

Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Quality Assurance Framework

1. Introduction:

1.1 The Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) is collectively responsible as a partnership for strategic oversight of safeguarding arrangements across Somerset. Our role is to lead, coordinate, develop, challenge, and monitor the delivery of effective child protection and safeguarding practice by all agencies across Somerset.

1.2 Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. Strong, effective multi-agency arrangements are ones that are responsive to local circumstances and engage the right people.

1.3 For local arrangements to be effective, they should engage organisations and agencies that can work in a collaborative way to provide targeted support to children and families as appropriate. This approach requires flexibility to enable joint identification of, and response to, existing and emerging needs, and to agree priorities to improve outcomes for children.

2. Vision:

2.1 The Partnership's vision is that unborn babies, children, and young people in Somerset grow up in a safe environment, free from abuse and neglect. Children, young people, and their families will receive the right level of support and intervention, at the right time, by skilled professionals to ensure that children and young people have the best start to life.

2.2 Professionals and organisations responsible for 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 and young people. There should be regular exploration of organisational processes and procedures, the knowledge and use of them within organisations and their impact on the quality of services.

3. Purpose of this document:

3.1 This framework exists to support the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) in carrying out its quality assurance, learning and improvement functions. It is outcomes focused and aims to ensure the Partnership's activities have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people in Somerset.

3.2 The framework sets out how the Partnership will make a difference and improve outcomes for children and young people. It also details the governance structures, tools and processes that will support the Partnership in carrying out this role. Finally, it will outline how the SSCP will

know that it is making a difference, including highlighting the information and data that is available to support monitoring of outcomes.

4. Making it work:

4.1 For the SSCP to effectively carry out its role and ensure the delivery of the principles in this framework, there is a need for all partners in Somerset to work together.

4.2 On behalf of their partner agencies, members of the SSCP Executive and wider partnership commit to the following:

1. to reflect and incorporate SSCP priorities within their own planning process;
2. to provide safeguarding data that evidences implementation of the SSCP priorities and the fulfilment of statutory duties (incl. Section 11 and Section 175/157);
3. to provide that data on a regular basis through a named individual;
4. to review the information and evidence gathered by the SSCP and use it to challenge both their own agencies and partners and to effectively monitor the impact of that challenge; and
5. to use information held by the SSCP to develop services and make improvements to existing services including at the early help and statutory level, using clear quality assurance processes to evidence the improvements made.

4.3 The SSCP has an Independent Scrutineer, who has overall oversight of the functioning of the Partnership and drives continuous improvement through constructive challenge, to ensure arrangements are working effectively for children, families and practitioners (*Working Together 2023*). The Scrutineer judges the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a range of methods.

5. Priorities:

5.1 The starting point for setting meaningful priorities is asking the question "are we making a difference?" To do this the SSCP Executive will review evidence to show that:

- Children and young people are being kept safe.
- Children and young people are experiencing improved outcomes evidenced by a reduction in risk.

5.2 To determine the extent to which these statements are true, the SSCP will use a variety of information sources including, but not limited to, the following:

- Local learning from learning reviews, audit activity, insight visits and quality assurance.
- National learning from case reviews and inspections.
- Demographic information highlighting outcomes for children and young people.
- Audit and performance data demonstrating the effectiveness of local services.
- National government priorities in relation to safeguarding.

5.3 Using these sources of information supports the SSCP Executive in understanding the impact that the SSCP has had on outcomes for children and young people. In addition, analysis of the information will identify gaps or emerging needs which should be addressed, and these will form the basis for new priorities.

6. Scrutiny and Assurance Framework

		Roles / Responsibilities	Dissemination of Learning	Timescale	Why this activity is important
Section 11 Audit – self-assessment	<p>The Section 11 self-assessment is an audit exercise to ensure agencies and organisations with a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 are compliant with their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people within their organisation. The audit considers the following domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and governance • Performance and outcomes • Commissioning and quality • Priorities and partnerships • Resource and workforce management • Culture and challenge <p>There are opportunities to develop additional questions for specific areas of focus as identified by the partnership.</p>	<p>High-level oversight of key areas of concern and good practice by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Scrutineer • SSCP Business Unit • Partners/relevant agencies • Regional Audit group 	<p>Findings reported to/in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP Executive • Q&P subgroup • 12 monthly report • SSCP Learning bulletin <p>Section 11 findings will inform thematic Partnership events.</p>	<p>Quarters 2-4</p> <p>Repeated every three years</p> <p>Year one of the S11 process</p>	<p>Provides leaders in organisations with a strategic overview of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in their organisations.</p> <p>Holds leaders to account for the essential changes identified in the self-assessment, that are required to ensure children are effectively safeguarded.</p>
Section 11 Audit – practitioner survey	<p>Agencies with responsibilities under Section 11 will participate in practitioner survey following the Section 11 audit activity. This activity aims to evaluate agency self-assessment submissions by hearing from practitioners directly and considering their responses.</p>	<p>High-level oversight of key areas of concern and good practice by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Scrutineer • SSCP Business Unit • Partners/relevant agencies • Regional Audit group 	<p>Findings reported to/in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP Executive • Q&P subgroup • 12 monthly report • SSCP Learning bulletin 	<p>Quarters 2-4</p> <p>Repeated every three years</p> <p>Year two of the S11 process</p>	<p>To ensure that the voices of practitioners in organisations are heard.</p> <p>To better understand leadership and practitioner understanding of safeguarding</p>

Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

	<p>The format for practitioners from all organisations will be in the form of a survey aligned to the themes of the S11 self-assessment audit.</p> <p>Practitioner surveys can also be used for a range of quality assurance topics.</p>				responsibility and activity in organisations.
Section 11 Audit – peer review workshops	Agencies with responsibilities under Section 11 will participate in peer reviews following the Section 11 audit activity. This activity will take place after the practitioner survey to look at progress, seek assurance and offer peer support.	<p>High-level oversight of key areas of concern and good practice by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Scrutineer • SSCP Business Unit • Partners/relevant agencies • Community members • Young people • Regional Audit group 	<p>Findings reported to/in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP Executive • Q&P subgroup • 12 monthly report 	<p>Quarters 2-4</p> <p>Repeated every three years</p> <p>Year three of the S11 process</p>	To enable leaders across organisations to identify good practice and opportunities to support each other to improve safeguarding culture, leadership and practice in the Somerset system.
Section 175/157 Audit	School audits carried out by Education Safeguarding with oversight provided by SSCP Education Safeguarding Partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Safeguarding • Schools • Colleges • Early years providers 	<p>Findings reported to/in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP Executive • SSCP Education Safeguarding Partnership • Q&P subgroup • 12 monthly report 	Annual	<p>To identify good practice and areas of concern in school/ Trust safeguarding practice.</p> <p>To hold school leaders to account for good safeguarding understanding and practice.</p>
Young Peoples Quality Assurance Panel	Face to face meeting between Safeguarding Partnership Executive and children and young			As required	For SSCP Exec to understand the safeguarding issues that

Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

	people. Coordinated by SSCP Business Unit.				<p>matter most to young people.</p> <p>To ensure that these issues are an integral part of SSCP safeguarding Quality Assurance.</p> <p>To regularly feedback to young people the progress made.</p>
Multi-Agency Audits	Multi-agency audits of case files that relate to specific themes identified through local priorities, local reviews, inspection findings, performance data and national research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Scrutineer • SSCP Q&P subgroup • Partners/relevant agencies 	<p>Findings reported to/in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP Executive • QA subgroup • Q&P subgroup • 12 monthly report 	Quarterly	<p>To better understand local multi-agency safeguarding practice.</p> <p>For the SSCP Q&P subgroup to be accountable for the implementation of improved practice for individual children and to extrapolate wider themes.</p>
Multi-Agency Practice Evaluations (MAPEs)	Multi-agency deep dive into the services experienced by a family led by Children's Social Care.	Relevant agencies	<p>Findings reported to/in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA subgroup • Q&P subgroup • 12 monthly report 	Bimonthly	<p>To better understand local multi-agency safeguarding practice.</p> <p>For the SSCP Q&P subgroup to be accountable for the implementation of improved practice for individual children and to extrapolate wider themes.</p>
Focus groups	Multi-agency discussions with frontline practitioners to		Q&P subgroup	Twice per year	

Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

	understand impact of tools or guidance				
Practitioner survey	Survey for frontline practitioners to evaluate against evidence provided by senior managers	Partner agencies	Findings reported to Q&P	Monthly	
Serious Incidents / Rapid Reviews	Serious Incident Notifications – when the SSCP receives a notification they are required to carry out a Rapid Review of the case to determine whether it meets the criteria for a local (or national) Child Safeguarding Practice Review.	Local Authority is responsible for informing National Panel and SSCP of serious child safeguarding incidents. Executive to sign-off final report and provide consistency of decision-making process.	Findings/learning reported to/in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSCP Executive L&I subgroup 12 monthly report SSCP Learning bulletin Integrated into multi-agency training Findings will inform thematic Partnership events.	Within 15 days of notification	
Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	Commissioned by SSCP following recommendation to Executive following rapid review (see above) – which must be endorsed by National Panel. Purpose is to identify improvements to practice to safeguard children. Executive to commission independent author.	Independent Scrutineer and SSCP Executive to sign-off final report. Process overseen by Learning and Improvement subgroup.	Reports have to be published. Findings/learning reported to/in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSCP Executive L&I subgroup 12 monthly report SSCP Learning bulletin Integrated into multi-agency training Findings will inform thematic Partnership events.	As required To be completed within 6 months of decision	
Thematic Reviews	To be completed as agreed by the Learning and Improvement subgroup where thresholds for	Independent Scrutineer and SSCP Executive to	Findings/learning reported to/in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSCP Executive 	As required	

Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

	Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are not met.	sign-off final report (where published). Process overseen by Learning and Improvement subgroup.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L&I subgroup • 12 monthly report • SSCP Learning bulletin • Integrated into multi-agency training Findings will inform thematic Partnership events.		
Safeguarding Conversation	One-off conversations with practitioners involved in a selected case, generally of good practice in multi-agency working, reflecting safeguarding priorities. Conducted within the Appreciative Inquiry framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP Q&P subgroup • SSCP L&I subgroup • SSCP Business Unit • Partners/relevant agencies 	Findings/learning reported to/in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP Executive • Q&P subgroup • L&I subgroup • 12 monthly report • SSCP Learning bulletin • Integrated into multi-agency training Findings will inform thematic Partnership events.	Twice per year	
Yearly Report	Required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Completed by SSCP Business Unit	Independent Scrutineer and SSCP Executive to sign-off report.	Report is published on the SSCP website and disseminated via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP • SSCP Learning bulletin 	Annual	
Quality assurance of Child Protection conferences	Analysis to be reported in annual CPC report.	CPC Service	Reports to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA subgroup • Q&P subgroup 	Annual	
Insight visits	Visits to interview practitioners by a team of multi-agency partners	All partner agencies	Findings/learning reported to/in:	Three times per year	

Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q&P subgroup • SSCP Executive 		
Inspection processes e.g. CQC, Ofsted, HMIC, JTAI	Regulatory inspection activity across individual partners by regulatory bodies; joint partnership inspection activity	Three key partners and Independent Scrutineer to be available for interview as well as any partners with Section 11 responsibilities	Inspection reports have to be published.	As required	
SSCP Executive	To receive exception reports from Partnership subgroup Chairs			Bi-monthly	
SSCP Quality and Performance subgroup	To receive reports from QA subgroup, Audit subgroup and T&F groups and prepare exception reports for the SSCP Executive	SSCP Business Plan	Reports to: SSCP Executive	Bi-monthly	
SSCP Quality Assurance subgroup	To receive data dashboard and identify themes and prepare exception reports for the SSCP Q&P	MASH Audit MAPE	Reports to: Q&P subgroup	Bi-monthly	
SSCP Audit subgroup	To support multi-agency audit agenda, identify themes and prepare reports for the SSCP Q&P	Multi-Agency Audit	Reports to: Q&P subgroup	Quarterly	

7. Quality Assurance Calendar:

April	May	June	July	August	September
Multi-Agency Audit (Q1)			Multi-Agency Audit (Q2)		
			Focus Groups		
	SSCP Insight Visit				SSCP Insight Visit
			S11 activity - self-assessment, practitioner survey or workshop		
Practitioner Survey					
					Safeguarding Conversation
	RPD Annual Report				Yearly Report
	SSCP Training Annual Report				CP Annual Report
					LADO annual report
	Quality & Performance subgroup		Quality & Performance subgroup		Quality & Performance subgroup
Action Plan Evaluation group	Learning & Improvement subgroup	Action Plan Evaluation group	Learning & Improvement subgroup	Action Plan Evaluation group	Learning & Improvement subgroup
Quality Assurance group	SSCP Executive	Quality Assurance group	SSCP Executive	Quality Assurance group	SSCP Executive

October	November	December	January	February	March
Multi-Agency Audit (Q3)			Multi-Agency Audit (Q4)		
			Focus Groups		
			SSCP Insight Visit		
>> S11 activity					
>> Practitioner Survey					
				Safeguarding Conversation	
					Young Peoples Quality Assurance Panel
	Quality & Performance subgroup		Quality & Performance subgroup		Quality & Performance subgroup
Action Plan Evaluation group	Learning & Improvement subgroup	Action Plan Evaluation group	Learning & Improvement subgroup	Action Plan Evaluation group	Learning & Improvement subgroup
Quality Assurance group	SSCP Executive	Quality Assurance group	SSCP Executive	Quality Assurance group	SSCP Executive

