was given to this in the design, approach and timescales for completion afforded to organisations completing the self-audit.

This audit received 71 responses in total, some organisations work across more than one local authority and completed the audit once to cover all relevant areas. There were a total of 22 completed audits received for South Gloucestershire. This is a 57% rise in the number of submissions for South Gloucestershire on the previous year. The names of these organisations are included in [Appendix One](#). The rise in submissions may have partially been due to a centralised approach from the Avon & Somerset Strategic Safeguarding Partnership, and the use of the Virtual College Enable Tool, which sent automated reminders. Having a greater number of responses provide the Partnership with a wider assurance than in previous years. There are still a number of organisations who did not submit an audit, and consideration should be given as to how to address this, and the risk of non-compliance for the children's partnership with this statutory process.

This report has been produced for the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership and has drawn on the themes identified in the audit process from the Organisations who work in South Gloucestershire.

Organisations were required to make a judgement as to how well each question is being achieved based on the following rating:

0	-	Inadequate
1	-	Requires Improvement
2	-	Good
3	-	Outstanding

There were four sections of questions and a total of ten questions within the audit, as well as self-auditing for a numerical score, organisations were asked to give examples and provide evidence for their score and the system gave the opportunity to create an interactive action plan based on responses.

What is Section 11? (from [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#))

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004

Places duties on a range of organisations, agencies 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.

Section 11 places a duty on:

- local authorities and district councils that provide children's and other types of services, including children's and adult social care services, public health, housing, sport, culture and leisure services, licensing authorities and youth services
- NHS organisations and agencies and the independent sector, including NHS England and clinical commissioning groups, NHS Trusts, NHS Foundation Trusts and General Practitioners

- the police, including police and crime commissioners and the chief officer of each police force in England and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in London the British Transport Police
- the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies Governors/Directors of Prisons and Young Offender Institutions (YOIs)
- Directors of Secure Training Centres (STCs)
- Principals of Secure Colleges
- Youth Offending Teams/Services (YOTs)

These organisations and agencies should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

- a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- a senior board level lead with the required knowledge, skills and expertise or sufficiently qualified and experienced to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's/agency's safeguarding arrangements
- a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services
- clear whistleblowing procedures, which reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis' Freedom to Speak Up Review and are suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed
- clear escalation policies for staff to follow when their child safeguarding concerns are not being addressed within their organisation or by other agencies
- arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other practitioners and with safeguarding partners
- a designated practitioner (or, for health commissioning and health provider organisations/agencies, designated and named practitioners) for child safeguarding. Their role is to support other practitioners in their organisations and agencies to recognise the needs of children, including protection from possible abuse or neglect. Designated practitioner roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. Practitioners should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively
- safe recruitment practices and ongoing safe working practices for individuals whom the organisation or agency permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check
- appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training
- creating a culture of safety, equality and protection within the services they provide

In addition:

- ✓ employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role
- ✓ staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and the procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare

- ✓ all practitioners should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they have knowledge, skills and expertise that improve over time

Section One: Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

Has COVID-19 impacted and changed the way that your organisation functions and responds, within the multi-agency partnership?



9% of organisations scored 1 (requires improvement)

77% of organisations scored 2 (good)

14% of organisations scored 3 (outstanding)

Analysis

Organisations commented on the profound impact of covid 19 on the ability to continue with face-to-face work with children and families. For some organisations, the pandemic and subsequent restrictions coincided with other planned changes within their organisations adding a layer of complication.

Multi agency working between professionals was reported to have improved and increased during this time. With a better engagement with a range of meetings. Issues of travel time, parking, meeting rooms all improved as professional meetings became virtual.

The impact of wellbeing of staff was highlighted as being an area of concern and has led to investment by organisations of both time and additional resources to support the workforce referenced in submissions. Concerns remain about the impact of staff fatigue and isolation.

Safeguarding work has been prioritised and protected during the covid period, even for those working in acute trusts. Creative use of technology is referenced in several submissions and adoption of new ways of working that have been successful. This has sometimes been more difficult for those not working in statutory services, there are observations about a focus on statutory services, with less engagement with faith and voluntary sector.

One year on, how well do you believe that your organisation has engaged with the new safeguarding arrangements and how well do you think that practitioners within your organisation are aware of the changes?



