



**ROCHDALE BOROUGH
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP**



Strategic Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework

2021-2023

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Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership Quality Assurance Framework			
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Introduction

The Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership (RBSCP) wants all services for children young people and families to be of a consistently high quality. Therefore, the RBSCP must ensure that safe front line services are delivered by partners and individual organisations, as well as quality assuring the systems and processes in place.

Our strategic quality assurance framework will enable agencies to develop a shared understanding of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and services across Rochdale.

One of the key ways we will measure the quality of services is by looking at the *wellbeing outcomes achieved by children and their families*; the impact on real lives – whether and in what way their lives are better and safer as a result of the various services, interventions and arrangements we are able to offer. The experiences of children, parents and frontline staff are an essential source of information for determining what outcomes have been achieved. The outcome of this framework will be the continual improvement and development of services for children and young people.

Working Together 2018¹ identified the Local Authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Group as the 3 statutory safeguarding partners. Our QA Framework recognises that safeguarding children and young people extends beyond these 3 agencies and is therefore applicable across all member agencies of the RBSCP.

This framework aims to achieve a good understanding for the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and services, for those working in safeguarding with leadership, management and scrutiny responsibilities in individual organisations and partnerships.

¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

Framework principles

Who the framework is for

The framework is primarily for use by RBSCP member organisations, and will be implemented by the Joint Quality Assurance, Excellence in Practice and Engagement Sub-Group. The key principles outlined in the framework can be applied by any partnership, organisation or individual with safeguarding responsibility for children and young people.

Governance

Implementation and delivery of the framework will be overseen by the Joint Quality Assurance, Excellence in Practice and Engagement Sub-Group. Quarterly reporting on activity will be reported to the Joint Sub-Group, and assurance reporting provided to the Safeguarding Children Partnership meeting.

The themes and focus of our activity will be shaped by the RBSCP priorities (as set out in the annual business plan) as well as learning from QA activity & reporting and practice reviews. Regular engagement between QAEIP and Child Safeguarding Practice Review Sub-Groups will take place to ensure learning and activity is aligned and co-ordinated.

The purpose of the framework

The framework is intended to help leaders in single organisations and strategic partnerships to answer the question: *'How effective are we at keeping children and young people safe?'* in a more systematic, holistic and comprehensive way. Understanding our collective effectiveness will therefore:

- Continue to keep children safe
- Manage the risk inherent in this area of work
- Drive improvement in outcomes for children and their families across the system
- Ensure families receive appropriate safeguarding support at the right time
- Achieve best value

Children's safeguarding is complex. This is because of the complexities of interacting human and organisational histories, behaviours and relationships. Effective multi-agency quality assurance needs to recognise and work with this complexity. The experiences of children, parents and frontline staff are an essential source of information for determining what outcomes have been achieved.

Our key principles

Our Quality Assurance Framework has been developed with some key principles in mind. They underpin the quality assurance and scrutiny work of the Partnership, and help to keep a focus on the purpose of our activity.

- **Children and families are the experts in their experiences.** We want to promote the voice of the families across Rochdale, recognising their views, feelings and experiences of safeguarding services.
- **Safeguarding is complex in its nature.** Constant scrutiny and review is required to ensure continuous improvement across the system in light of an evolving legislative framework and regional and national contextual influences.
- **All agencies are committed to learning and improvement.** Effective quality assurance comes from the nature and detail of organisational and partnership culture and leadership. We all need to be engaged and willing to learn and improve together
- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.** The Quality Assurance Framework needs to offer reassurance that all parts of the system are working effectively both individually and collectively.
- **The Quality Assurance Framework has to provide learning back in to the system.** Its core purpose is to improve outcomes for children and families, not to describe processes or service provision. We will be supportive in our approach to learning and development across the system. All activity and reporting should be fair, participative and transparent.
- **Quality Assurance activity is broad and adaptive.** Different areas of enquiry will require a different approach, and we will need to make sure that we are measuring and scrutinising the right things in the right way. We will adapt our method of enquiry and ensure that performance indicators, system throughput and outcomes for children and families are all given due consideration.

Links with practice and improvement

The purpose of our QA activity should be improved outcomes for the children, young people and families living in Rochdale. It is therefore important that we take account and are influenced by current safeguarding themes within the borough.

