



Swindon Safeguarding Partnership

Quality Assurance Framework 2024-25

| Date | Version | Document owner | Review Date |
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1. Introduction

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults with care and support needs. An important aspect of this is to assure that the quality of the multi-agency work being undertaken with children, their families and adults with care and support needs, is effective and of a consistently good quality throughout the borough, and that robust multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are in place.

2. Aims of the Framework

Quality assurance is a continual learning process using a range of different methods to understand quality and impact.

The aims of the framework are to:

- provide oversight of the effectiveness of multi-agency practice and the impact on outcomes for children, young people and adults with care and support needs
- celebrate and evidence best practice
- highlight areas for improvement
- provide assurance that improvements are made
- disseminate learning

3. Safeguarding Partnership Quality Assurance Duties

In line with Section 14 of the Children's Act 2004, safeguarding partners have a duty to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise on ways in which practice improvements can be made to improve outcomes for children and young people. To fulfil their statutory functions under regulation 5, Safeguarding Partnerships should use data, to; assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families including 'Early Help', and:

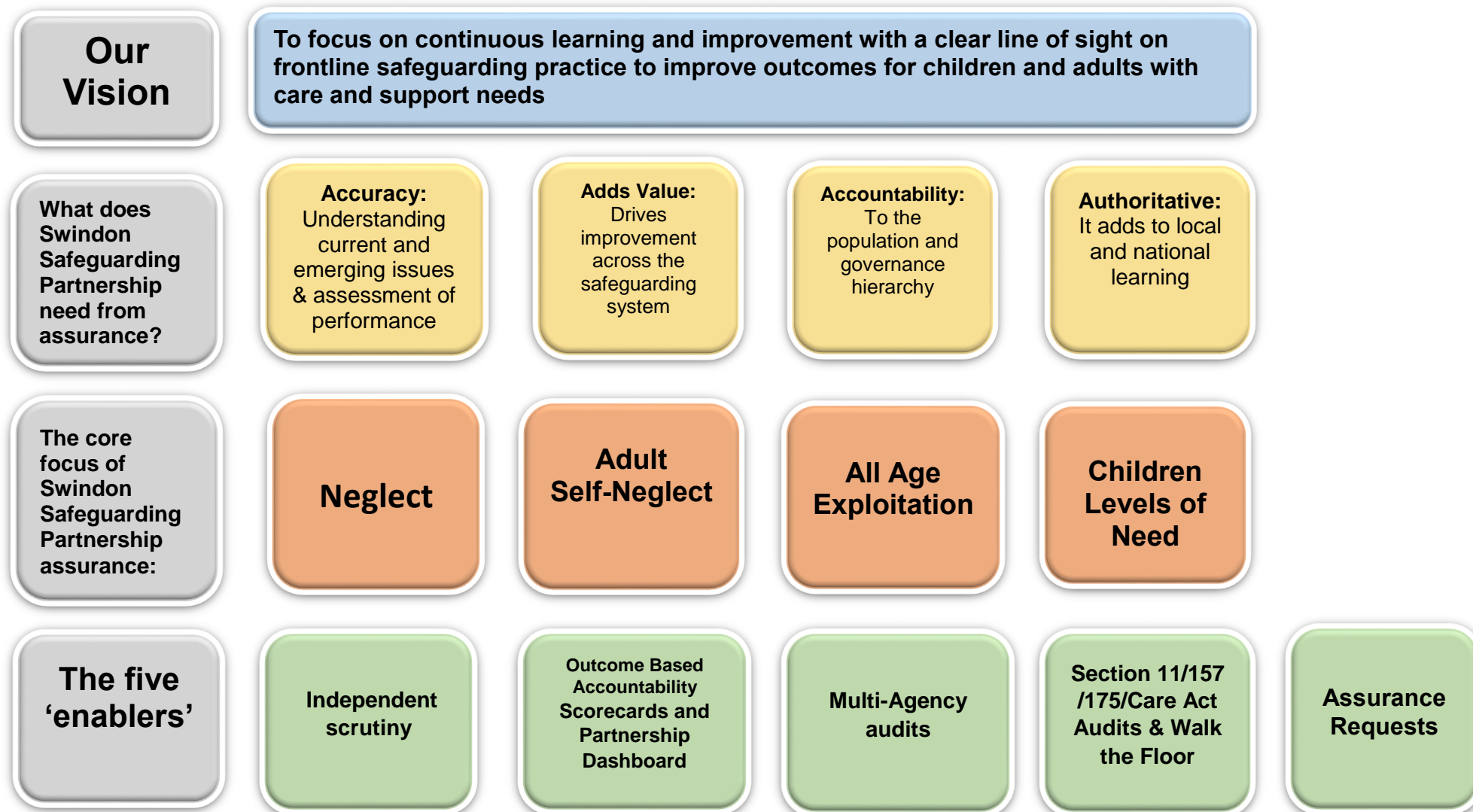
- Assess whether partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations as set out in Chapter 2 of Working Together 2023
- Quality assure practice, including through joint case audits of files involving practitioners and identifying lessons learned; and
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In addition to this Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 includes a statutory duty for Safeguarding Partners to evaluate multi-agency working through audits of case files.