8. SSCP Dataset

8.1 This document sets out the dataset for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP). It attempts to illustrate what data is collected by the Partnership and why this data is collected. The intention is to create a focused dataset that can be used to monitor the impact of the Partnership in meeting the agreed safeguarding priorities. The dataset is divided into two parts:

- (1) **Core Partnership Child Safeguarding Data** – this is the standard dataset to be monitored by the Partnership and includes key performance measures in relation to child safeguarding. This dataset will remain relatively static and will be used to provide an overview of performance and activity in key areas.
- (2) **Data to Support Business Plan Safeguarding Priorities** – this data is more flexible and is structured around the child safeguarding priorities for the year in question. This data should help to provide assurance against whether the work of the Partnership and partner agencies is improving outcomes in each of the priority areas of the Business Plan.

8.2 In addition, qualitative information is also needed to build a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the partnership. Much of this will be supplied in different formats - through reports, presentations, audits etc. To ensure there is a good marrying up of quantitative and qualitative information, this document also outlines what other information might be considered in addition to the data to support the Partnership in monitoring performance and outcomes.

8.3 This document provides a summary of the dataset – the data will be collected, recorded, and monitored using a data dashboard (headlines reference below). This dashboard will support good quality analysis by building up a picture of trends over time, performance compared to other areas, and performance in relation to any targets that have been set. This data will then be combined with the qualitative information outlined in this document to support the SSCP in identifying whether its priorities have been met.

(1) Core Data

8.4 This is the data that is collected and reported to the SSCP as standard. It primarily comprises of summary information in relation to the children and young people population, safeguarding activity and the effectiveness of the SSCP.

Understanding Need (Core 1)	
What does it include:	This data includes key demographics for children, young people and families in Somerset. It also includes data on the prevalence of more specific needs.
Why do we collect it:	To provide context for the rest of the dataset and to help with identifying trends and changes in levels of need in the population. Collecting and monitoring this data is also a keyway of evidencing knowledge of the needs of the local population.
What else is needed in addition to data:	A range of qualitative information should be used by the Safeguarding Children Partnership in addition to the data to build up a comprehensive picture of the children and young people population. This might include reports from the associate functions, Health and Wellbeing Board reports, specific pieces of research, consultations or surveys with children and young people or feedback from specific groups.

Keeping Children and Young People Safe from Harm (Core 2)	
What does it include:	This data focuses on the number of children and young people experiencing harm and the effectiveness of safeguarding services in responding to that. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social care data about the number of referrals, children in need and child protection. - Police and health data concerning children suffering or at risk of harm. - Data on the timeliness and effectiveness of services to safeguard children and young people. - Data that indicates how well needs/thresholds are managed between agencies. Where possible, comparative data with other partnerships/areas will be used to inform an assessment of performance and trends over time will also be identified.
Why do we collect it:	This data provides the overall summary of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements across the county. It outlines the volume of safeguarding-related incidents and how well these are responded to and managed. The data will be used to identify rising areas of concern, areas of good practice, and key emerging trends/themes.

What else is needed in addition to data:	In addition to the data, there is a range of other information that will be used by the SSCP to support the monitoring of safeguarding services. This information includes annual single-agency reports on safeguarding activity, analysis of the Front Door and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), dataset, single and multi-agency audits, feedback from children and young people and pieces of research and analysis looking at specific issues, for example repeat referrals.
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Workforce and Training (Core 3)	
What does it include:	This data focuses on the effectiveness of the SSCP in supporting the safeguarding workforce. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workforce profile data for all partner agencies - Training availability and take-up - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) complaints
Why do we collect it:	This data is important in providing an overview of the safeguarding workforce and of the effectiveness of support provided to the workforce. It helps to illustrate any major changes in the workforce and the capacity and capability of those working in safeguarding roles.
What else is needed in addition to data:	To support the data, a range of other information is needed to provide a comprehensive overview of the workforce. This might include evaluations of training (including anecdotal feedback), analysis of the workforce profile, the LADO annual report or reports into staffing concerns.

Effectiveness of the Partnership (Core 4)	
What does it include:	This data is used to monitor the performance of the SSCP and includes information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number and quality of multi-agency audits - Attendance at meetings - The contribution of all partner agencies to the SSCP
Why do we collect it:	This data is important in ensuring the Partnership is effective and that all partner agencies are contributing to SSCP activities. It provides an overview of the work carried out by the Board and the quality of this work.

