

Checklist for Independent Scrutiny

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This checklist has been developed through combined work between:

Jenny Pearce of Safer Young Lives Research Centre, University of Bedfordshire; Iona Stratton and Lorraine Parker of the VKPP and Alison Thorpe of The Association of Safeguarding Partners.

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Context



This checklist is informed by the description of Independent Scrutiny outlined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)* and from 'Independent Scrutiny and Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements' (Pearce, Stratton, Parker & Thorpe, 2022), a national survey of what is being scrutinised, by who and how. It has also been developed from "The Six Steps for Independent Scrutiny" work (www.theasp.org.uk/IndependentScrutiny). The checklist draws on developing practice and has not undergone a formal evaluation.

The six areas identified under 'What' in this checklist can be used together or separately to scrutinise the overall work of the LSCP or to scrutinise discrete areas of work such as 'early help' or 'safeguarding adolescence' for example.

Purpose



This is a list that can be used by LSCPs and their Independent Scrutineers to prompt discussion about who is scrutinising LSCP activity, the methods used for scrutiny and what is being scrutinised.

Impact



It is important that LSCPs develop ways of assessing the impact of scrutiny. Shared views from 'Independent Scrutiny and Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements' (Pearce, Stratton, Parker & Thorpe, 2022) are that scrutiny creates most impact when LSCP leadership is driving the creation of an embedded, open and reflective learning culture.

Who?

Checklist for Independent Scrutiny

Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018) notes that scrutiny can be undertaken through a variety of forms chosen by the LSCP. The essential feature is that scrutiny must be independent from the day to day functioning of the LSCP. To date, scrutiny is undertaken through a variety of forms. This is not an exclusive list but draws on knowledge from from 'Independent Scrutiny and Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements' (Pearce, Stratton, Parker & Thorpe, 2022).

Method	Suggested Advantages	Suggested Challenges
Employing one or more scrutineers on a one to three year basis	<p>The Scrutineer gets to know and understand the LSCP functions and activities and the impact of the local environment.</p> <p>The Independent Scrutineer can monitor change and progress over time.</p> <p>The Independent Scrutineer becomes knowledgeable enough to identify problems and challenges as well as strengths.</p>	<p>Are there mechanism in place to ensure that the scrutineer remains 'Independent' being able to hold a critical appraisal of LSCP activity?</p>
Occasional employment of specific subject area experts	<p>External review by an expert in the specific field.</p> <p>The expert has one specific task to focus on.</p> <p>The expert holds no invested interest in the total structure of the LSCP.</p>	<p>The expert will need paid time to familiarise themselves with the working of the LSCP alongside the local context within which the specific task fits.</p> <p>The expert will not immediately know how the specific area of work they are reviewing is aligned to all other work of the LSCP.</p> <p>The expert will not be available to ensure follow up of recommendations made.</p>
Employment of an Independent Chair who also holds scrutiny duties AND/OR employment of scrutineer(s) with some LSCP chairing activity	<p>The Chair will have detailed insight into the working of the LSCP, direct and ongoing contact with the LSCP leadership and a longevity that ensures actions and developments can be monitored.</p>	<p>The question of 'independence' needs to be explored and processes put into place to ensure that the scrutiny is undertaken from an 'independent' position.</p>

Who?



Method	Suggested Advantages	Suggested Challenges
<p>Engagement of young people as scrutineers</p>	<p>Offers young people a direct line to input their ideas and feedback of safeguarding experience.</p> <p>Provides ongoing access to a group of trained, supported young people to provide young people's voices in monitoring and developing safeguarding responses.</p> <p>Reaches into the youth communities showing evidence of LSCP collaboration, outreach and engagement.</p> <p>Provides training and work experience for young people that can enhance their professional development and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Representation: can a small group of young people carry the burden of being perceived to represent a larger youth voice?</p> <p>How do LSCPs access and support young people who have direct experience of safeguarding interventions?</p> <p>Resources: does the LSCP have resources to train and appropriately support young scrutineers?</p> <p>Do the LSCP provide remuneration to the young people and if so, in what form?</p>
<p>Local Scrutiny Panel</p>	<p>Engages multi-agency partners together to assess and review multi-agency arrangements.</p>	<p>If the panel does not include external reviewers, is independence undermined or jeopardised?</p>
<p>Engagement of lay people as scrutineers</p>	<p>Long established history of this work.</p> <p>Provides scope to access user voice to influence LSCP activity.</p>	<p>How do LSCPs access and support people who have direct experience of safeguarding interventions to work effectively as lay members?</p> <p>Does the LSCP have resources to train and provide remuneration to the lay member?</p>

How?