In line with the Care Act 2014, safeguarding partners also have a duty to safeguard adults with care and support needs. The Partnership will seek assurance of the effectiveness of safeguarding activity and that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life for adults with care and support needs and carers in its area, in line with 'Making Safeguarding Personal'. This should address issues of quality as well as quantity, particularly from the perspective of those who have experienced safeguarding services. The Partnership needs to:

- assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance
- assure itself that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused
- working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
- ensure agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred
- assure itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area

4. Assurance of Swindon Safeguarding Partnership



5. Governance

The Quality Assurance Group will be responsible for overseeing the multi-agency Quality Assurance Framework with a focus on understanding the experience of children and adults with care and support needs in Swindon and the impact of services and practice on outcomes for children and adults.

The Quality Assurance Group will contribute to the independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults with care and support needs. The group will assist in the monitoring and interpretation of performance data and management information via the Partnership Dashboard and Outcome Based Accountability Scorecards. The group will identify themes that may need to be addressed that arise from the performance data or from exception reports, including early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats. The Quality Assurance Group will provide bi-monthly reports to the Delivery Group.

Outcomes from quality assurance work will help to inform the Safeguarding Partnership's yearly report.

6. Role of partner agencies in Quality Assurance

Partner engagement is crucial to the success of the quality assurance work of Swindon Safeguarding Partnership. This section provides more detail on each of the Five Quality Assurance Enablers and the expectations of partner agencies in relation to them.

Enabler 1: Independent Scrutiny

The role of independent scrutiny is to:

- Provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- Provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- Ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews, safeguarding adult reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- Ensure that the voice of children, families and adults with care and support needs are considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- Be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- Provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- Evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections. (Adapted from Working Together 2023)

Independent scrutiny for 24/25 will include:

- a) Meeting the needs of adolescents and the impact of adultification
- b) Thresholds and decision making for children
- c) Thresholds and decision-making transitions
- d) Thresholds and decision making adults at risk
- e) Revisit neglect in 9 months and link to thresholds
- f) Front door arrangements through 'Contact Swindon'
- g) Compliance with Working Together Dec 2023
- h) Delivery of the improvement recommendations from independent scrutiny report and their impact
- i) Experience of children, young people and families
- j) Experience of adults at risk and those who play a critical role in their lives, including carers
- k) Impact of learning from SARs (Safeguarding Adults Reviews) on practice and outcomes for adults at risk
- l) Impact of learning from LCSPRs and Rapid Reviews on practice and outcomes for children and young people

