

GLOUCESTERSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP MULTI AGENCY AUDIT PROCEDURE

2023

Multi-agency auditing is central to the partnership's learning and improvement work and the continuous cycle of improvement. A robust program of multi-agency audits will make a significant contribution to the improvement of multi-agency practice. This is not a forum to influence case management decision-making or for resolving professional conflict.

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership



Multi-Agency Audit Procedure

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Document Revision Table

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1.0	June 2 nd	Approved by the QiiP 24 th April and the Executive 2 nd June 2023

What are Multi Agency Audits (MAA)

Multi-agency auditing is central to the partnership's learning and improvement work and the continuous cycle of improvement. A robust program of multi-agency audits will make a significant contribution to the improvement of multi-agency practice. This is not a forum to influence case management decision-making or for resolving professional conflict.

The purpose of conducting audits is:

- To enable the partnership to carry out its function of monitoring the effectiveness of what is done to protect children and promote their welfare and importantly to focus on outcomes for children.
- To enable identification of learning points from areas which are working well and those which need improvement; to identify learning which can then be disseminated through the partnership.
- To inform policy and practice protocols and learning and development activity.
- To audit the progress on the implementation of recommended improvements arising from LCSPR's.

MAA's enable the partnership to:

- Increase understanding of other agencies' roles, systems and practice approaches which will aid how they work together for the benefit of children, young people, and families.
- To enable curiosity about how agencies have worked together and ask questions that will benefit improved multi-agency working.
- Encourages transparent and confident discussion across agencies which in turn increases individual and agency understanding of different perspectives, approaches, and priorities.

Statutory Function:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (chapter 3) requires the Partnership to set out in its Published Arrangements how multi-agency and interagency audits will be undertaken and this procedure provides that information.

Multi Agency Audits (MAA) take the form of either a Multi-Agency Case Audit (MACA) a Multi-Agency Thematic Audit (MATA) or a Partnership Arrangements Audit (PAA). All Multi-Agency Audit Activity that is undertaken is overseen by the Quality and Improvement in Practice (QiiP) Subgroup of the GSCP. All key agencies across Gloucestershire will be asked to provide named 'Audit Coordinator's' to support in the delivery of the MACA & MATA program, which includes taking a role on the Audit Panel.

Information-sharing:

The lawful basis for information-sharing in relation to GSCP MAA is that of public task In line with the duties of each statutory partner under s.11 of the Children Act, 2004. Under GDPR arrangements, MAA activity is supported as part of planned improvement of multi-agency practice arrangements.

Audit Coordinator:

Audit Coordinators role will be to be engaged in all [steps](#) of the MAA and to be a member of the [MAA Panel](#) and QiiP.

They have a key role in managing and overseeing their agencies engagement in any agreed audit, to plan and determine who will need to be involved in their agencies internal audit arrangements, what processes will be undertaken, arrange practitioner involvement (letting their staff know what is expected/involved and support them through their internal audit process) and ensuring that an 'Agency Overview of Findings' Report is completed and presented at the Findings Meeting within the audit timeframe. MAA Panel

The Audit Panel will approve all audit requests and support Audit Coordinators in fulfilling the audit requirements of this document. Much of the work of the Audit Panel will be conducted virtually with two formal meetings a year to oversee the years audits, review and amend as required the audit arrangements and consider phase 4 and 5 of the MAA process. It is envisaged that agency Audit Coordinators will be members of the QiiP subgroup and will rotate the chairing of the Audit Panel meetings which will be supported by the GSCP Business Unit.

Multi-Agency Case Audits (MACAs)

Involve a range of key agencies taking a forensic look at the effectiveness of multi-agency working in relation to a single case using their own internal audit tools/approaches in line with their own business models to support this practice evaluation activity. Once audit activity is completed, involved professionals/agencies come together at a MACA meeting to share observations drawn from their related audit activity and to hear the reflections of their partner agencies.

Multi-Agency Thematic Audits (MATAs)

Can involve a range of quality assurance activities such as focus groups, policy & procedural reviews, related aggregated learning and bespoke audits to form a view about the effectiveness of multi-agency working where there is common practice feature, for example Neglect, Strategy Discussions etc. Typically, MATAs will involve evaluating multiple case examples, to draw out cross cutting practice themes which agencies can learn from.

Steps involved in a MAA:

Selecting Cases for MAA: Generally, cases will be nominated for a MACA or a MATA from the SIN Decision Team, GSCP Subgroup activity or from other avenues such as a request from the Executive or in response to national or local drivers. All nominated cases will be considered by the Audit Panel and suitable cases selected. Not all nominated cases are considered suitable.

