

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

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PART I **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

SECTION 11 AUDITS

1. **Purpose of Report**

This report provides an overview of work in the Council relating to Safeguarding, specifically Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

2. **Recommendation**

The Panel is requested to note and comment as appropriate on the report.

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities applicable to this report**

1. Protecting vulnerable children

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes applicable to this report**

The responsibilities of Section 11 cut across services which support all the priority outcomes "putting people first", with a specific focus on Outcome 1 – Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications relating to this report.

(b) **Risk Management**

Each of the actions that comprise this update report are already contained within the service planning framework of the relevant Council Directorates and overseen by the corporate Five Year Plan Board, Cabinet and Scrutiny committee. Monitoring reports including identification of risks and mitigating action will be reported through this governance process.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications relating to this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

None required.

(e) Workforce

There are no workforce implications relating to this report.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

5.2 Specifically, Section 11 places a duty on local authorities that provide children's and other types of services, including children's and adult social care services, public health, housing, sport, culture and leisure services, licensing and youth services. The responsibilities of Section 11 cuts across all Council services and those of Slough Children's Services Trust (SCST).

5.3 Eight national standards are used to assess s11, reproduced below:

- 1) Senior management have commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare
- 2) There is a clear statement of the agency's responsibility towards children and this is available to all staff
- 3) There is a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting welfare
- 4) Service development takes into account the needs to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families
- 5) 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
- 6) Safer recruitment procedures including vetting procedures and those for managing allegations are in place
- 7) There is effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- 8) There is effective information sharing

5.4 An initial audit of s11 work against the eight standards was undertaken across the Council and reported to CMT in May 2016 and to the summer meetings of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and Education and Children's

Services Scrutiny Panel (ECSSP). A presentation on s11 was made to the Council's Senior Leadership Team on 28 February 2017 as a precursor to launching a corporate s11 Champions' Group with meetings scheduled during the year to track progress against s11. The aforementioned initial audit was refreshed in March 2017, utilising a Pan-Berkshire s11 Audit Tool, and reported to the Audit Committee of the Pan-Berkshire LSCB on 20 June 2017. The Minutes (extract) from the Pan-Berkshire LSCB Audit Committee noted that:

"..... Slough had submitted a good return providing useful evidence of their journey to date. There were areas noted which would benefit from further scrutiny and challenge. The panel suggested the inclusion of more comprehensive evidence and links and challenged some of the section grading."

Current progress

- 5.5 The s11 Champions Group was established, launching on 21 June 2017 with meetings scheduled on a bi-monthly basis. The last meeting, held on 22 August, agreed the Terms of Reference and updated the s11 Audit Tool based on a discussion which reflected the findings from the aforementioned meeting of the Pan-Berkshire LSCB Audit Committee and on-going work within SBC.
- 5.6 The governance for the s11 Champions Group is such that the Terms of Reference, Agenda and Minutes, Action Log and extant version of the Audit Tool are on a shared drive available to the Group, which includes ex-officio members, i.e. Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive. This process therefore reflects the ethos of the Group that its work is transparent, crosscutting, that attendees (which include Slough Children's Services Trust) are representatives of their service area and with a collaborative brief – in short, the governance underlines the principle that safeguarding is everyone's business.
- 5.7 In the current context of the Council's senior management restructure, membership of the Champions' Group will need to be refreshed to take account of new colleagues / roles.
- 5.8 Members will wish to know that a Member Safeguarding Training session was arranged for 18 October 2017 and that there have been recent appointments to two new posts in Children, Learning & Skills (CLS) Directorate: Education Safeguarding, and Prevent.
- 5.9 The latest self-assessment against the eight national standards used for s11 are summarised below and in the Table 1 overleaf:
- 1) Standard 1: Action – Develop a corporate Volunteer Strategy and Policy to provide assurance that there is consistency with paid staff re safeguarding training (induction, refresher, role-specific and appraisal). This action is currently assigned to the Service Lead Communities & Leisure and Service Lead People, with timescales to be confirmed.
 - 2) Standard 2: Action – Revised Procurement guidelines to include standard contract clause that providers are required to demonstrate regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This action is currently assigned to the Head of Procurement, with a completion date of June 2017.
 - 3) Standard 3: Action – None
 - 4) Standard 4: Action – None

5) Standard 5: Actions - (a) Develop corporate systems for monitoring compliance from On-boarding through to induction for staff and volunteers; (b) Assurance on compliance by employees / volunteers attending Induction which includes Safeguarding element. Actions (a) and (b) are currently assigned to Service Lead People with timescales to be confirmed.

6) Standard 6: Action – Consider a separate Safer Recruitment Policy. This action is currently assigned to Service Lead People.

7) Standard 7: Action – None

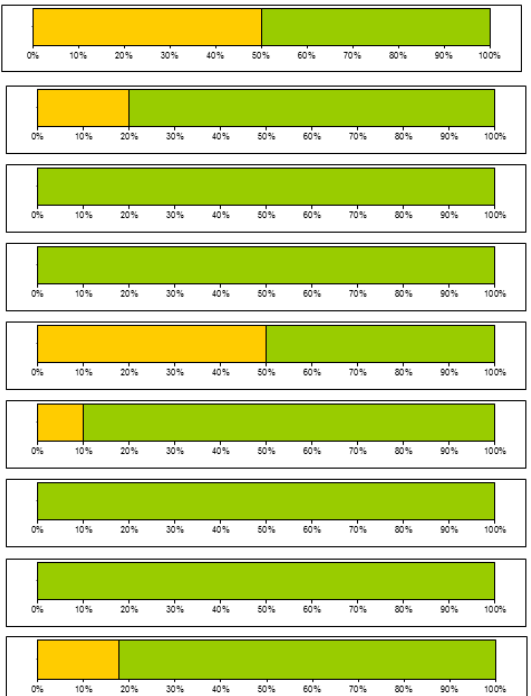
8) Standard 8: Action – None

Table 1

Section 11 Audit Tool - Score Summary

Totals for each area

Standard	No of questions	Not met	Partly met	Fully met	Unanswered
1. Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare	2	0	1	1	0
2. A clear statement of the agency's responsibility towards children is available to all staff	5	0	1	4	0
3. A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children	2	0	0	2	0
4. Service development takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed by the views of children and families	2	0	0	2	0
5. Staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or in contact with children and families	6	0	3	3	0
6. Recruitment, vetting procedures and allegations against staff	10	0	1	9	0
7. Inter-agency working	4	0	0	4	0
8. Information sharing	3	0	0	3	0
Total All Areas	34	0	6	28	0



5.10 Once compliance with s11 is substantially embedded across the Council in the context of the new senior management structure, the remit of the Group will need to refocus on embedding cultural change across SBC and partners.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

None.

7. **Conclusion**

Members are invited to note and comment on this update of s11 progress with the Council.

8. **Appendices Attached**

None

9. **Background Papers**

None.