<p>What else is needed in addition to data:</p>	<p>There is a range of qualitative information that will be considered alongside the data outlined. This will include the results of audits and associated action plans, the SSCP Yearly Report, any self-assessments or peer review activity, meeting minutes and progress against the SSCP Business Plan.</p>
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(2) Data to Support Safeguarding Priorities

8.5 This part of the dataset is more fluid and will change in response to the identified priorities of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Business Plan, this will also ensure continuity with the annual priority areas of focus as identified by the SSCP and confirmed by the SSCP Executive. To improve analysis and reduce duplication, data to support safeguarding priorities will be provided by partners via their own dashboards and strategic actions plans.

8.6 The SSCP Quality and Performance subgroup supported by the subgroups will be responsible for monitoring the effective implementation of safeguarding measures to protect children and young people from harm across the partnership. The subgroups work to understand the impact of this work in terms of effectiveness in improving outcomes and keeping children safe in relation to the identified priorities and learning of the partnership, providing assurance to the SSCP Executive.

<p>Priority One: Safe Start to Life</p>	
<p>Strategic Objectives:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Babies and young children in Somerset will have the best start to life, and their families will have the right support to keep them safe. 2) Practitioners provide robust support for Somerset families at the earliest possible stage, including involving fathers. 3) Understanding of neglect amongst professionals across Somerset is enhanced. They access tools to better identify indicators of neglect, and understand what interventions are available to support and protect children affected by, or at risk of, neglect.
<p>What does it include:</p>	<p>This data will focus on the effectiveness of the partnership in supporting the strategic objectives of the priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social care data of the number of referrals, children in need and child protection for unborn to 5 years old - Police data concerning children suffering or at risk of harm under 5 years old (U5s)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health data concerning children suffering or at risk of harm from pre-birth to U5s (including midwifery data such as referrals to WREN service, and SFT data around the number of non-accidental injuries (NAIs) identified in U5s and child protection medical referrals). - Multi-agency neglect training availability and take-up.
Why do we collect it:	This helps us to understand progress against our priority, and continued areas for development.
What else is needed in addition to data:	Qualitative information to be considered alongside any data, including findings from single and multi-agency audits, associated action plans, findings from focus groups and surveys.

Priority Two: Safe in the Community

Strategic Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Children feel confident and safe with inclusive education and the risks of exploitation are reduced. 2) Children who have become involved in offending behaviour can access multi-agency interventions for support. 3) Practitioners understand the safeguarding risks for children who are excluded from education and/or receiving reduced hours provision. 4) Relevant factors such as inclusion, attendance, and risk of exploitation are taken into account by practitioners where there are concerns that children have engaged in offending or anti-social behaviour. 5) Child exploitation is addressed by clear pathways where there is suspected child exploitation. 6) The prevalence of and circumstances leading to child exploitation is well-understood through intelligence from practice and informs responses. 7) Children, families and professionals understand child exploitation and how to respond as appropriate. 8) Practitioners across the Somerset are identifying children at risk of exploitation, coordinating services to intervene, support and protect children and their families from harm, effectively sharing intelligence and information, engaging with the child's extra familial contexts and listening to the voice of the child and family.
What does it include:	<p>This data will focus on the effectiveness of the partnership in supporting the strategic objectives of the priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education data including missing data, school attendance, exclusion data. - Police data concerning child exploitation banner, CAWN data. - Multi-agency CE screening tool use and CE training availability and take-up.

Why do we collect it:	This helps us to understand progress against our priority, and continued areas for development.
What else is needed in addition to data:	Qualitative information to be considered alongside any data, including findings from single and multi-agency audits, associated action plans, findings from focus groups and surveys.

Priority Three: Positive Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Strategic Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) More children in Somerset will be resilient, have good mental health and positive transitions to adult services. 2) Children can access the right support to prevent mental health difficulties stopping them from achieving positive life outcomes. 3) Trends and changing needs across children’s emotional health and wellbeing are well understood by partners, including the impact of local and national influences. 4) Practitioners supporting children from a range of agencies understand the services available to young people and can signpost for identified needs. 5) Children in Somerset can access the right support at the right time, and access support earlier.
What does it include:	<p>This data will focus on the effectiveness of the partnership in supporting the strategic objectives of the priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children and young people supported through NHS funded mental health services, CAMHs referrals, self-harm and suicide. - Education data including school attendance, exclusion data. - Multi-agency Trauma Informed training availability and take-up.
Why do we collect it:	This helps us to understand progress against our priority, and continued areas for development.
What else is needed in addition to data:	Qualitative information to be considered alongside any data, including findings from single and multi-agency audits, associated action plans, findings from focus groups and surveys.