

Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership Audit Framework.

2025 - 2028.

1. Introduction.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 requires the safeguarding arrangements to specify how multi-agency, and interagency audits will be undertaken, and this framework provides that information.

Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership has a duty to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of single agency and multi-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support and advise them on ways to improve. Audits help to identify themes and trends in order to share learning and recommendations for improvement regarding the quality of practice and service provision.

Audits enable the partnership to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding practices, recognise areas of good practice that can be shared and built upon and identify areas in which there may be policy, training and developmental needs.

The purpose of auditing as part of a wider quality assurance process is to improve practice and the quality of the service we provide, with the intention of improving outcomes for children and young people through a process of continuous learning.

2. Methodology

The precise methodology adopted for any audit will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The decision on which methodology to adopt will be determined by the learning hub and or Statutory partners (LSP'S). Such decisions will be predicated on the audit approach that is likely to be most impactful. In some instances, an audit might involve a deep dive analysis of a small number of cases, whereas other audits may scrutinise a larger sample of cases but at less depth.

3. Audit cycle

The rolling three-year audit programme will be reviewed at least annually by the Learning hub and Statutory Partners. The programme will reflect the priorities for safeguarding children in Oldham and will be informed by:

- OSCP Priorities
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Performance indicators

- The need to further explore issues that have caused of concern, including those highlighted through previous audits and subgroup outcomes
- Feedback from learning and development opportunities or policy implementation
- General audits within a category of case to establish a baseline assessment of performance.

4. Audit processes

Various audit processes will be used depending on the activity to be audited. These will include but not be limited to the following:

- Themed multi agency case file audits
- Dip sampling
- Feedback of single agency auditing activity.

Every year the OSCP undertakes a series of audits and reviews as part of its wider quality assurance function. The partnership completes two significant annual activities:

5. Single agency audits

Single agency audits will be undertaken by partner agencies as part of their own quality assurance frameworks. Areas of practice to be audited will be agreed by respective agencies according to those single agency issues which have been identified for scrutiny and suitable single agency audit tools will be developed accordingly. OSCP requires partner agencies to report to the partnership by exception any findings from single agency audits which represent risk to the safeguarding of children in Oldham. This should be raised with the OSCP learning hub for progression.

Single agency audits which are completed as part of a multi-agency audit co-ordinated by the OSCP learning hub need to be completed in line with the terms of reference for that audit and to an appropriate standard. Quality of single agency audits will be monitored by the Chair of the OSCP learning and any issues raised with strategic leads as necessary to ensure that findings from the multi-agency audit are not compromised.

6. Multi-agency Audits

6.1 Section 11 Audits

Section 11 (s11) of Children Act 2004 puts a legal duty on a range of organisations to ensure that their functions – and any that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. OSCP and OSAB have developed a safeguarding audit tool and guidance document to help organisations undertake their own quality assurance process in regard to safeguarding and child protection.

6.2 Section 175 Audits.

Sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a statutory duty on independent and maintained schools to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that any services they contract out to others are provided having regard to that need.

In fulfilling its statutory objectives under Section 14 of the Children Act 2004, the partnership is required to ensure that schools are meeting these duties effectively. Therefore, OSCP has developed a safeguarding audit tool that educational providers complete. A deep dive analysis is completed for a sample of returns, with individual feedback provided to these settings. A summary findings report is shared with all educational provisions.

These audits are self-assessment audits completed to provide assurance to the partnership that agencies are meeting their duties and responsibilities under Section 11 of the children act.

7. Audit of training impact

OSCP undertakes an annual audit to evaluate the impact of its multi-agency training which is based on the reports of course attendees.

8. Case file auditing

This is the systematic analysis of case records by staff with relevant professional expertise, to collate the required information from a sufficient sample of cases to provide a picture of what is going on through aggregating the case findings. This may be undertaken as part of a thematic case audit where cases are identified specifically to audit the multi-agency response to a particular type of issue, e.g. domestic abuse or exploitation, or as part of a dip sampling approach to look at a very focussed practice issue, e.g. partner agency engagement with core groups.

9. The effective use of single and multi-agency audits

Single-agency and multi-agency audits are essential quality assurance methods. A robust audit programme of single and multi-agency audits will make a significant contribution to service improvement. The purpose of conducting audits is to:

- Identify learning which can then be disseminated through the partnership
- Focus on outcomes for children
- Enable the partnership to carry out its function of monitoring the effectiveness of what is done to protect children and promote their welfare
- Promote reflections on specific aspects of practice but not be purely process driven
- Enable conclusions to be drawn about the lived experiences of children and their families
- (Where applicable) Provide a stringent and consistent approach to assessing work undertaken on a multi-agency or single agency basis with a child/young person and their family through an audit of case records, particularly in relation to the safeguarding role of both specialist and non-specialist practitioners
- Provide commentary/analysis regarding those factors which may have impacted on practice
- Adapt to suit the needs of different partner agencies dependent upon the type of services being delivered by them
- Provide an indication of outcomes or impact measures for the intervention being audited
- Promote service improvement through identification of key practice issues so that recommendations can be drawn together and action plans implemented
- Inform policy and practice protocols and learning and development activity
- Evidence on what works and aspects of practice to showcase

