



## **Essex Safeguarding Children Board** **Learning and Improvement Framework**

### **Introduction**

This document sets out how the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) meets its duties as set out in Working Together 2013 to create, maintain and measure a framework of continuous learning and improvement. The ESCB is formed of partner agencies including health, police, probation, social care, education and the voluntary sector.

The ESCB is committed to continual improvement of the way it works and the outcomes for safeguarding practice. This framework outlines the method by which lessons are learned from the different activities of the Board and how they can best be disseminated and embedded in practice. The aim is to meet the challenges of a changing environment and to further improve safeguarding practice across all agencies. The framework is therefore flexible, responsive to changes and an integral part of the creation of the business plan.

The Board is also committed to continuing to work with other LSCB's and Boards such as the Essex Safeguarding Adult Board, Health and Well Being Board and Clinical Commissioning Groups to share practice and learn from others.

This document sets out:

- Statutory duties of the Board and its partner agencies in terms of learning and improvement
- Methods of learning and development incorporating:
  - Linkages to the Business Plan and wider work of the Board
  - Dissemination of learning
  - Audit and measurement of impact

As the various methods and tools for learning set out in the framework highlight issues to be addressed, so these can then be tackled and evaluated by using those same tools. The process is thus cyclical and ongoing.

Current work that the Board is undertaking which illustrates this cyclical process includes:

- The development and implementation of a flexible and responsive learning and development programme which supports and arises from key themes from serious case reviews, practice, peer reviews, dataset trends and feedback from young people and the community.
- Evaluation of the impact, scope and reach of learning and development across agencies to ensure that programmes are supporting practitioners in their safeguarding work
- Commissioning of a Partnership case review model to identify learning from cases which do not fully meet the SCR threshold but where lessons can nevertheless be learned.
- Continued contribution to and attendance at LSCB events and meetings in the Eastern region and nationally to share practice and learn from others.

### **Statutory duties of the LSCB**

Working Together 2013 defines the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Linked to all of these duties is a requirement to continue to learn and improve. Working Together sets this out as follows:

'Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) should maintain a local learning and improvement framework which is shared across local organisations who work with children and families. This framework should enable organisations to be clear about their responsibilities, to learn from experience and improve services as a result.

Each local framework should support the work of the LSCB and their partners so that:

- reviews are conducted regularly, not only on cases which meet statutory criteria, but also on other cases which can provide useful insights into the way organisations are working together to safeguard and protect the welfare of children;
- reviews look at what happened in a case, and why, and what action will be taken to learn from the review findings;
- action results in lasting improvements to services which safeguard and promote the welfare of children and help protect them from harm; and
- there is transparency about the issues arising from individual cases and the actions which organisations are taking in

response to them, including sharing the final reports of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) with the public.

The local framework should cover the full range of reviews and audits which are aimed at driving improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Some of these reviews (i.e. SCRs and child death reviews) are required under legislation. It is important that LSCBs understand the criteria for determining whether a statutory review is required and always conduct those reviews when necessary.

It is with this guidance in mind that the ESCB has developed this overarching framework for monitoring and improvement of all its activities.

### **Methods and tools for learning**

The framework covers all opportunities for learning. For the ESCB these include:

- Learning and development supported by the ESCB learning and development strategy
- Serious Case Reviews and Partnership case reviews
- Multi agency case audits
- Attendance at practitioner forums by the ESCB Independent Chair
- Consultation with young people
- Section 11 audits
- Learning and Development Audit
- ESCB performance and quality assurance dataset
- Child Death Overview Panel

### **Learning and Development**

The ESCB has an annual learning and development programme which is agreed via the HR and Learning Development sub-committee. The programme is varied and incorporates courses, workshops, conferences and e learning. The programme is adapted through the year as needs dictate and covers issues arising from Serious Case reviews and other audits as well as priorities set as part of the business plan. It is also based on research and latest training and development practice incorporating reflective practice, sharing of practice and the facilitation of learning communities which continue the learning 'beyond the classroom' (Cutler, A)

The learning and development strategy sets out how the programme is developed, as well as an evaluation framework and incorporating the learning into supervision and one to ones.