The focus of all QA activity (as set out on pages 7 and 9) will be linked with activity and learning from Rapid Review referrals and completed Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. The findings from QA activity will be published on the RBSCP website, and will be shared and reflected in our training offer for safeguarding professionals.

Where action plans lead to service improvement, we will closely monitor implementation and impact on children's lives as a result of this activity.

Audit topics will be identified in the annual work plan for the Quality Assurance, Excellence in Practice and Engagement Sub-Group, and additional themes will be selected dependent upon individual agency priorities, regulatory inspections and other regional and national context, and cases referred for Rapid Review that may offer additional learning for the Partnership.

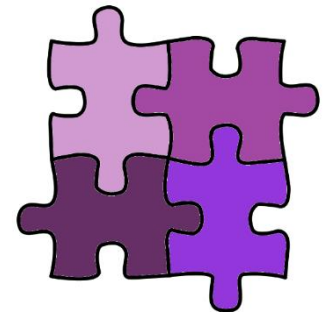
Our Quality Assurance and Performance Reporting Activity

The subject and method of our activity will vary depending upon the intended outcome. Our approach will be flexible and adaptive to suit our needs. The table on the next page outlines the breadth of different QA activity that will take place across the RBSCP, and Appendix C sets out a process flowchart for our routine QA activity.

We will ensure activity takes note of a range of different evidence sources to arrive at a rounded view of quality and performance. Above all, we will ensure that the child's voice is prominent and observed as part of any work undertaken.

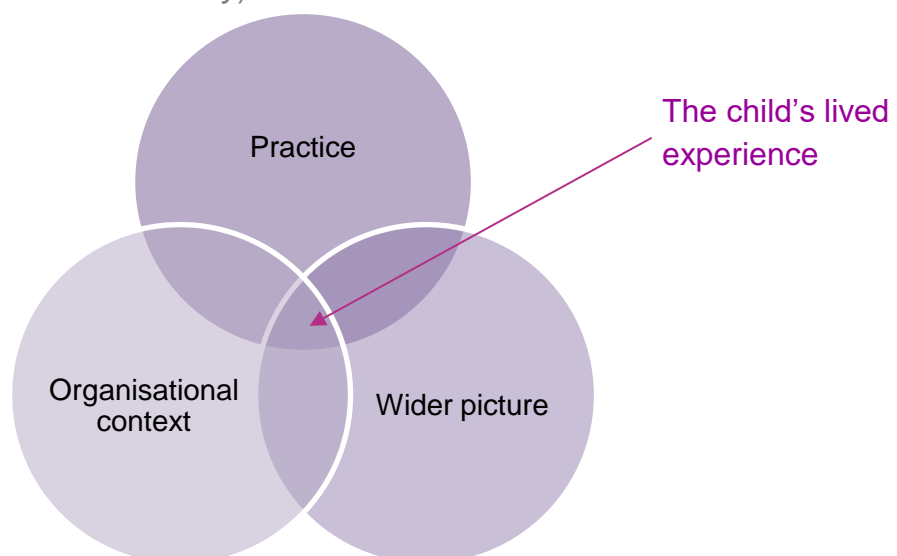
Getting the balance between qualitative, quantitative and outcome data will be central to give a balanced, unbiased review of quality and performance. To this end, we will need to look at the following (or a mix of these dependent upon the particular audit query) as part of our routine QA activity.

- Children's case file records
- The views of professionals and other stakeholders
- Children's voice reporting
- The RBSCP performance outcomes framework
- Exception data reporting



Our activity will focus around three main themes.

- **Practice** – we will explore and understand practice-based issues that affect vulnerable cohorts of children & young people (*e.g. neglect, criminal exploitation*)
- **Organisational context** – we will explore strategic issues that can have an impact on children's lives (*e.g. workforce, resources*)
- **Wider picture** – these enquiries will look at wider contextual factors (*e.g. deprivation, culture and identity*)



