

## West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (WSSCB)

### Learning & Improvement Framework

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Learning and Improvement Framework is intended to strengthen and support a learning culture across partner agencies in West Sussex to continuously improve services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. To achieve this end, the Board will create a culture of openness and facilitate effective and regular challenge to all partner agencies.
- 1.2. The WSSCB is required to:
  - (a) to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
  - (b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes
- 1.3. The WSSCB should, as a minimum:
  - assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help;
  - assess whether WSSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations;
  - quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned; and
  - monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- 1.4. Working Together 2013 states:

“Professionals and organisations protecting children need to reflect on the quality of their services and learn from their own practice and that of others.

Good practice should be shared so that there is a growing understanding of what works well. Conversely, when things go wrong there needs to be a rigorous, objective analysis of what happened and why, so that important lessons can be learnt and services improved to reduce the risk of future harm to children.

These processes should be transparent, with findings of reviews shared publicly. The findings are not only important for the professionals involved locally in cases. Everyone across the country has an interest in understanding both what works well and also why things can go wrong.

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.

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. "

## 2. Principles for learning and improvement (Working Together 2015)

2.1. The following principles should be applied by the WSSCB and its partner organisations to all reviews:

- there should be a culture of continuous **learning and improvement** across the organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, identifying opportunities to draw on what works and promote good practice;
- the approach taken to reviews should be **proportionate** according to the scale and level of complexity of the issues being examined;
- reviews of serious cases should be led by individuals who are **independent** of the case under review and of the organisations whose actions are being reviewed;
- professionals must be involved fully in reviews and invited to contribute their perspectives without fear of being blamed for actions they took in good faith;
- families, including surviving children, should be invited to contribute to reviews. They should understand how they are going to be involved and their expectations should be managed appropriately and sensitively. This is important for ensuring that the child is at the centre of the process;
- final reports of SCRs **must be published**, including the LSCB's response to the review findings, in order to achieve **transparency**. The impact of
- SCRs and other reviews on improving services to children and families and on reducing the incidence of deaths or serious harm to children must also be described in LSCB annual reports and will inform inspections; and
- improvement must be sustained through regular monitoring and follow up so that the findings from these reviews make a real impact on improving outcomes for children.

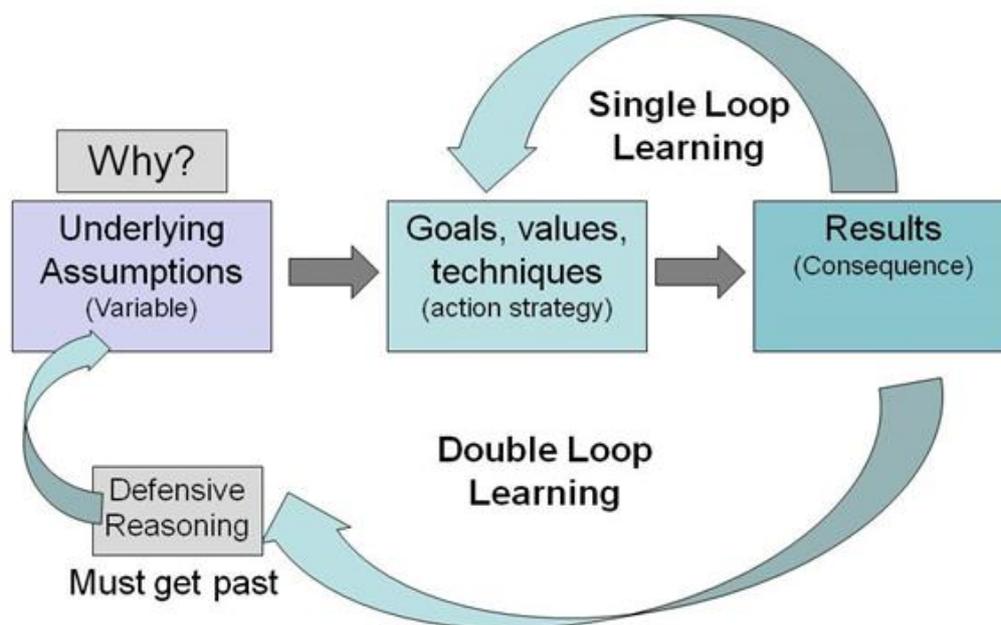
2.2. SCRs and other case reviews should be conducted in a way which:

- recognises the complex circumstances in which professionals work together to safeguard children;
- seeks to understand precisely who did what and the underlying reasons that led individuals and organisations to act as they did;
- seeks to understand practice from the viewpoint of the individuals and organisations involved at the time rather than using hindsight;
- is transparent about the way data is collected and analysed; and
- makes use of relevant research and case evidence to inform the findings

## 3. Double loop learning

3.1. The WSSCB is committed to a double loop approach to learning (Fig 1); utilising learning to reflect not just on our actions, but on the underlying assumptions and rationale behind our actions. This enables us to identify where we need to challenge our thinking and approach.