10. Single- agency Audit Principles

The following will underpin single agency audit process:

- *Key priorities will be a golden thread as part of the auditing processes EG EEDI*
- *An expectation that all agencies commit to the audit procedures.*

- *Focus on current practice, considering interventions that have occurred within the last 12 months*
- *Learning from local and national safeguarding practice reviews*

11. Multi-agency Audit Principles

The following will underpin multi-agency audit process:

- *An expectation that all agencies commit to the audit procedures.*
- *Focus on current practice, considering interventions that have occurred within the last 12 months*
- *Auditors should seek to understand practice from the viewpoint of the individuals and organisations involved at the time, rather than using hindsight*
- *Consider interventions that are within the remit and work of local agencies*
- *Include a focus on the welfare of the child, other children living in the household, timeliness, communication and engagement with families or other significant adults.*
- *Auditors must not be directly involved in the practice or management of the specific cases being audited.*
- *Auditors should identify good practice (and get at the details of this), as well as identifying gaps/anomalies*
- *Key priorities will be a golden thread as part of the auditing processes EG EEDI*
- *Learning from local and national safeguarding practice reviews*

12. Types of audit tools

The type of tool used for audit will be dependent upon the type of audit taking place and will be developed specifically to meet the needs of the audit and agreed as part of the audit planning process.

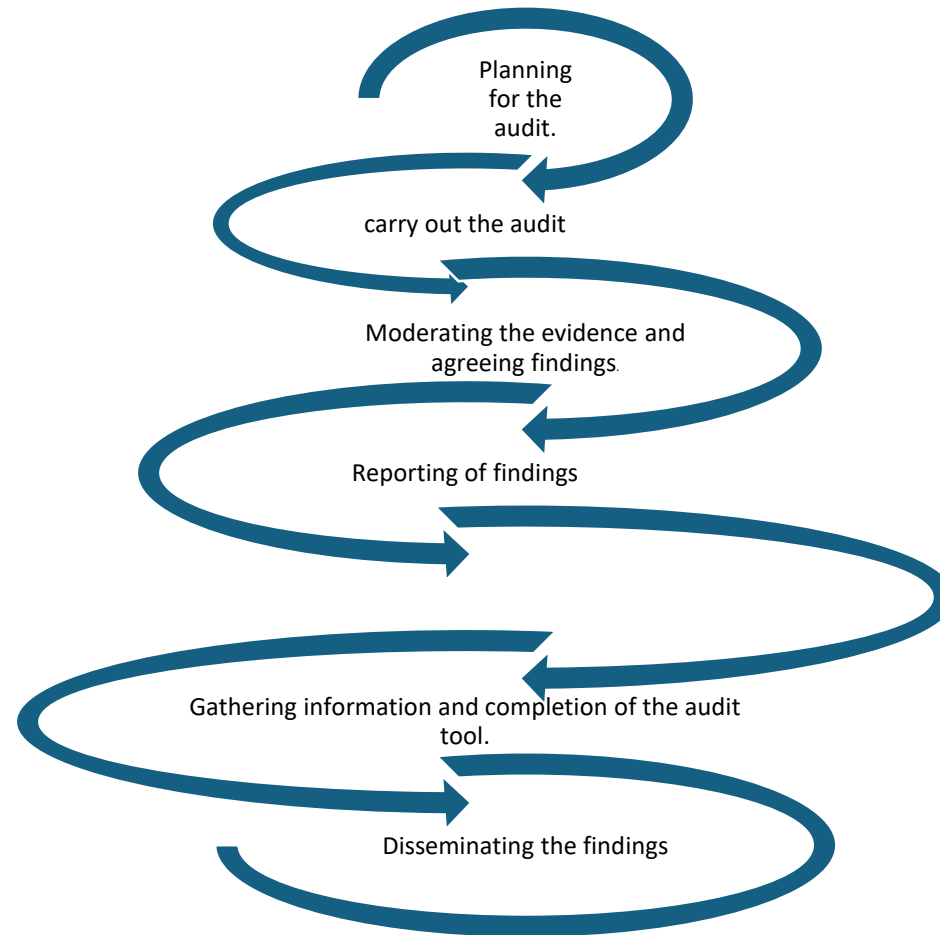
Audit tools will need to:

- promote reflections on specific aspects of practice but not be purely process driven
- enable conclusions to be drawn about the lived experiences of children and their families
- provide commentary/analysis regarding those factors which may have impacted on practice
- promote a standardised approach to evaluation of practice through the use of ratings and guidance as to how the ratings should be applied
- adapt to suit the needs of different partner agencies dependent upon the type of services being delivered by them

- provide an indication of outcomes or impact measures for the intervention being audited

Audit tools will need to be designed to meet the specific needs of each audit. They should be proportionate to the task and enable the production of both quantitative and qualitative data which is sufficiently rich to help the partnership to maintain a line of sight on the quality of frontline practice.

