



GLOUCESTERSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP SECTION 11 PROTOCOL

2024

Section 11 places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract or commission out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

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Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 GSCP Audit

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Document Version Control

Version	Date	Comment
1.0	May 2020	Process Approved GSCP Executive
1.1	Jan 2021	Revision to GSCP Structures and subgroups.
1.2	Sept 2021	Update on Yearly Reporting arrangements for GSCP Executive, inclusion of Template report form, guidance on use of hyperlinks when reporting
1.3	May 2022	Key officer details update
1.4	Sept 2022	Key officer Details, Incorporation of JADU Online upload system, LOGO change
1.5	October 2023	Change to timetable and update of submission process, key officer details and Standard 4 detail and guidance notes
1.6	April 2024	WT2023 Update – inclusion of revised Guidance Notes

Introduction

The following procedure sets out the standards from the Children Act 2004 (known as the section 11 audit) carried out annually by the GSCP. The procedure has been endorsed and approved by the GSCP Executive in December 2019, reviewed, and updated when needed annually, and forms part of the Executive's Published Arrangements under Working Together to Safeguard Children. As such all named partners and relevant agencies have a duty to comply with the procedure for the auditing of section 11 duties.

Under Working Together there is a duty on named agencies to meet the requirements of section 11 but there is significant scope for local discretion around how the GSCP obtains all assurance about the effectiveness of agency compliance with their section 11 duties.

Section 11 places duties on a range of organisations, agencies, and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract or commission 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 that provide children's and other types of services, including Commissioned services
 - Children's and Adult Social Care Services
 - Public Health
 - Housing
 - Sport, Culture and Leisure Services (Including the consideration of Libraries, Registration, and transport services)
 - Licensing Authorities (licenced drivers and licenced premises)
 - Youth Services
 - Youth Offending Teams/Services
- NHS organisations including
 - NHS England
 - Integrated Care Boards
 - NHS Trusts
 - NHS Foundation Trusts
- The Police including
 - Police and Crime Commissioners
 - Chief Officer of each police force in England
 - The British Transport Police (BTP Biannual National Response)
- The National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies (Biannual Regional Response)
 - Governors/Directors of Prisons and Young Offender Institutions
 - Directors of Secure Training Centres
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service CAFCASS (Biannual Regional Response)

The standards are broken down into four areas: (See [Appendix 1](#) for full details)

- 1) Leadership and Accountability
- 2) Safe Recruitment, Induction, Training and Development
- 3) Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- 4) Listening to Children and Young People

Process

The section 11 process is a statutory requirement and an integral part of the self-assessment and assurance of effective safeguarding practice for each agency. It should not be considered as a period of standalone audit activity and therefore should feature in all agencies reporting and internal self-assessment and governance processes.

This section 11 process requires each agency to produce and submit a brief and succinct section 11 report via the provided Online reporting system: <https://www.gscpaudit.org.uk/>

Additional evidence can be uploaded in a suitable format consistent with partners and relevant agencies own business needs and regulatory assurance requirements.

All agencies should address the four section 11 standards ([Appendix 1](#)) identifying evidence of compliance, through existing business processes, for example inspection reports, single agency audit and other processes and practices available; copies can be uploaded as evidence. Hyperlinks should not be used unless the link is to a public document on an open-source website.

The GSCP Business Unit will communicate a submission deadline date with non-submission of a section 11 report reported to the GSCP Executive Chair to follow up with respective senior leaders within that agency.

Each agency should include in their report, where appropriate, relevant single agency actions from previous section 11 audits, safeguarding reviews and other Multi Agency Audits undertaken through the previous period and report back to the Panel giving assurances that these actions have been, are being, or are in a planning cycle to be addressed and embedded in improved practice.

Section 11 reports will need to be submitted to the GSCP Business Unit three weeks prior to a section 11 Assurance Panel (the Panel) for scrutiny by the Independent Scrutineer. Agencies will be invited to attend the Panel for a 30-minute session including Q&A.