32% of organisations scored 1 (requires improvement)

64% of organisations scored 2 (good)

4% of organisations scored 3 (outstanding)

Analysis

There is a good level of understanding about the new safeguarding arrangements among senior managers and safeguarding leads reflected in the submissions to the audit. 36% of audit

submissions detail their involvement with establishing the new partnership arrangements and attendance at key meetings.

There is an acknowledgement that the arrangements were only established for a short time prior to the pandemic, and therefore have not embedded as well as they may have done.

Responses about front line practitioners are reflected in this quote from a submission:

I do not feel that the new partnership arrangements are fully understood and embedded at practitioner level so that they can see how the Partnership guides and leads their day-to-day work.

Recommendation One: Children’s Partnership Executive to consider how to improve engagement and understanding of the new safeguarding arrangements at practitioner level.

The Partnership fortnightly newsletter is referenced as being valued and some responses included that this is disseminated across organisations and as a way of engagement with the partnership, although it is not clear how widely this happens across all organisations.

Some organisations reported that they feel less involved since the ending of the LSCB, as their previous ‘seat at the board’ gave them an insight into strategic decision making and high-level system discussions that they no longer have.

Recommendation Two: Children’s Partnership to ensure Stakeholder Network meetings take place regularly to ensure wider organisation involvement in the partnership.

Some of the organisations that work across more than one partnership only referred to the Bristol arrangements in their responses, highlighting the difficulty of cross border working across different sets of arrangements.

How effectively does information get shared across the partnership, at a practitioner level?



27% of organisations scored 1 (requires improvement)

64% of organisations scored 2 (good)

9% of organisations scored 3 (outstanding)

Analysis

At case level several responses to the self-audit rated information sharing as good and effective. There was some evidence that this has improved over the covid period with an improved use of technology and more online meetings. There was no evidence that information sharing has been impacted by the introduction of the Children’s Partnership.

There was reference to the use of multi-agency audit summaries and single page summaries from CSPRs within team meetings, and of systems embedded within organisations to cascade information. There was a request for creative ways to share information apart being from email and newsletter based.

Difficulties included working with multiple local authorities, challenges for services that work directly with adults rather than with children and not receiving a response back following referrals.

Section Two: Thresholds

Are you using your local Threshold Document where required, and working with multi-agency partners effectively when requesting review or support?



23% of organisations scored 0 (inadequate)

18% of organisations scored 1 (requires improvement)

36% of organisations scored 2 (good)

23% of organisations scored 3 (outstanding)

Analysis

Almost a quarter of responses were graded as inadequate for this question. For those who responded in this way the information provided either referred to use of national tools for safeguarding rather than local ones and in some cases they reported that they were unaware of a threshold tool existing. This indicates there is still work to be done to promote the newly updated tool in South Gloucestershire launched in January 2021. ([The right help, in the right way, at the right time](#))

Recommendation Three: Consider how to improve knowledge, understanding and use of the threshold tool in South Gloucestershire.

Of the 59% of organisations who rated themselves as good or outstanding for this question many mentioned the new version and had taken part in the consultation about the draft version and had shared this within their organisations. It was described as 'embedded into practice'. The use of escalation was mentioned by two submissions.

Do you believe COVID-19 has affected children, young people and their families' access to your services?



5% of organisations scored 0 (inadequate)

9% of organisations scored 1 (requires improvement)

59% of organisations scored 2 (good)

27% of organisations scored 3 (outstanding)

Analysis

60% of all the responses indicated that they had been able to continue with their services to children and families, with some changes in place as a result of the pandemic. The most disruption occurred during the first lockdown in March 2020.

Faith groups have in many cases not been able to resume face to face activities for children and this has meant a loss of a source of support for some children.

Issues identified by organisations impacting their work with children in this time included:

- Fear of having people enter the home

- Access to technology/credit for virtual contact
- Health appointments happening remotely
- Delays for routine/elective health admissions
- Reluctance to allow children to go outside of the home for sessions when they were provided
- Other family members being present in the room for virtual appointments/visits impacting on confidentiality
- Increased referrals
- Young people disengaging due to remote rather than face to face work

There have also been positive impacts to online/virtual sessions with some young people preferring this as a way of accessing services, and their engagement improving during Covid-19. The ICON programme, aimed at prevention of non-accidental head injuries to babies roll out was accelerated during the covid-19 period and is now fully implemented within the midwifery service which was a recommendation from a Serious Case Review in South Gloucestershire.