What will we do?	What will we learn?	When will we do it?
Section 11 Audit Each agency will be asked to complete a self-assessment to identify their own individual strengths and areas for development.	By looking strategically at all agency returns, we will be able to develop a shared understanding of what our collective strengths are in safeguarding vulnerable children and young people.	The Section 11 assessments will be completed on an annual basis. Every 3 years, the RBSCP will seek strategic peer review opportunities to test out our own S11 findings.
Multi-Agency Case File Audits Multi-agency case file audits around a particular case or theme. All relevant agencies will be asked to participate and a learning report and action plan will be prepared in response to the findings.	We will arrive at a shared understanding of our collective response, including examples of best practice, and what the Partnership needs to improve around specific areas of safeguarding practice.	A minimum of 4 multi-agency audits will take place each year across children and adult services.
Performance Outcomes monitoring Quarterly reporting on the Safeguarding Children Partnership performance outcomes framework.	Key performance indicators across all agencies will provide professionals and leaders across the system with a single overview of how safeguarding activity is being delivered, and what, if any, pressure points exist.	Performance reporting will be provided on a quarterly basis in arrears.
Thematic deep-dives We will utilise learning from practice reviews, QA reporting, and other regional & national developments to undertake our own thematic deep-dives. These will include a mix of audit, performance data, and stakeholder engagement. These enquiries could be based on individual cases or strategic areas of practice.	Learning will be gained in a similar way to case file audit activity, but will be more strategic in that it incorporates performance data and stakeholder feedback.	There won't be a set frequency for completing deep-dive enquiries and they will be agreed by the Sub-Group Chair when they are required to happen.

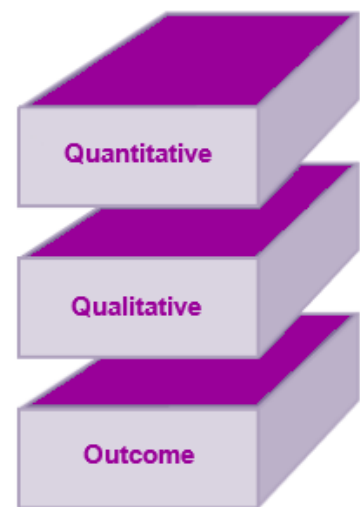
Our evidence base: building a shared understanding

It is important to define what our evidence base will be as part of the Quality Assurance Framework. We have acknowledged that safeguarding is complex in its nature, and we will therefore need to take different evidence types and sources into account. We will collate learning from each of these sources to triangulate findings and arrive at a comprehensive shared understanding of the effectiveness of services.

Performance Information

Within this framework there are 3 types of evidence that should be considered:

- **Quantitative** – This type of evidence is concerned with "*how much or how many*", examples include: data and trends, performance indicators and targets
- **Qualitative** – This type of evidence is concerned with "*how well something is done*", examples include: views of practitioners, children and families; quality of assessments, case audits, mapping evidence to criteria
- **Outcome** – This type of evidence is concerned with "*so what*", what difference has an intervention made to children and families. Examples include: reduction/cessation in harm, increase in attendance at appointments, improved wellbeing, fewer safeguarding incidents of a similar nature







Sources and Range of methods

To arrive at a truly holistic picture of our combined effectiveness and impact, we will consult with 4 main evidence sources, set out below:

- The views and experiences of children, young people and parents & carers
- Feedback from frontline professionals and managers
- Exploring and examining case file records
- Other information held within each organization including performance information and policy & procedures.



Evidence source	How will we do it	What will we learn
 Children, parents and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User surveys / interviews conducted by phone or in person • Engagement records (e.g. consultation documents) showing how agencies engage and record strategic interactions with children & families • Senior managers / councillors / board members etc. hearing the voices of children & young people, parents and carers, either directly or indirectly. 	<p>It's important to know how children, parents and carers experienced the professionals and agencies they interact with, to understand outcome & impact. This will tell us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What difference the interventions & services have made to their lives? How are things better as a result? • What did they find helpful? • What do they feel could have been done differently?
 Frontline staff and managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff survey exercises & focus groups exploring particular themes of practice • an annual partnership survey in which frontline staff in all organisations are asked to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of partnership working in respect of key partners (e.g. Section 11 Audit) • Walking the floor where those with leadership, management or scrutiny responsibilities observe frontline practice 	<p>Those working directly with children and families will share their knowledge of the quality and impact of their own service, as well as how they 'navigate the system'. This will tell us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What they feel families find helpful • How they interact with other agencies • What could be improved to help them to do their job more effectively
 Case file records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case record auditing using the methodology set out in this framework • Thematic auditing looking at records from a particular perspective to understand impact of one intervention or factor, rather than an audit of the entire lived experience. 	<p>The case records held by each organisation, in whatever the format, will be a rich source of information. They will tell us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How children & families engage with that service • What is known about each child (and what is missing) • How that information contributes to a bigger picture
 Other organisational activity & information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management information reports will usually produce quantitative information and some degree of qualitative information • HR Information looking at staff recruitment & retention, exit interviews etc. • Policy & procedure to understand safeguarding processes 	<p>Organisations will have a range of information in their systems which is relevant to safeguarding quality assurance e.g. Human Resource, financial information and learning & development systems. We will learn how each agency monitors and supports their staff, as well as the systems and processes in place to promote effective safeguarding activity for themselves as well as across the partnership.</p>

Information Sharing and Confidentiality

All RBSCP member agencies need to be aware of the importance of confidentiality and information governance as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018².