Whilst attendance at the Panel is not mandatory this will be a time to expand on the agency's submitted report, respond to questions relating to their submission as well as incorporate other relevant safeguarding topics from the agency to the Panel; therefore, offering a broad picture of the agency's section 11 and broader safeguarding compliance. Non-attendance will result in the Panel assessing the agency's compliance from their submitted report in isolation.

All agencies will be assessed against section 11 of the Children Act 2004 using the submitted section 11 report and Panel time. The Independent Scrutineer will subsequently produce an Assurance report reflecting each agencies submission and Panel time for the consideration of the GSCP Management Group and the GSCP Executive as part of their annual assurances and statement of effectiveness.

GSCP Section 11 Panel Membership

The Panel: (This is not an exhaustive list; members can be added at the discretion of the Independent Scrutineer and GSCP Business Manager action on behalf of the GSCP Executive)

- GSCP Independent Scrutineer – Section 11 Lead and Report Author
- GSCP Business Manager / or Assistant Business Manager
- Stroud District Youth Council – GCC Ambassador Representation

Timescales and deadlines

Single agency section 11 report submitted in the third week in January to cover the financial year, April to March, with section 11 Assurance Panel held in the second week of February. Invites for agency attendance at Panel to be sent out in January.

April 2023 to March 2024	January 2024 – Panel Day January 24 th , 2024
April 2024 to March 2025	January 2025 – Panel Day Report available June
April 2025 to March 2026	January 2026 – Panel Day Report available June

Appendix 1

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 Reportable Standards

Key Standard	Organisations and agencies should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children,
1. Leadership and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A senior 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 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 are always explicitly defined in job descriptions. Practitioners should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision, and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively. A clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
2. Staff Safe Recruitment, Induction, Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 undertake appropriate vetting of staff. Staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and the procedures to be followed. Safeguarding training must be undertaken proportionate to the role of the staff member. - Single agency training and induction are the responsibility of the organisation whereas front line practitioners working in a multi-agency capacity, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads and others as identified must access a local Curriculum to ensure knowledge of local arrangements. Staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Appropriate supervision and support for staff. Staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role. All practitioners should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they have knowledge, skills and expertise that improve over time.
3. Safeguarding Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear priorities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, explicitly stated in strategic policy documents. Policies for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including a child protection policy, and procedures that are in accordance with guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures. Clear escalation policies for staff to follow when their child safeguarding concerns are not being addressed within their organisation or by other agencies. Procedures for dealing with allegation of abuse made against members of staff and volunteers. 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. Good systems for information sharing, which professionals are confident and knowledgeable about.
4. Understanding and communicating with and for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A culture of listening to, and engaging in dialogue with, children – seeking children's views in ways that are appropriate to their age and understanding and taking account of those views in individual decisions and in the establishment or development of services. Ensure the voice of children and young people is heard, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Maintaining verbal and / or non-verbal communication with those accessing the services that you commission or deliver. Advocating and liaising for children and young people in situations of power imbalance. A culture of engaging with children and young people in ways that are appropriate to their age and ability.

Appendix 2

Section 11 Audit Standards Guidance

Section 11 standards should be applied across all agencies that have a function relating to children. This includes both services designed to meet the needs of children young people and families and those services that commission, procure or in any way fund activities for children young people and families. In addition, must be considered within those services that may in the course of their operation come into contact with children young people and families. – Safeguarding is not a service to be delivered but a culture to be imbedded across all services.

Standard 1 Guidance Notes

1. The organisation has a Safeguarding Lead within the organisation of a sufficient level to influence policy and practice across the whole organisation. This is clearly signposted around the organisation. All staff are aware of the Safeguarding Lead and what their role is. The Safeguarding Lead is given sufficient time within their job plan. The Safeguarding Lead has clear oversight of all elements of Safeguarding within the organisation. The Safeguarding Lead routinely updates organisation staff.
2. The organisation has a Deputy Safeguarding Lead. This is clearly signposted around the organisation. All staff are aware of the Deputy Safeguarding Lead and what their role is. The Deputy Safeguarding Lead is given sufficient time within their job plan for this role.
3. Where organisations are large, with multiple departments or locations, each department or location or individual is clear as to who their responsible safeguarding lead is (who may not be within their department).