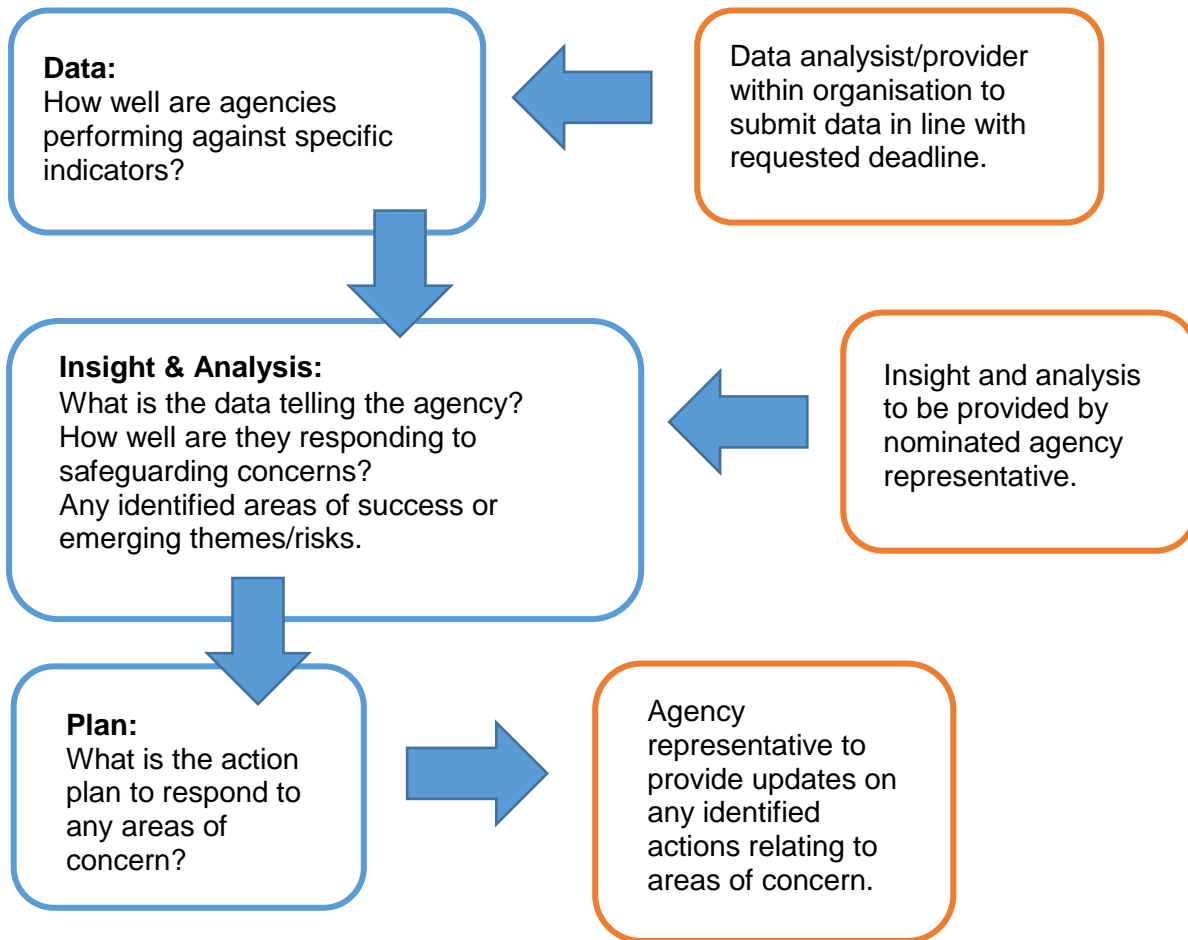
Partner agencies are expected to comply in a timely manner to requests from Independent Scrutineers employed by the partnership.

Enabler 2: Outcome Based Accountability Scorecards and Partnership Dashboard

The partnership has used Outcomes Based Accountability to define the impact it wants to have for children, their families and adults with care and support needs in relation to each of its priorities.

The Partnership Dashboard is aligned to the Outcome Based Accountability Scorecards for each Partnership priority. It brings together quantitative data via performance indicators for each partner agency, as well as insight and analysis.

It is the responsibility of each agency to provide data, insight and analysis on the agreed indicators and ensure that this is accurate and submitted on time.



Enabler 3: Multi-Agency Audits

Thematic multi-agency audits will be conducted per quarter linked to core safeguarding and/or the Safeguarding Partnership's priorities. The Swindon Safeguarding Partnership Strategic Support Unit will co-ordinate the audits and compile the information. It is the responsibility of partner agencies to submit the information in a timely manner to ensure a holistic picture is captured of all agency involvement with the child or adult.

The key lines of enquiry for each audit will scrutinise the effectiveness of impact, practice and process across the following four key areas:

- The individual's lived experience
- Identification and early intervention
- Partnership working and information sharing
- Governance, policies and procedures

An audit tool will be developed by the sub-groups reflecting the focus of each thematic audit. Partner agencies participating in the thematic audit will be asked to complete and return their tool within a specific time period, providing evidence of practice and process.

Partner agencies will be expected to complete this independently, with frontline staff involved with a case, capturing the views of the practitioner and the voice of the child/adult with care and support needs where possible.

The completed audit should be submitted by the agreed deadline, and where the child/adults are not known, the agency should provide a response to confirm this.

As part of the multi-agency audit process, a reflective feedback session will be arranged after each audit with auditors and relevant practitioners and managers from across agencies to feedback audit outcomes. Good practice and learning will be shared and inform the work plan of the sub-group. Alongside this, single agency assurance reports and/or practitioner questionnaires will be requested from agencies, these will link with the Partnership priorities.