### **Serious Case Reviews**

The ESCB carries out SCR's in line with statutory guidance via the Serious Case Review Panel. All SCR's are carried out in line with the guidelines in Working Together to use a systems approach and one that is proportionate to the case

Learning from SCR's locally and nationally is cascaded via briefings and workshops and promoted on the ESCB website. Action plans arising from local cases or ones the ESCB has been involved in are monitored and followed up and implemented across different agencies as appropriate.

### **Child Death Overview Panel**

The ESCB carries out Child Death Reviews as set out in Working Together 2013. Lessons and trends arising from these reviews are compiled and reported to the main Board. Campaigns are carried out as appropriate – this has included Safer Sleeping and awareness around batteries, blind cords and nappy sacks.

### **Multi-agency case audits**

Multi agency case audits look at cases put forward by any of the agencies on the Board. Multi agency participants attend the multi-agency case audit meetings and share practice and thoughts on the case and any learning is drawn out. Any multi agency issues arising from audits are passed to the ESCB for action and incorporated into the learning and development plan as required. A quarterly reporting process of the findings of such reviews is made to the Board as part of the overall reporting of data and audits. Collating and analysing audits and data from all agencies form the key area of work of the Quality Assurance sub group and themes and trends are highlighted and reported to the Board as part of an improvement plan.

### **Practitioner forums**

The Independent Chair of the Board regularly attends multi-agency practitioner forums. These enable front line practitioners to discuss any issues or areas where improvements can be made so that the work of the Board can also reflect issues raised at the 'front line'.

### **Consultation with young people**

Plans are underway for greater consultation and involvement of young people in the development of the business plan and activities of the Board to provide greater focus on issues affecting young people. Their views have already influenced the website,

and further discussions and engagement with young people will also form part of the monitoring of the effectiveness of child protection practice. Young people will also be involved in projects forming part of the business plan so that they can actively contribute to the work of the Board.

### **Section 11 Audit**

The Section 11 audit considers safeguarding practice across all agencies. These are undertaken via an online audit tool. Lessons from the audit and gaps are addressed directly by the agency through an action plan and also form part of wider learning where needed including changes to practice.

The audit also allows the identification of additional support for agencies to take place and highlights areas where improvements can be made. The audit also serves as a measurement of impact of safeguarding practice across all agencies.

### **Learning and Development Audit**

The learning and development audit is carried out annually with all agencies and this highlights what training is being carried out, how it is evaluated and crucially how the impact on practice is measured. This is then reviewed by the Learning and Development sub committee and a report made to the Board. The audit allows the Board to identify any gaps in the provision of training and to challenge and support agencies as required to address these to meet their statutory requirements around safeguarding. The audit can also highlight any gaps in the provision of multi-agency training and thus contributes to the ESCB learning and development plan.

### **ESCB Dataset**

The ESCB dataset consists of a number of multi-agency indicators, identified and agreed by the Performance and Quality Assurance sub-committee. The dataset is monitored and reviewed by the Performance and QA sub-committee and members are tasked with actions as appropriate. An overview of the dataset and any areas of concern will be quarterly to the full Board. These areas of concern will then be discussed at the Board and the relevant agencies asked to address as appropriate.

The dataset is currently under review to consider how it can best be utilised to support and inform the ongoing improvement plan for the ESCB. All data in the dataset will be directly linked to the outcomes and objectives in the ESCB business plan.

### **Information from other sources**

The ESCB will also use information and patterns/trends from other areas of work such as complaints and referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer to

highlight any areas where improvements in practice could be addressed.

### **Ongoing dissemination and cascade of learning**

All of the learning and findings from these tools are disseminated and incorporated into the day to the day business of the Board and its partner agencies. This takes various forms and includes:

- Specific learning interventions such as training
- Briefing notes and practice workshops
- Development and updating of protocols and procedures
- Development and ongoing review of the Business Plan
- Discussions, debate and challenge at Board level using evidence from these tools to hold agencies to account
- Information on the website
- Cascade of information via all members of the Board and its sub committees
- Linkages to communication channels in other agencies eg newsletters to ensure key messages are disseminated
- Monitoring and evaluation of impact is ongoing utilising the learning and improvement tools in this framework.

### **Review and taking forward the framework**

The learning and improvement framework will be incorporated into the ESCB Business Plan and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

**References:**

Working Together to Safeguard Children - guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. HM Government, March 2013

Cutler, A. (2011) Can collaborative, inter-agency learning support the development of inter-agency working relationships between practitioners? (MA research paper, University of Hertfordshire)