Section Three: Engaging with Children and Young People

Can you give an example where your organisation has effectively engaged with children and young people which has directly improved services and outcomes?



18% of organisations scored 0 (inadequate)

9% of organisations scored 1 (requires improvement)

55% of organisations scored 2 (good)



Barnardo's

Children and Young people directly supported the development of the Children's community contract during the design phase of the procurement in 2016. Barnardo's are subcontracted as part of the head contract which is held by Sirona care & health. Barnardo's form part of the Community Children's Health Partnership (CCHP) which is made up of Sirona care & health, Avon Wiltshire Partnership NHS Trust (AWP), University Hospital Bristol (UHB), Off the Record and Kooth. Barnardo's HYPE service support in facilitating this engagement with C&YP who are also considered 'commissioners of our service'. The aim of the Barnardo's Engagement and Participation service is to support CCHP to develop, establish and monitor formal and informal engagement and participation structures so that children and young people and their families have a voice and can influence the design and delivery of services.

18% of organisations scored 3 (outstanding)

Analysis

Examples of good practice of engaging with children included:

- Use of young people's reps

- Engagement in recruitment process



Avon & Somerset Police

The hyper-local knife crime animation project targeted four schools in areas where serious violence/knife crime was a concern. The campaign placed young people at the heart of discussions, encouraging them to be part of the solution. A third-party facilitator worked with young people to create animations which encouraged participants to identify reasons for serious violence and potential solutions. The project increased engagement in the issue and a key outcome was the sense of ownership and empowerment it gave to the young people involved. The new force procedure for the use of Police Protection Powers was influenced by children’s lived experience of being taken into police stations under this power. The procedure, launched in January 2021, includes key information about the necessity to engage with children and how to achieve this.

- Online pupil survey
- Your voice group to influence and co-produce policies and service design
- Well established forums to engage young people
- Design of a client engagement model to actively shape service innovation

For those organisations who scored lowest in this section it was mainly reported that they do not work directly with children or young people, but with parents.

Recommendation Four: Based on the good practice (73% good or outstanding) identified about hearing the voice of children and young people, consider ways that this can be used by the partnership to shape the work of the partnership across South Gloucestershire.

Has COVID-19 affected your ability to engage with CYP?



13% of organisations scored 0 (inadequate)

32% of organisations scored 1 (requires improvement)

32% of organisations scored 2 (good)

23% of organisations scored 3 (outstanding)

Analysis

There is mixed reporting from organisations about being able to continue to engage with children and young people. There are some organisations who told us that their contact stopped or was severely disrupted. For example, Avon Fire and Rescue had previously visited schools for their face-to-face contact with children, and this ended abruptly in March 2020. However, adaptations have taken place and by September their input to schools was able to take place digitally and was well received. At the mother and baby unit of Eastwood Park, no family or sibling visits were able to take place with the babies living at the unit.

The impact seems to have been most severe during the first national lockdown, with a significant impact described by organisations on their ability to engage well with children.

Many organisations describe their use of remote contact with children and young people and reported that even after the pandemic they plan to review their ways of working to keep elements of the virtual contact that has been successful.

We have maintained contact with young people at a level that meets their needs – in some cases this has resulted in higher levels of contact than normal to support them through the pandemic. Generally, young people have adapted well to changes in the way we have needed to provide support. We have continued to meet young people face to face but with new Covid-secure rules to ensure safety (social distancing, PPE, etc). We recognise that it is critical to see young people as often as we can, particularly vulnerable young people.

Recommendation Five: Explore with organisations how their practice has changed post pandemic and the elements of new and effective practice that is retained so that this can be shared as a good practice model.

Section Four: Training and Workforce Development

How does your organisation ensure that effective, regular safeguarding supervision which supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of paid staff in relation to safeguarding children and young people takes place?



14% of organisations scored 1 (requires improvement)

54% of organisations scored 2 (good)

32% of organisations scored 3 (outstanding)

Analysis

This question resulted in the highest percentage of good and outstanding self-evaluation with 86% of responses scoring either 2 or 3 for this question.