All Safeguarding Children Partnerships in England are bound by Working Together 2018, which sets out provision for information sharing between agencies for the purposes of safeguarding activity as well as quality assurance activity.

The Children's Act 2014 also makes provision for information sharing to support the work of safeguarding partners.



Organisations and agencies within a strong multi-agency system should have confidence that information is shared effectively, amongst and between them, to improve outcomes for children and their families. Safeguarding partners may require any person or organisation or agency to provide them, any relevant agency for the area, a reviewer or another person or organisation or agency, with specified information. This must be information which enables and assists the safeguarding partners to perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including as related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.

Extract from Working Together 2018, Chapter 3 page 79

The Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership has an Information Sharing Agreement in place which covers information sharing between agencies. No personal information will be made public as part of our activity, and no individuals will be personally identifiable as a result.

In all Quality Assurance activity, all agencies should take all necessary precautions to safeguard personal information, and comply with all relevant information governance policies and procedures.

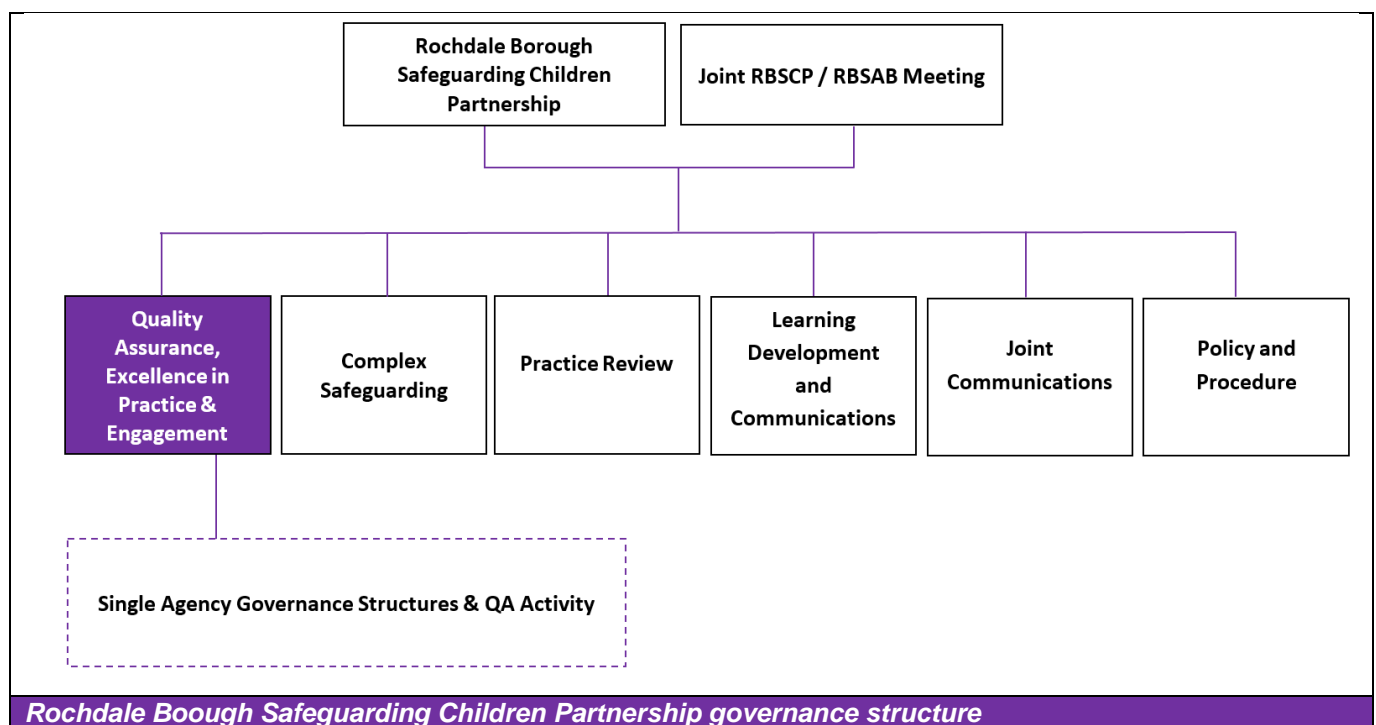
² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted/data.htm>