Audit Flow chart



Lessons and actions:

Once the audit has been carried out and the findings have been moderated by the agency/ auditors the chair of the respective audit will co-ordinate the production of a summary report of the audit.

This report should highlight:

- What is working well,
- Emerging concerns,
- Recommendations about the most significant areas in which change is needed.
- A reflection on any learning arising about the process of the audit itself.

Case specific actions will be progressed by single agencies, however, if during the course of an audit there are any concerns about the immediate risk to a child/vulnerable adult or unsafe practice is raised, this information will be escalated to the respective agencies for a response and assurance. The multi-agency audit findings will reflect a balance of good practice and areas of improvement.

Next Steps:

The outcome of each audit will be disseminated through the learning hub, OSCP website and practitioner learning on a page or 7-minute briefings.

Audit plan 25 -28

Month/ timeframe	Theme and type of audit	Rationale	Evidence to be measured against	Report author	Date of sign off by learning hub & SSP	Impact /evaluation / monitoring
October 24	Serious Youth Violence Benchmarking exercise	Right support, right time. Benchmarking to evaluate multi- agency arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring against Manchester SYV JTAI SYV Thematic Review New study report explores school exclusions and youth violence The McPin Foundation 	OSCP	Dec 24	The action plan overseen by complex and contextual Safeguarding Subgroup.
Report to partnership September 25	CAMHS Deep dive	Provide assurance to the partnership – wait times and impact on children wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAMHS resource and performance data. NB letter drafted to Mark Fisher from Dame Christine and Andrew Robinson. 	Emma Barnes /Louise Hamer	Taken to partnership Sept 25 – not signed off- request for further assurance	
Report to Performance group Nov 25	Female Genital Mutilation Deep Dive	Deep dive into data gathering in relation to FGM.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key lines of enquiries 	Audery McCoy	Reported to performance group in Q3.	Will be monitored and challenged in the performance hub
Report to Partnership Nov 25	YJS Brief Learning Review audit of impact	Audit BLR taken place to date and the impact of partnership working and what difference is being made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief learning reviews Action plans Action plans completed and analysis of impact Type and number of cases open to YJS Consider number and type of offences 	Clare Griffiths	Presented to Strategic partnership in Q3	Impact and monitoring is ongoing with oversight from CG.

Report to performance Group March 26	Deep dive contacts and referrals to front door inc ethnicity, assessments concluded with NFA		<p>1. Deeper dive to consider contacts, referrals, CIN, CP and CLA data based on ethnicity alongside the statistical evidence of the ethnicity of children in our communities.</p> <p>2. deep dives on what assessments are concluded with no further SW action.</p> <p>3. data - what referrals/ categories are coming to the front door (Q2) MB & AP & JR</p>	Michelle Bernasconi AP Jen Robertson		
TBC	The effectiveness of operation encompasses in schools – GMP OE under review Jan 26	Need reassurance that Operation Encompass is effective and managed will schools getting the correct timely notifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with school • GMP data 	Kev Johnson Stacey Brackenridge		
Oct – Dec 25	Sexual abuse MACE	Evaluate multi agency arrangements and effectiveness for CSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JTAI inspection guidance and criteria • Support Matter CSA Centre • CSA Centre Pathway. • I wanted them all to notice review. 	OSCP Multi Agency		
March 26	Serious Youth Violence Multi agency audit	Evaluate SYV in Oldham – following on from the BLR audit carried out by YJS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLR outcomes • Benchmarking tool and thematic review • Manchester SYV strategy • Serious youth violence research programme DoFE 	Lorraine Kenny OCSP		

Quarterly (first submission date August 25)	What difference are we making. Safeguarding effectiveness report	To inform sub regional and regional safeguarding effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance data Subgroup reporting templates IS reports and evaluations Child voice. Practitioner voice and family voice Working Together 23 	Jayne Haigh (BM)	Q1 and Q2 presented to learning hub Dec 25. Q3 to be presented in March 26.	Impact monitored in learning hub quarterly
TBC	Domestic Abuse MACE	Evaluate multi agency arrangements for DA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JTAI guidance and criteria Operation Encompass 	OSCP Bruce Penhale.		
Dec 25	Neglect – GCP2 audit of impact of training	Measure the impact of the neglect strategy, neglect toolkit and GCP2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCP2 impact Training and development outcomes Early Help assessment tool Neglect strategic plan 	NSPCC OSCP	Decision to look at an Oldham tool due to the low numbers of initiated GCP2	
Jan 26 – March 26	Child emotional health and wellbeing scrutiny audit	Explore pathways to support emotional health and well being across the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the I Thrive model Meetings with professionals and young people with lived experiences Evidence led by Oldham data. 	Vicky Buchanan	Report to partners March 26	

The themes are: (so far)

Serious youth violence

Sexual abuse.

Domestic Abuse – JTAI MACE.

CAMHs

Attendance in schools - children involved with CSC. Sept 25 Partnership meeting to be taken to learning hub November 25