No organisations reported that Covid-19 has had an impact on the frequency or quality of supervision, and this has been prioritised across agencies. Many organisations reported the use of virtual technology for supervision, including group supervision.

Good Practice Highlight – keeping policies alive with practitioners:

Every month there is a specific policy of the month for the staff member to read and discuss in supervision.

Does your organisation use volunteers to support delivery of your services to children and young people?



36% of organisations use volunteers.

64% of organisations do not use volunteers.

How does your organisation ensure that effective, induction and regular supervision is given to volunteers, which supports, assures and develops their knowledge, skills and values in relation to safeguarding children and young people takes place?

All the organisations that use volunteers described having safeguarding processes in place.

67% scored 2 (good) and 33% scored 3 (outstanding)

There are robust protocols for the recruitment and training of volunteers across all Parishes working with children and young people.

Details of provision for volunteers includes:

- Safer Recruitment practice, DBS checks
- Induction process
- Training
- Supervision
- Volunteer mentor/co-ordinator role

Conclusion

This is the first section 11 audit that has included the five partnerships with the Avon & Somerset Strategic Safeguarding Partnership¹ (ASSSP) working together to audit organisations across the whole region. This has been a positive improvement, particularly for our partners who work in more than one location who had previously had to complete more than one Section 11 audit. It is also the first time the Virtual College Enable Tool has been used for the audit. There were multiple problems for those completing the audit with this tool, which led to the time scales needing to be increased as professionals were not able to access the survey for a period of time. The audit group who designed the survey were frustrated by the lack of analysis provided by the tool, as the purchase of the tool had been intended to provide audit reporting functions that were not available, and this was not known at the time of purchase by the group. Subsequently the data was downloaded manually and analysed by the Business Manager. The intention had been to provide one regional report for ASSSP. However the Independent Scrutiny Co-ordinator, who was doing this piece of work, left the post and it is currently vacant. This has left individual partnerships to produce single reports. This

¹ ASSSP covers the Children's Partnerships for Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset and Somerset.

has been a difficult, time consuming and disappointing outcome, and careful consideration will need to be given to future Section 11 survey processes.

Despite the difficulties with the data described above, South Gloucestershire has seen a significantly greater engagement by partners than in the previous year. Some organisations completed the Section 11 for the first time. The children’s partnership executive need to consider how to follow up with organisations who did not submit an audit.

Organisations should be taking action to ensure their compliance with Section 11, and this will in practice mean they should hold action plans for elements of the self-audit where they identified opportunities for improvement. The children’s partnership Executive should consider how it can be assured that this is happening in South Gloucestershire.

Every organisation will have their own recommendations based on their Section 11 submission. The thematic recommendations based on all submissions for the 2020-21 Section 11 audit are as follows:

Number	Recommendation
1	Children’s Partnership Executive to consider how to improve engagement and understanding of the new safeguarding arrangements at practitioner level.
2	Children’s Partnership to ensure Stakeholder Network meetings take place regularly to ensure wider organisation involvement in the partnership.
3	Consider how to improve knowledge, understanding and use of the threshold tool in South Gloucestershire.
4	Based on the good practice (73% good or outstanding) identified about hearing the voice of children and young people, consider ways that this can be used by the partnership to shape the work of the partnership across South Gloucestershire.
5	Explore with organisations how their practice has changed post pandemic and the elements of new and effective practice that is retained so that this can be shared as a good practice model.
Additional Recommendations	
A	Children’s Partnership Executive to consider how to respond to organisations who did not submit an audit
B	Consideration to be given about how to conduct future audits given the technical and personnel difficulties that arose with this audit
C	Children’s Partnership Executive to consider how to be assured that organisations are making improvements to practice following the findings of their individual Section 11 audit

Appendix One

Organisations who submitted a Section 11 Audit for South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership

Organisations scored themselves for every question between 0 and 3. The Virtual College Enable tool used for the audit combined these scores into an average for each organisation at the end of the audit.