Fig 1: Double loop learning cycle



#### 4. The inter-connectedness of the Board and its Sub-Groups for learning and improvement

- 4.1. The WSSCB operates with a Sub-Group and network group structure to manage the functional tasks of the Board. The terms of reference of each element of the Board structure necessarily compartmentalises aspects of the Board's work, with the Board itself having overall responsibility for all aspects of learning and improvement within that structure. However, the effectiveness and thoroughness of the Board requires that the work of each Sub-Group interacts with the work of the others, whereby the output of one Sub-Group informs the input to another. This in turn creates the opportunity for the Board to evaluate the effectiveness of agencies' services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 4.2. The WSSCB Independent Chair will meet with the Sub-Group Chairs to drive the WSSCB's Business Plan and manage the interface between the work of the Sub-Groups. This group has a pivotal role in developing the Learning and Improvement framework.

#### 5. The relationship of the WSSCB with other bodies

- 5.1. Learning and improvement is not exclusive to the WSSCB and it must be open to importing learning from, and exporting learning to, other bodies, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Start of Life Board, the Community Safety Partnership, and the Safeguarding Adults Board. The Annual Report of the WSSCB will be an important means of communicating Board learning.
- 5.2. A WSSCB Communication Strategy will be developed to clarify and expand the methods of communication both from the Board and to the Board.

## 6. Scrutiny and Challenge

6.1. The process by which scrutiny and challenge is informed is through the collation, coordination and analysis of information from a variety of different sources. The approach is outlined in more detail in the WSSCB Quality Assurance Framework:

- **Core dataset:** The WSSCB holds a core dataset which includes information from the Local Authority, Police and Health. This dataset includes national, local and WSSCB performance indicators. Information on the priorities areas will be included in the core dataset where appropriate. Allocated senior officers are responsible for reporting against the core dataset for their agency. The Core dataset is enhanced by the basket of performance measures made up of proxy performance measure sets held by each agency to demonstrate impact against outcomes
- **Case reviews and Serious Case Reviews:** The WSSCB undertakes systemic reviews of cases to deliver a rigorous, objective analysis of what happened and why in order to learn lessons for the future
- **Audits**
  - Section 11 audits
  - Single agency audits
  - Multi-agency audits
  - Thematic case file audits
  - Deep-Dives: the WSSCB will run an annual deep dive – a close inspection of the quality of work in a given area. This will include gathering the experiences of children, their families and front line practitioners, case file auditing, and building the journey of a child
- **Reflective practice and journey of the child reviews:** the WSSCB will identify cases for a detailed exploration in order to provide a window on the wider system. These will involve practitioners, and where possible, the experiences of the child and their family
- **Scrutiny of key reports**, e.g. advocacy and participation reports, Independent Reviewing Officer, Child Protection Chairs and LADO reports
- **Tracking and monitoring outcomes** against our strategic priorities outlined in the WSSCB Business Plan
- **Peer review**

## 7. Participation & Engagement with Children and Young People

7.1. The WSSCB will develop a programme to:

- Receive and act upon information about the views and experiences of children and young people (quantitative and qualitative data from single and multi-agency performance reporting and audits, serious case reviews and other management reviews);
- Develop links and build relationships with existing children and young people's groups and forums;
- Raise awareness of safeguarding issues amongst children and young people and equip them with the knowledge to stay safe;
- Promote the direct participation and input of children and young people in the work of the WSSCB at a strategic and operational level;
- Ensure input from children and young people is communicated outwards; and

- Challenge partners to demonstrate how the voice of the child influences their work

## **8. Participation & Engagement with Parents and Carers**

8.1. The WSSCB will develop a programme to:

- Receive and act upon information about the views and experiences of parents and carers (quantitative and qualitative data from single and multi-agency performance reporting and audits, serious case reviews and other management reviews);
- Develop links and build relationships with existing parents' and carers' groups and forums;
- Raise awareness of safeguarding issues amongst parents and carers and equip them with the knowledge to ensure children stay safe; and
- Challenge partners to demonstrate how the voice of parents and carers influences their work

## **9. Involving Front Line Staff and Managers**

9.1. The current methods being used by the WSSCB include:

- Multi-agency training
- Link to practitioners groups used in reviews
- Link to case audits
- Link to feedback from training sessions, workshops, conferences
- Focus groups
- The WSSCB will deliver an annual staff survey across LSCB partner agencies

## **10. Consultation with the Public and Other Stakeholders**

10.1. This will involve communicating what the WSSCB does and seeking to understand from the public what the key child safety issues are within the West Sussex community and their preferred solutions. This will include:

- Improving the use of the WSSCB webpages as a means of communicating messages and receiving feedback
- Exploring the use of social media as a means of communicating messages and receiving feedback
- Developing the role and responsibilities of Lay Members
- A WSSCB Communication Strategy will be developed to clarify and expand the methods of communication both from the Board and to the Board

## **11. Future Initiatives**

11.1. The WSSCB will keep the Learning & Improvement Framework under review and when needed will adapt the Framework to ensure learning has a demonstrable impact on improving services for children and families in West Sussex.