

Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

Reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards

This document sets out the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

These inspections are conducted under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. They focus on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements to help and protect children, the experiences and progress of children looked after, including adoption, fostering, the use of residential care, and children who return home. The framework also focuses on the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after and the experiences and progress of care leavers. The leadership, management and governance judgement addresses the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people and the quality of professional practice locally.

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Section 2: The effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

39. Ofsted intends to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board at the same time as the inspection the local authority. This review will be conducted under 15(A) of the Children Act 2004.
40. Inspectors will make their judgements on a four point scale:
- outstanding
 - good
 - requires improvement
 - inadequate.
41. Inspectors will use these criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of the LSCB in meeting its statutory functions. Inspectors will make a judgement of 'good' where the characteristics set out in the description of 'good' are widespread and common practice. In addition, inspectors will consider how effectively the LSCB evaluates and monitors the quality and effectiveness of the local authority and statutory partners in protecting and caring for children, including the provision of improvement advice. Inspectors will deploy professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings. When considering the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children LSCB, inspectors will use the descriptors of 'good' as the benchmark from which to grade performance. A judgement of 'good' will be made where the inspection team concludes that the evidence overall sits most appropriately with a finding of 'good'. This is what Ofsted describes as 'best fit'.
42. A report of the review will be published on the Ofsted website. This will also be the case where the review does not take place at the same time as the single inspection of the local authority.
43. The LSCB must within 30 working days of receipt of the report, arrange for it to be published in such manner as the LSCB considers appropriate.³⁵

Reviewing an LSCB that covers more than one local authority

44. Some LSCBs cover more than one local authority. Where this is the case, the local authorities who share an LSCB will usually be inspected at the same time. In these circumstances, the review of the LSCB will evaluate its effectiveness separately with regard to each local authority being inspected at the time.

³⁵ The Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Review) Regulations 2013, section 4 ; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/2299/contents/made.

45. The reviews will result in a separate overall judgement and report for the LSCB in relation to each local authority being inspected. The effectiveness of the LSCB in meeting its statutory requirements may differ in relation to each local authority; therefore, the judgements about the effectiveness of the LSCB in relation to each local authority may also differ.
46. Where an LSCB covers more than one local authority and those authorities are inspected at different times, the effectiveness of the LSCB will be reviewed in relation to each specific local authority at the time that each is inspected. The outcome of an earlier review relating to a different local authority will inform lines of enquiry for any future review of that LSCB.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) complies with its statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Children Act 2004³⁶ and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006.³⁷ The LSCB is able to provide evidence that it coordinates the work of statutory partners in helping, protecting and caring for children in its local area and there are mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness of those local arrangements. Multi-agency training in the protection and care of children is effective and evaluated regularly for impact on management and practice. The LSCB checks that policies and procedures in respect of thresholds for intervention are understood and operate effectively and identifies where there are areas for improvement. Challenge of practice between partners and casework auditing are rigorous and used to identify where improvements can be made in front-line performance and management oversight. Serious case reviews, management reviews and reviews of child deaths are used by the local authority and partners as opportunities for learning and feedback that drive improvement. The LSCB provides robust and rigorous evaluation and analysis of local performance that influence and inform the planning and delivery of high-quality services.

47. The LSCB is likely to be judged to be good if:
- The governance arrangements enable LSCB partners (including the Health and Well-Being Board and the Children’s Trust) to assess whether they are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities to help (including early help), protect and care for children and young people. The LSCB effectively prioritises according to local issues and demands and there is evidence of clear

³⁶ The Children Act 2004; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents.

³⁷ The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006; www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/90/regulation/5/made

improvement priorities identified that are incorporated into a delivery plan to improve outcomes. (*Evaluation Schedule Number (ESN) 77*)³⁸

- Regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of multi-agency front-line practice to safeguard children³⁹ identifies where improvement is required in the quality of practice and services that children, young people and families receive. This includes monitoring the effectiveness of early help. (*ESN 78*)
- Partners hold each other to account for their contribution to the safety and protection of children and young people (including children and young people living in the area away from their home authority), facilitated by the chair. (*ESN 79*)
- Safeguarding is a priority for all of the statutory LSCB members and this is demonstrable, such as through effective section 11 audits. All LSCB partners make a proportionate financial and resource contribution to the main LSCB and the audit and scrutiny activity of any sub-groups. (*ESN 80*)
- The LSCB has a local learning and improvement framework with statutory partners. Opportunities for learning are effective and properly engage all partners. Serious case reviews are initiated where the criteria set out in statutory guidance are met and identify good practice to be disseminated and where practice can be improved. Serious case reviews are published. (*ESN 81*)
- The LSCB ensures that high-quality policies and procedures are in place (as required by *Working together to safeguard children*) and that these policies and procedures are monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness and impact and revised where improvements can be made. The LSCB monitors and understands the application of thresholds locally. (*ESN 82*)
- The LSCB understands the nature and extent of the local issues in relation to children missing and children at risk of sexual exploitation and oversees effective information sharing and a local strategy and action plan. (*ESN 83*)
- The LSCB uses case file audits including joint case audits to identify priorities that will improve multi-agency professional practice with children and families. The chair raises challenges and works with the local authority and other LSCB partners where there are concerns that the improvements are not effective. Practitioners and managers working with families are able to be involved in practice audits, identifying strengths, areas for

³⁸ The *evaluation schedule numbers* (ESN) are a referencing system to support inspectors when they record their findings in evidence records. **ESN 01** refers to the first characteristic for a good service in the local authority key judgement *the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection*. The bullet points in the framework are numbered sequentially thereafter (including the criteria for a good LSCB). The numbering excludes the bullet points that describe a service that is outstanding, requires improvement or is inadequate.

³⁹ This applies to all children and includes having an understanding of the local safeguarding response to deaf and disabled children in all aspects of the LSCB functioning.

improvement and lessons to be learned. The experiences of children and young people are used as a measure of improvement. *(ESN 84)*

- The LSCB is an active and influential participant in informing and planning services for children, young people and families in the area and draws on its assessments of the effectiveness of multi-agency practice. It uses its scrutiny role and statutory powers to influence priority setting across other strategic partnerships such as the Health and Well-being Board. *(ESN 85)*
- The LSCB ensures that sufficient, high-quality multi-agency training is available and evaluates its effectiveness and impact on improving front-line practice and the experiences of children, young people, families and carers. All LSCB members support access to the training opportunities in their agencies. *(ESN 86)*
- The LSCB, through its annual report, provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It identifies areas of weakness and the causes of those weaknesses, and evaluates and where necessary challenges the action being taken. The report includes lessons from management reviews, serious case reviews and child deaths within the reporting period. *(ESN 87)*

Outstanding

- The LSCB is likely to be outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements for a good judgement, it provides evidence of being a highly influential strategic arrangement that directly influences and improves performance in the care and protection of children. That improvement is sustained and extends across multi-disciplinary practice with children, young people and families. Analysis and evaluation of performance is exceptional and helps the local authority and partners to properly understand the impact of services, the quality of practice and the areas for improvement. There is a comprehensive range of training for managers and practitioners that is directly related to multi-agency improvement priorities. The LSCB creates and fosters an effective learning culture locally that extends to front-line practitioners.

Requires improvement

- The LSCB is likely to require improvement if it is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of good.

Inadequate

- The LSCB is likely to be inadequate if it is not demonstrating that it has effective arrangements in place and the required skills to discharge its statutory functions set out in Working together to safeguard children, the Children Act 2004 and the LSCB regulations 2006. The LSCB does not understand the experiences of children and young people locally and fails to identify where improvements can be made.