0 inadequate
1 requires improvement
2 good
3 outstanding

Organisation	Average Score
1625 Independent People	3
Avon & Somerset Police	2
Avon Fire and Rescue	1
Barnardo's	3
BNSSG CCG	3
Community Rehabilitation Company	2
CVS	2
Diocese of Bristol (Anglican)	2
Eastwood Park Mother & Baby Unit	2
Kooth	3
National Probation Service	2
Next Link	3
Off the Record	2
Sirona Care & Health	2
South Glos Council - South Glos Children's Social Care	2
South Glos Council - Public Health	2
The Green House	3
UHBW	2
Victim Support	2
Vinney Green Secure Children's Home	3
Youth Offending Service	2
North Bristol Trust	3

Appendix Two: British Transport Police Submission (Section 11 reports are provided on a national basis by BTP)

British Transport Police (BTP) Concerns for Children and Young People (CYP) in England & Wales - Summary 2020/21

Total reports: 8,939 Ave. per month: 745

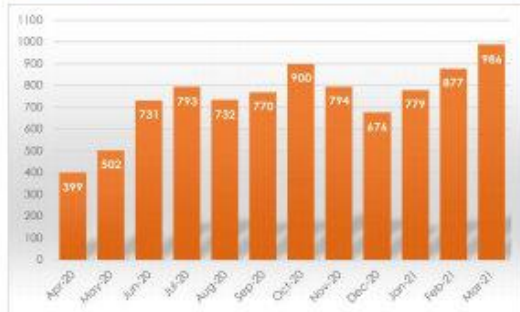


Chart 11. CYP encounters by month

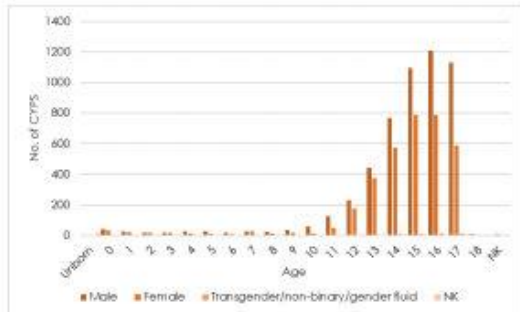


Chart 12. CYP age and gender

Nature of incident	No. of CYPs	%
Runaway / missing	3090	35%
Suspect	1906	21%
Victim	1062	12%
Drugs / alcohol	1008	11%
Stop and search	876	10%
Trespass	804	9%
Fare evasion	771	9%
Suicide risk / MH	463	5%
Parental behaviour	399	4%
Witness	104	1%
Other	1981	22%

Table 1. CYP nature of incidents (multiple possible)

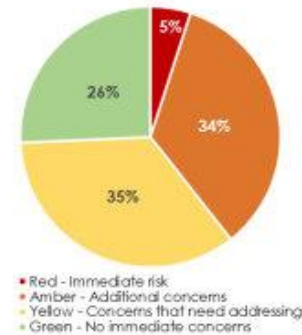


Chart 4. CYP BTP risk assessment

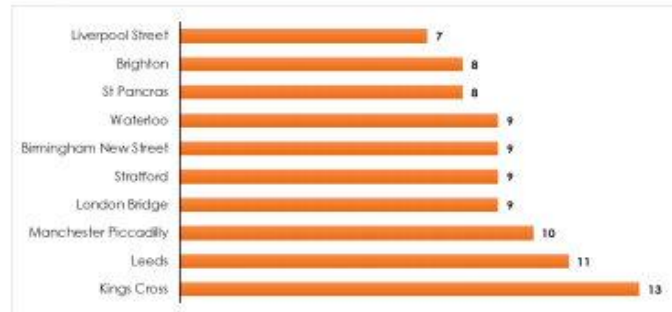


Chart 13. Top locations for CYP at immediate risk

Station	Count
Manchester Piccadilly	276
Birmingham New Street	245
Leeds	191
Waterloo	166
Euston	161
Victoria	155
Stratford	150
Kings Cross	144
St Pancras	140
Bristol Temple Meads	130
Preston	122
London Bridge	122
Brighton	116
Liverpool Street	112
East Croydon	100
Doncaster	96
Reading	95
Coventry	95
Paddington	91
York	89

Table 2. Top twenty CYP locations 2020/21

There were 813 repeat CYPs during the year whom were the subjects of a total of 2,211 CYP form submissions, an average of 2.7 incidents per repeat child