

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017

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**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

#### **SECTION 11 AUDITS**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To inform members of the progress made since the Ofsted inspection in November 2015.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

Members are asked to comment on the changes made to the Section 11 auditing process, outlining the safeguarding implications of services provided by Slough Borough Council (SBC).

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The report addresses the following priorities:

1. **Protecting vulnerable children**

Section 11 audits are undertaken to ensure that all SBC services consider the role they have in safeguarding children, and the policies they operate to fulfil this role.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The Section 11 auditing process contributes to the following outcomes:

- Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.
- Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

Should a service require amendment in light of the auditing process, the financial implications of this will be borne by the service in question. The auditing process itself has very limited financial impact (e.g. officer time dedicated to its completion).

## 5. Supporting Information

5.1 The obligation to complete Section 11 audits was established in the Children Act 2004. The stipulation given in this outlines that local authorities need to ensure that, when conducting their business, all service areas must demonstrate an awareness of their contribution to safeguarding and the manner in which they fulfil this. The exact wording of the Children's Act 2004, Section 11 subsection 2 reads as follows:

*Each person and body to whom this section applies must make arrangements for ensuring that:*

*a) Their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and*

*b) Any services provided by another person pursuant to arrangements made by the person or body in the discharge of their functions are provided having regard to that need.*

5.2 However, this was an area which was deemed to be in need of significant work by the Ofsted inspection of November 2015. Recommendation 124 of the Ofsted report stipulated that SBC needed to establish a programme of effective monitoring and quality assurance. Section 11 audits were specified as an integral part of this culture change.

5.3 As a result, the Slough Local Safeguarding Children's Board and SBC have committed themselves to ensuring that Section 11 audits are completed. They are also committed to having these processes as ones with a genuine impact on policy and practice, rather than simply a contractual obligation. Progress on this was shared with the Education and Children's Services Board on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

5.4 Whilst the audits were now being undertaken, the Panel stated that further progress was desirable. The embedding of the process still required more effort, which the SBC Leadership Team were committed to providing given their ownership of the matter. The audits also needed to be more ambitious rather than limited to compliance and the system needed compliance to avoid duplication or omission; an Action Plan has been produced and is being used to enforce this. This Plan is attached as Appendix A.

5.5 The Action Plan outlines the 8 standards by which progress on Section 11 auditing will be assessed. These are as follows:

- Senior management have commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare
- There is a clear statement of the agency's responsibility towards children and this is available to all staff
- There is a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting welfare
- Service development takes into account the needs to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families

- There is effective training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or, depending on the agencies primary functions, in contact with children and families
- Safer recruitment procedures including vetting procedures and those for managing allegations are in place
- There is effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- There is effective information sharing

5.6 These are measured on a 'red, amber, green' scale. At present, progress is as follows:

Green rating: 8 actions

- Senior managers' commitment to be an explicit item in their appraisals
- Senior Leadership Team to mentor / support care leavers
- Induction pack for new employees to include safeguarding statement
- Develop child-friendly complaints literature and form
- Develop regular reporting on corporate L&D data for review at Corporate Management Team / Senior Leadership Team.
- Better embedding of safeguarding needs in corporate induction
- Safer recruitment procedures including vetting procedures and those for managing allegations are in place
- Develop information sharing processes in relation to support for children

Amber rating: 7 actions

- Senior managers' commitment
- Commissioning and procurement activity to include securing this commitment
- Senior Leadership Team to undertake Section 11 audits once every 2 years
- Ensure all council staff understand what they need to do if they have safeguarding concerns about a child
- Develop with partners a Children's Early Help Commissioning Board
- Develop Section 11 checklist
- Review Local Safeguarding Children's Board functions, and implement new arrangements

Red rating: no actions

## 6. **Conclusion**

6.1 The Panel is requested to note the progress being made on Section 11 auditing, the contribution it makes to safeguarding and the future developments which will offer the most benefit to local children.

## 7. **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Section 11 Audits Action Plan

## 8. **Background Papers**

None