Standard 2 Guidance Notes

1. All recruitment processes demonstrate the determination of the organisation to safeguard children listed at the organisation. This could be in the form of a generic safeguarding statement included in the job descriptions.
2. The organisation ensures that pre-employment checks including DBS check where relevant are completed before members of staff commence employment, including temporary staff / locums etc.
3. Written references from at least two previous employers are always gained and reviewed before all staff, including temporary staff / locums, commence employment.
4. Single Agency inductions include information on the organisations safeguarding arrangements including the S11 standards, sign posting and requiring staff to read the policies and procedures relating to the organisations safeguarding duties and arrangements. Staff are required to sign to say they have read and understood the organisations arrangements.
5. The induction programme for new staff, including temporary staff, includes time to read the safeguarding policy, as well as time for training on the key local Safeguarding Procedures including but not limited to Information on how to make a referral to MASH.
6. Single agency Training includes but is not limited to training on the organisations S11 duties, policies and procedures and their safeguarding model as relating to their own business model. This training can be self-generated or be bought in and may utilise basic safeguarding eLearning.
7. Multi agency training must be sourced from the GSCP under the GSCP's S11 arrangements. This ensures that all staff requiring multi agency training are cognisant of local partnership arrangements, learning from local and national reviews and understand the GSCP governance arrangements including the Published Arrangements.
8. The organisation has a list of which staff have completed safer recruitment training, and most senior staff have completed this training.
9. The organisation reviews the training status of all staff on a quarterly basis. The organisation works with any individuals whose safeguarding training is not sufficient to ensure that they gain sufficient training as soon as is practicably possible.

10. The organisation ensures that all professionals working with children and vulnerable adults has protected time for Safeguarding Supervision
11. There is an annual internal appraisal process of all staff which includes a review of each member of staff's role and their skills, competencies and knowledge around Safeguarding.

Standard 3 Guidance Notes

1. The organisation has a Safeguarding Policy which has been reviewed within the three years and includes the following:; Safeguarding Children, Looked After Children, Domestic Abuse, Allegations Management, and Escalation & Safeguarding Adults with care and support needs
2. The organisation can provide evidence that all professionals working with children or adults with care and support needs have confirmed that they have read the reviewed Safeguarding Policy.
3. The organisation has written procedures for handling allegations against staff and volunteers and staff are aware of the LADO process or adult equivalent process
4. The organisation has an escalation policy and a whistleblowing policy OR whistleblowing and escalation is included in the safeguarding policy
5. The organisation can evidence that the policy and procedural arrangements are linked to and reference the GSCP's Procedural Manual [Welcome to the Safeguarding Procedures Manual \(trixonline.co.uk\)](http://trixonline.co.uk)
6. The organisation has a process in place to ensure that all minutes from meetings (Strategy Discussions, Case Conferences, Core Groups, Adult Safeguarding Meetings and MARACs) related to safeguarding that come into the organisation are read by that person's usual professional.

Standard 4 Guidance Notes (Compiled in partnership with Stroud District Youth Council)

1. Children and young people's needs become their rights, when recognised as imperative to protection and quality of life, as reflected in human rights for everyone (<http://labspace.open.ac.uk> – October 2009).
2. We would want to see evidence that supports the criteria regarding this standard, that clearly highlights what your organisation or service does regarding the following
 - a. Upholds the UNCRC, particularly (but not exclusively) Articles 3; 4; 6; 12; 13; 15; 19; 20; 21.
<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>
 - b. Enables children and young people to access information that is important for them to make informed decisions.
 - c. Has anonymous and independent feedback from children and young people.
3. If you use a particular framework for ensuring the voice of children and young people is heard, please state which one: e.g., *Hear by Right (National Youth Agency)*; *Lundy Model*; *Treseders Degrees of Participation*; *Harts Ladder of Participation*; *Shier Pathways to Participation*.
4. Young people will be involved in the Section 11 audit process - please make language and terminology accessible and inclusive (e.g., explain acronyms and initialisms)