

Multi-Agency Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) Audit for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

This multi-agency audit methodology has been tested. It appears as an example in appendix 4 of the resource for Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) on MSP <https://www.local.gov.uk/making-safeguarding-personal-safeguarding-adults-boards>

The audit has been completed across two SABs, Leicester City SAB and Leicestershire and Rutland SAB. MSP principles have been incorporated into any subsequent multi-agency audits.

Overview of Multi Agency Audit Process

The audit took place across two Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs), Leicester City SAB and Leicestershire and Rutland SAB. The audit process was agreed within the SABs' Multi-Agency Audit Group meeting in September 2016, and subsequent written guidance was circulated.

The focus of the work was to audit safeguarding practice on a multi-agency basis

- It included observation and talking directly to the individuals involved about their experience of the safeguarding enquiry.
- It was felt this should take place whilst the enquiry was in process, as previous work trying to talk to people after the enquiry had finished has had limited success (this has been the case locally, regionally, and nationally).
- It was also agreed that it was important for the auditing agency to speak to the workers undertaking the enquiry about their understanding of MSP principles, and how they felt they had been supported around this by their agency. This is referred to as the 'live' audit.

It was recognised that it would only be possible to audit a small number of cases in this way due to the time commitments required of the Audit Group members.

It had been previously agreed within the Audit Group that cases identified for audit should be from those completed within the last 3 months, and that each agency would bring 3 safeguarding cases, chosen at random within that time period. Confidentiality arrangements had also been discussed and agreed. Within the meeting the responsible agency then presented the case and original case records were also reviewed collectively by the group members in order to try to achieve more independent audit.

15 safeguarding enquiries were reviewed by the group within the case file audit, in addition to the 4 cases where practice was directly observed, so 19 cases in total were audited. A summary of the details of the referral and outcomes of the audit were recorded collectively within the meeting on the previously agreed audit tool, with 8 questions regarding whether the principles of MSP were evidenced. Each question outcome was RAG rated and a final

field used to flag issues, agreed actions and identify examples of good practice. The audit tool used has been previously provided.

Any agreed actions regarding practice which were identified as a result of the audit were taken back by the agencies involved, for example, based on feedback from an advocate in the audit, one agency had already started work on making amendments to letters they sent out within enquiries to make them more personalised.

The outcomes were presented to the Safeguarding Adults Boards in a report in March 2017. Within this more detailed outcomes of the cases audited for each agency were included.

It was agreed the agencies carrying out audits would be those undertaking Section 42 enquiries. These being the three Local Authorities (LAs), Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and the Leicestershire Partnership Trust and University Hospitals of Leicester Safeguarding Teams (who undertake enquiries with oversight of the LAs). There was also representation from Leicestershire Police and the local Clinical Commissioning Groups within the group. Auditing agency representative should have a good, and if possible operational understanding of the safeguarding process.

Each agency identified a safeguarding enquiry and gained consent from the individual involved or their advocate to be involved in the audit. The auditing agency representative then spoke to the worker involved, the individual/advocate and where possible observed the practice of the worker with the individual and any safeguarding meetings. A summary of the areas of focus of the audit is as follows:

1. What outcomes did the person express?
2. If there were doubts about the persons capacity to make decisions about the enquiry was a mental capacity assessment undertaken and where required were best interests decisions made?
3. Was the need for advocacy considered?
4. Did you feel that any meetings arranged were in line with the principles of MSP (e.g. consideration about venue, how individual would be supported to attend/participate, how record of meeting was recorded etc.).
5. Were there any issues of risk in relation to the outcomes expressed by the individual? If so how were these addressed?
6. Did the practice of any other agencies involved (such as provider services) evidence understanding of MSP principles?
7. In your view was the individual kept involved and informed of the safeguarding process throughout the enquiry?

The worker involved was also asked the following questions by the auditing agency:

1. What was the worker's understanding of the principles of MSP and how has their practice changes in relation to this?
2. Did the worker feel they have been supported by their agency in understanding and applying principles of MSP in safeguarding practice?
3. Were the individual's outcomes met? If not why was this?

There was then discussion by the auditing agency representative with the individual involved about their experience of the safeguarding enquiry, and the following questions were asked:

1. Were you asked at the point of first contact in relation to the Safeguarding enquiry what you wanted as an outcome?
2. Did you feel listened to during conversations and meetings about helping you feel safe?
3. How happy are you with the end result of what people did to try and keep you safe?
4. Are you satisfied that you have achieved the outcomes you wanted at the end of the safeguarding enquiry?

Agencies provided feedback on this part of the audit within an Audit Group meeting, when the case file audit was also completed collectively by the multi-agency group. The outcomes were presented to the Safeguarding Adults Boards in a report in March 2017. Within this more detailed outcomes of the cases audited for each agency were included. Recommendations and suggested areas of focus were identified for agencies going forward.

One area within the recommendations is around engaging with people around their experiences. It was concluded that: it remains difficult to engage with people about their experience of safeguarding enquiries, and clearly this requires a sensitive approach. The group felt that agencies should focus on establishing the person's views whilst the enquiry is ongoing. From the audit this also would seem to work best with someone the person has established a working relationship with, as understandably the people involved in the enquiries often did not want to discuss their experience with people they did not know.

The members of the subgroup agreed that this audit had been a useful exercise and all agencies present had been engaged in the process and willing to take back action points within their agencies. The 'live' audit was more complex to arrange, and time consuming for the auditors but provided some helpful learning, particularly the direct contact with the people affected

by the enquiry. The case file audit was also considered helpful by the Safeguarding Adults Boards, with particular value in the cases being reviewed collectively on a multi-agency basis

Limitations of the audit

It should be noted that due to database access restrictions, for the case file audit the agencies were responsible for selecting their own cases to be audited (although it was specified this should be at random, and original case records were reviewed by the group to provide more independent audit). Also clearly this was a small sample of cases, and therefore some caution is required in making assumptions about the outcomes on a wider scale.

MSP in subsequent audits

The Audit Group has subsequently completed an audit around domestic abuse, and an audit around strategy meetings is in process. MSP principles have been considered within both of these, as the group identified that clearly these should be integral area of focus in all audit work. For example within the domestic abuse audit there were questions around whether the person had consented to the referral and whether their outcomes were met. Within the audit for strategy meetings the audit group will consider whether the views and wishes of the person involved had been established at this stage, and if this had not yet been possible whether there is evidence that the plan for establishing this as soon as possible was agreed within the strategy meeting or discussion.