Phase 1 - Preparation: Once cases have been selected, the MATA and MACA audits are scheduled/timetabled. 'Audit coordinators' take the lead in identifying key (case related) professionals to participate in the audit and to attend the MACA/MATA findings meetings. Key professionals will include practitioners who have worked directly with the child & family; those managing frontline practitioners, subject matter experts and strategic leads within agencies who can influence practice development and design going forwards.

Phase 2 - Audit Completion - Agencies complete their own internal audit activities (often a combination of focus groups, practitioner reflections, case file audits & learning from wider practice evaluation work, however this activity is for the agency to determine in line with their own business models and statutory regulations). Agency coordinators draw together key learning headlines which inform an 'Agency Overview of Findings' Report.

Phase 3 – MACA/MATA Findings Meetings: GSCP Business Unit co-ordinate and facilitate MACA/MATA meetings at which 'Audit Coordinators' and invited relevant parties to come together to reflect upon multi- agency learning. Through these facilitated discussions, cross-cutting practice themes are identified by the group.

The GSCP Business Unit will commission and appoint an independent Chair For the MACA/MATA Findings Meeting and ensure that all agencies are fully included and supported to participate in a discussion about their involvement, what has worked well, what has worked less well and why. The

Chair then will produce a final Audit Overview Report of agreed learning from the MATA/MACA meetings which is shared with all in attendance and the QiiP Subgroup.

Phase 4 - Sharing the learning and progressing the plan: 'Audit Coordinators' and participants take responsibility for sharing the learning from MACA/MATA activity within their own agencies, identifying, overseeing and progressing any agreed areas of work.

Phase 5 - Showing impact on Service Development/Practice Improvement: Following on from the MACA/MATA findings meeting and after an agreed period (usually between 6-12 months), the Audit Coordinators and QiiP will produce a MACA/MATA update report that reflects the progression of agreed work.

Partnership Arrangements Audit

The QiiP may seek to understand the totality of both multi agency and single agency activity for a defined period. this activity forms part of a Partnership Arrangements Audit that looks at key areas of the partnership's activity utilising the Published Arrangements to ascertain both the effectiveness of the partnership and any themes that may be prevalent across the scope of the partnerships work.

This should include key statutory and partnership functions.

1. Outputs from Audit – Audits undertaken, efficacy of audit arrangements, Learning and ability of the partnership to land learning.
2. SIN Decision process – efficacy of the process, engagement, decision making, themes and data.
3. Outputs from safeguarding Reviews - effectiveness, timeliness, engagement, themes and impact of learning
4. Outputs from Subgroups - activity and engagement including attendance and quality of papers.
5. Section 11 reporting – efficacy of process, progress against identified recommendations.
6. Section 175 Arrangements – efficacy of process, progress against identified recommendations.
7. Escalation process – adherence to WT2018 process but including partnership level escalation and resolution.
8. Single agency activity within the GSCP safeguarding area of influence – Internal audits, inspection reports (including responses) and other activity.
9. Multi agency training report – setting out attendance and engagement in MA training curriculum.
10. Data – Analysis of data for the year.
 - a. MARF, MARAC, Conference, Strategy Discussions
 - b. Allegations Management.

(The list is not exhaustive and will be added to by the QiiP)

This higher-level audit activity will be defined in any period by the QiiP and will be used to understand the strength of the partnership at a higher functioning level to determine any theme requiring oversight, investment, or focus. This activity should be utilised to feed into the partners understanding of the arrangement's effectiveness and be a key tool in driving improvement.

Process

The Audit Panel on behalf of the QiiP to determine the scope for the period and to set out and support an audit group to come together with an independent Chair to look at and report back to the QiiP the findings. The process will be supported by the GSCP Business Unit.

Timescales

It is the role of the Audit Panel and or QiiP to determine scope and timescales for each audit setting out the expected deliverable timeframe for each audit.

Phases 1 and 2 including the production of the 'Agency Overview of Findings' Report will be determined as stated in relation to each audit and can range from one week for a MACA to up to, but no longer than, eight weeks for a MATA.

It is envisaged that phase 3 'Findings Meeting' will be anything from a half day to a full day dependent on complexity of the audit.

The GSCP Business Unit will coordinate the Phase 3 meeting in line with directed timescales.

The completion of a final Audit Overview Report will be completed within one to three weeks of the 'Findings Meeting' dependent upon the scope and complexity of the audit undertaken.