Checklist for Independent Scrutiny

A range of different methods for undertaking scrutiny have been identified (see list below). More than one method has been used at any one time.

Examples of how scrutiny is undertaken will become available on the TASP website at:

www.theasp.org.uk/IndependentScrutiny



- **Interviews, Focus Groups, Learning Events, Workshops, Webinars**
- **Questionnaires, Surveys, Case Studies**
- **Multi-agency Scrutiny Committees and Panels**
- **Secondary Analysis of Data**
- **Observation**
- **Literature Reviews, Reviews of Policy Documents**
- **Single or Multi-agency Peer Review with the Local LSCP**
- **Single or Multi-agency Peer Review between different LSCPs**
- **Appreciative Inquiry**
- **Theory of Change**

What?

Checklist for Independent Scrutiny

LSCP Leadership

The LSCP Partner Leads are clearly identified and accountable; are developing, reviewing and ensuring funding for strategic LSCP activity; and are identifying and publishing agreed desired outcomes for LSCP activity safeguarding children.

Delegated representatives of the three lead partners are strategically placed on relevant partnership meetings, sub groups, and working groups.

The three partner leads are working alongside other partnerships: safeguarding adult board; community safety partnership; health and wellbeing board.

The three strategic leads are ensuring that necessary annual reporting is in place; with the LSCP annual report appropriately scrutinised. They are ensuring that a process is in place to review annual LSCP outcomes and for assessing forward planning procedures.

Engagement of Relevant Agencies

All relevant agencies within the LSCP are appropriately informed of, and engaged with, the safeguarding children partnership arrangements and LSCP priorities.

All safeguarding partners are engaged with identifying and reviewing LSCP priorities: communication channels are clear for safeguarding concerns to move up to and down from the three lead partners.

All safeguarding partners are engaging with LSCP information sharing and staff training protocols.

The wider safeguarding children partnership is informed and updated with current findings from research and local and national reviews. They are informed of local and national guidelines regarding safeguarding children in and outside of the home environment.

Outcomes for Children & Young People

Children and Young People are consulted; and given opportunities to input into, and influence the development, implementation and review of the LSCP desired outcomes for children.

A communication system is in place (engagement strategy) to ensure that those impacted most by safeguarding concerns are aware of their right to be safeguarded and to play a part in developing initiatives to prevent, respond to, and report about safeguarding threats.

Opportunities are in place for Children and Young People to lead or co-lead safeguarding initiatives focused on improving outcomes for children; safeguarding training for adults and children; and attending relevant meetings, working groups, and sub groups.

Young people play a role in assessing and representing desired outcomes during their transition to adult services.

What?



Quality Assurance & Information Sharing

Mechanisms are in place for the three core partners to collect, analyse, and share relevant multi-agency data pertaining to safeguarding children.

Agencies from the wider partnership are undertaking and sharing their own single agency audits of data pertaining to safeguarding children.

Relevant data from the full LSCP is being used to review the impact of safeguarding initiatives on desired outcomes for children.

Relevant data shared across the partnership is used to inform an assessment of gaps in data needed to identify priorities, and future safeguarding plans.

Learning from Local & National Reviews & Research

The full LSCP are aware of the criteria and process for referral of serious incidents.

Case reviews are adequately resourced to enhance learning, to embrace contextual as well as individual and family concerns and to involve the full range of strategic and operational staff to extract and embed learning.

Learning from local and national reviews is cascaded and used to improve outcomes for children, their families and community.

Learning from case reviews is integrated into future LSCP training, policy and practice.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training & Workforce Development

There is a transparent and clearly understood process for identifying, providing and evaluating LSCP training needs with all safeguarding partners, including children, families and communities.

The planning and delivery of multi-agency training is informed by the local safeguarding children plan; review of local data; local and national policy; legislative contexts; and up to date research findings.

The take up and use of LSCP training is reviewed in all LSCP agencies including take up and use of training by children, young people and communities.

The three lead LSCP partners are assessing the impact of safeguarding children training on practice and using this to inform future LSCP training needs.