These reports/questionnaires, along with completed audits will provide partners with a clear picture of need/learning/areas for development.

Robust actions plans will then be produced and monitored within the Partnership sub-groups. Single Agency Assurance Requests will clearly set out which recommendations each agency is accountable for responding to and provide a consistent format to report on the response and impact.

| Swindon Safeguarding Partnership Audits 2024/25 |
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| Audits |
| Multi-agency response to the exploitation of children |
| Multi-agency response to adult exploitation |
| Multi-agency response to children and families who need help |
| Multi-agency response to Children living with Neglect |
| Multi-agency response to Adults who self-neglect |

Enabler 4: Section 11/Care Act Audits and Section 175/157 Audits for Education Providers

Section 11/Care Act Audits

All partner agencies are obliged to complete the Section 11 / Care Act Audit on a bi-annual basis. The aim of the audit is for agencies to ensure that they are regularly reviewing and updating their safeguarding policies and practices.

Year 1 - It is the responsibility of partner agencies to ensure that they complete the audit on time and that the information provided is accurate and up to date. Agencies will have identified actions collated into an action plan and it will be the responsibility of partner agencies to ensure that they deliver the actions on their action plan within agreed timescales.

Year 2 – Agencies will be chosen by the Quality Assurance group members for a ‘Walk the Floor’ assurance visit, which will be undertaken by the Partnership Strategic Support Unit and a member of the Quality Assurance group. This will enable agencies to provide updates on their audit returns and for safeguarding evidence to be provided. This will also provide the opportunity to engage with staff and ensure that safeguarding practice/procedures are evidenced in frontline practice.

Section 175/157 Audits for Education Providers

Conducted on an annual basis and managed by SBC Education Safeguarding Lead. The Section 175 audit should be completed by Heads/Principles/Executives and Designated Safeguarding Leads. The aim of this audit is for education providers to ensure that they are regularly reviewing and updating their safeguarding policies and practices. It is the responsibility of education providers to ensure that they complete the audit on time and that the information provided is accurate. A report will be produced by the Education Safeguarding Lead and shared with the Safeguarding Partnership’s Learning and Development Group. Education providers will be responsible for monitoring any actions identified as part of the audit and this is followed up by the Education Safeguarding Lead

Enabler 5: Single Agency Assurance

Single Agency Assurance Requests will be used to gain assurance from agencies regarding the completion of recommendations of multi-agency audits or other processes within the scope of the Quality Assurance Framework.

The Safeguarding Partnership Executives will share current and emerging safeguarding system risks and issues arising from their own organisational quality assurance processes on a quarterly basis.

The Quality Assurance Group will also exception report wider intelligence from partner agencies from data, insight and analysis provided. This insight will help inform future areas for attention as part of the improvement journey across Swindon’s safeguarding system.

7. Learning and Development

Recommendations relating to learning and development from the Partnership's quality assurance work, will be added to the learning needs spreadsheet and reported to the Learning and Development Group, this will be used to inform and update the multi-agency safeguarding training offer and resources.

The most effective way to cascade any learning will be decided by the Learning and Development Group, which may include:

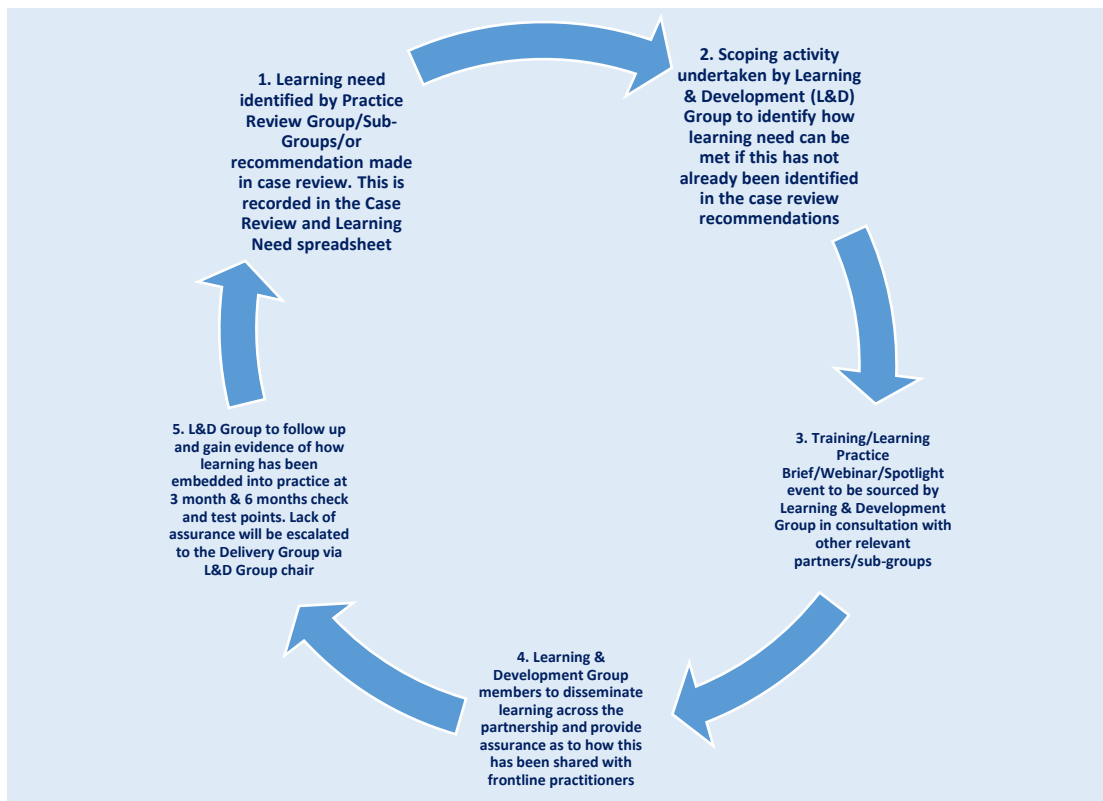
- Communications Campaigns: Development of 7 Minute Briefings, or guidance documents
- Virtual or face-to-face learning: Information sharing events, workshops or multi-agency training
- Online Learning Tools: Development of online learning modules

Learning and Development Group members will be responsible for taking relevant learning back to their relevant agencies and providing assurance of how this has been disseminated.

There will be regular monitoring at three and six month points of whether there has been any impact on practice and outcomes for children and young people and adults with care and support needs. The Partnership has developed a 'Closing the Learning Loop' process. See figure 1 below.

A 'Closing the Learning Loop' process has been implemented to support the embedding of learning from case reviews across the partnership. See figure 1.

Figure 1. 'Closing the Learning Loop'



The Learning and Development group chair will provide a bi-monthly report on the closing the learning loop process. If any organisations are identified as non-compliant in this process, a single agency assurance request can be made directly to the organisation.

Any learning and development areas where there are commissioning/funding costs, this will be presented to Partnership Executives for approval.

8. Participation

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership must ensure that the voice of children and the views of adults who have care and support needs are central to quality assurance work.

The views and experiences of 'experts by experience' will be gained through direct work with adult scrutineers and direct engagement with young people. Views and experiences will also be gained through case audits and the work of the Participation Network.

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership must also ensure that the views of frontline workers are also captured to help support strong multi-agency working. This will be captured via targeted online surveys linked with the Partnerships priorities and managed through the Partnership sub-groups and practitioner forums.

The views of practitioners will also be captured as part of the Section 11/Care Act audit 'Walk the Floor' activity. These conversations will centre on key lines of enquiry to ensure that staff knowledge and feedback reflects the information gathered through the single agency self-evaluations and case audits.

Student Voice Audit Toolkit

In 22/23, the DfE Young Champions project produced a Student Voice Audit toolkit for education providers. Editable it can be applied to any agency or service working with young people and is a mechanism for agencies to ensure young people in their setting understand how to report safeguarding concerns and where to access support within the setting.

The audit can be expanded upon and co-produced by young people in individual settings.

The student voice audit would complement the Section 175 audit where education settings choose to utilise it to help assure themselves about student and staff knowledge of safeguarding.

Education providers and other settings can submit their audit results to the Partnership Strategic Support Unit for inclusion in the quarterly data return. The Partnership would not hold any responsibility to monitor any outcomes of the audit.

The student voice audit is not mandatory and would provide added value and assurance.

[Student voice audit tool template](#) & [Student voice action plan template](#)

Review

This Quality Assurance Framework will be updated annually to ensure the quality assurance process is effective in providing an appropriate level of assurance to partners. The next review will be **April 2025**.

Proposals for suggested multi-agency audit activity for 2025-26 can be emailed directly to safeguardingpartnership@swindon.gov.uk or can be discussed at the Quality Assurance Group.