

(January 2021)



One Minute Guide



What is a Deep Dive Multi-Agency Case Audit?

Deep Dive Audits have a specific focus on a particular area of multi-agency practice and procedure, such as responses to child exploitation, mental health, domestic abuse, missing from home and care. Typically, a Deep Dive Audit involves a small number of cases (8) within a fixed timeframe (usually within the past 6 months). The audits are detailed in nature and consider a number of different aspects of multi-agency practice and procedure.

Why does WSCP hold these audits?

WSCP seeks to assure itself that partnership work to safeguard children is good quality, keeps children happy, healthy, achieving and safe; improves outcomes and makes a difference; and is carried out by well informed skilled practitioners who are properly supported by line managers, organisations and the wider partnership arrangements.

Deep Dive Audit is one approach WSCP uses to carry out this assurance. The audits ensure that WSCP has a view across a child's journey, but with a focus on the effectiveness of safeguarding (i.e. universal, early help, child in need, child protection, child in care).

What is the process of this type of audit?

The focus of the audits is determined from a range of sources including:

- the findings of national or local Safeguarding Children Practice Reviews
- priorities agreed within the WSCP Business Plan
- areas of concern emerging from practice, performance data and local information

Within a specific practice focus, cases are identified at random selecting examples and are taken from across the spectrum of children's services (universal support, early help, child in need, child protection and child in care). Once a cohort is identified, services who have involvement with those children are contacted by WSCP and are asked to complete an audit tool and invited to attend a multi-agency audit discussion. The audit tool is completed from a single agency perspective with inter-agency working being taken

into consideration. Each section of the tool asks for key areas of good practice, areas for development and recommendations for practice to be recorded. All single agency audit tools once submitted, are collated and circulated by the WSCP Business Unit ahead of the multi-agency audit discussion.

The audit discussion consists of representation from all services who have completed an audit tool. The discussion analyses the information provided within the audit tools and draws conclusions on the multi-agency responses in respect of recognition, planning & intervention, assessment, joint working, impact and overall quality.

What is expected from partner agencies?

All agencies who have involvement with a child identified as part of a cohort are expected to respond to WSCP's request by:

- completing an audit tool including as much detail as possible within the time scales requested
- providing appropriate representation at the audit discussion

When completing an audit tool and providing representation at the audit discussion, agencies should feel they are able to be transparent in providing an appraisal of their agency's involvement. This appraisal will ensure information captured is accurate and provide agencies with the opportunity to use this exercise as part of self-assessment to celebrate good practice and identify learning.

Agencies should be assured that information shared is done so in a confidential and professional manner in line with broader [HM Government \(2018\) Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#). This involves agencies sharing information specific to the audit focus within the time frame outlined, in addition to providing relevant historical information. Each attendee will respect the views of other agencies and will treat the information received as restricted and with strict confidentiality.

Once the audit exercise is completed and good practice is identified, agencies should feed this back to relevant professionals. Where recommendations and actions have been identified, agencies are expected to progress these

and report on updates through WSCP Safeguarding Effectiveness Group (SEG) on a quarterly basis until complete.

What happens afterwards?

WSCP produces an anonymised summary report highlighting areas of good practice, areas for development, identified themes and recommendations.

Agency specific actions are progressed by those organisations themselves. If during the course of the audit discussion there are concerns about the immediate risk to a child or adult, or unsafe practice is raised, information is escalated to the respective appropriate agency lead for action.

The summary report is circulated to practitioners who participated in the audit exercise for approval, before being presented to the SEG. Once approved by SEG, recommendations are adopted onto the SEG work plan to monitor progress. The WSCP Business Unit produces a 7 Point Briefing which is placed on the WSCP website for learning to be disseminated across the children safeguarding sector.