Reporting and governance

We want to ensure that our quality assurance activity influences learning and improvements across the Rochdale safeguarding partnership. For this reason, it is important to include robust governance arrangements in our framework, underpinning the work that we do.

The Quality Assurance, Excellence in Practice and Engagement Sub Group will be the main body to oversee delivery of Quality Assurance activity across the Partnership. Overview assurance reporting, including findings and learning from audit and practice reviews, performance information and thematic deep-dive work will be reported to the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership at least once per year.




Regular engagement between QAEIPE and Practice Review sub-groups will ensure that learning is not lost between independent activities.



Learning and assurance reporting through the Partnership Structure will not be limited to a single format or frequency, however as a minimum activity will include the following.

- ✓ Each audit will have an associated findings / learning report and action plan to address any recommendations
- ✓ Quarterly reporting on performance information and activity across all agencies
- ✓ Quarterly reporting on links with Practice Reviews
- ✓ Annual overview report bringing together all activity and learning

Quality Assurance Framework – Plan on a page

	Quarterly	Annually	Every 3 years
 Audit activity	Multi-Agency Audit	Thematic Deep Dive	Peer review
	Performance Information Monitoring	Section 11 Audit	Review of training and development offer
	Review of Rapid Review referrals and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	Responding to inspection findings and recommendations	
		Responding to learning from Practice Reviews	
 Engagement		Thematic children & families survey	Multi-agency Staff survey
 Reporting	Audit learning report including action plans	Annual audit activity & learning overview report – to include child and family voice	Priority setting for next 3 years based upon learning from QA activity
	Quarterly Performance Information report	Annual Performance Information report	Findings and learning from multi-agency staff survey
		Single-agency reporting on QA activity	

Appendix A: Performance Information dataset

The current RBSCP performance information set is shown below, which was agreed by the QAEIPE group in November 2020. The set of indicators is dynamic, and will be subject to change as reporting progresses. The list below sets out the minimum information that will be collected on a quarterly basis.

Neglect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children and young people who are the subject of a child protection plan under the category of neglect
Child sexual abuse & exploitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of crimes with a <i>child sexual exploitation</i> flag Number of children and young people who are the subject of a child protection plan under the category of sexual abuse
Complex safeguarding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children & young people open to the Complex Safeguarding Team
Missing from home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children missing from home who are the subject to a child protection plan Number of incidents missing from home for children subject to a child protection plan Number of children missing from home who are subject to a child protection plan and are at risk of CSE
Early Help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of new EHAs initiated
Children affected by Domestic Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children and young people who are the subject of a child protection plan under the category of physical abuse Number of contacts to EHASH with a main category of domestic abuse The proportion of children subject to a child protection plan where domestic abuse is a feature
Emotional health and wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of under 18s admitted to adult psychiatric wards Number of children and young people presenting at A&E for self-harming
Child Protection activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and rate of referrals to Children's Social Care Percentage of total referrals to Children's Social Care for reasons of abuse/neglect Percentage of referrals which occurred within 12 months of previous referral (rolling 12 months) Number and rate of Section 47 enquiries Number and rate of Initial Child Protection Conferences held Distribution of working days from Child Protection Strategy Meeting to Initial Child Protection Conference Number and rate of children and young people subject to CP plans Number and rate of Children in Need Number and rate of children starting to become looked after Number and rate of children and young people ceasing to be looked after Total number of open EHA multi-agency plans in place Percentage of successful completion rate of drug treatment for parents / adults living with children (rolling 12 months) Number of Rapid Review referrals received Outcomes of Rapid Reviews

Appendix B: Glossary of terms

RBSCP	Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CP	Child Protection
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
QAEIPE	Quality Assurance, Excellence in Practice and Engagement (Sub-Group)
QA	Quality Assurance

Appendix C: QA Process Map

