

Section 11 Self Assessments

Guidance on “The Surrey Way” 2023



Safeguarding Surrey's children together

What is Section 11? The legal bit

When we talk about Section 11 we are referring to Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004. This was amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to strengthen this important relationship by placing new duties on key agencies in a local area. Under S11 of the act, named organisations have a statutory duty placed upon them to cooperate and work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

Chapter 2 of '[Working Together to safeguard children 2018](#)' (soon to be revised in 2023) gives clear guidance on which agencies hold these statutory responsibilities under Section 11 and what those responsibilities and requirements are. It is the responsibility of each agency to ensure that they are meeting these commitments.

Schools have their own set of responsibilities and requirements clearly identified within **Section 175(4) of the Education Action 2002** with further guidance being provided within the **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE)** document.

The Working Together to Safeguard children 2018 statutory guidance applies to all organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children, including Schools.

How does it work in Surrey?

The template

Each year the SSCP will send out a blank template to each agency to complete over the following 12 months. The template will cover:

- Your statutory obligations under Section 11 – this will be covered by a **library of core documents** which you are asked to keep and maintain
- An update on any areas of S11 which have been **identified in the past as requiring improvement** across the partnership
- Progress that your agency is making towards **meeting the key objectives of the Surrey Partnership**
- Celebrating and sharing good practice

The templates are for agencies and organisations to use and complete during the course of the year. This can be done in a way to best suit the needs of the organisation as long as a completed template can be submitted to the SSCP at the end of the year on a pre designated date published by the SSCP.

Will the template change each year?

The template will certainly be reviewed each year by the SSCP Learning from Practice Group to ensure that the template is evolving and remains fit for the purpose and current. The core document library is less likely to change unless the requirements themselves change. Emerging issues and changing objectives of the partnership will certainly lead to changes in the template but this will be reviewed annually.

The recommended way to use the template

Step 1. Join your Safeguarding Forum

The SSCP would like its partners to attend the Safeguarding Forums throughout the year. The established forum already operationing are:

The **District and Borough Councils Safeguarding Forum** (Chair is Ray Lee. Please contact Mariette Masters for information and how to join mariette.masters@surreycc.gov.uk)

The **Health Safeguarding Forum** (Chair Audrey Scott-Ryan. Please contact Maggie Pugh for information and how to join margaret.pugh@surreycc.gov.uk)

The **Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum** (Chair is Mary Ellen McCarthy. Please contact Mariette Masters for information and how to join mariette.masters@surreycc.gov.uk)

The **Third Sector Safeguarding Forum** – please note that participation in the S11 self assessment is voluntary for non statutory organisations (i.e. those not listed in the Children’s Act 2004) – for details on how to participate in the Third Sector Forum please contact Liz Cassini liz.cassini@surreycc.gov.uk

Step 2: Complete your self assessment either section by section over time, or all in one go to set your initial benchmark and see where you are. The sooner you start the better.

Step 3: Discuss any concerns or questions you may have at your next forum meeting. Find out what others are doing as this will save you time and enhance your understanding of the requirements. Share that the things that are working well – you could influence and support your colleagues across the sector. This instills the Working Together ethos!

Step 4: As the deadline approaches for annual submission to the SSCP make sure that your template is brought up to date and the most Senior Manager in your organisation has seen and approves your report for submission.

Step 5: The action plan. The SSCP has purposefully not provided an action plan template as we recognise that all agencies will have their own plans for improvement in place already and we don’t want to impose a separate, different plan structure. Actions arising from your self assessment should be embedded within your business’ own existing action plans to ensure that it is integrated as business as usual and not something separate. This is your action plan not the Partnership’s.

NB: If an agency is not part of a safeguarding forum or is unable to participate in a forum then they will be required to carry out their own self assessment and submit it to the SSCP working to the same deadlines as other agencies.

The Library of Core Documents

The library of 13 core documents shown at the beginning of the template are your way of showing how the S11 requirements are met and communicated to staff. These could be in a policy format, procedure, an extract from a contract or a guidance document – whatever works best for you. Again there is no set structure to follow for these documents – they are yours and should be structured in a way that fits in for your own systems.

The **grading structure** used is in line with the gradings being used by Schools in their S175 self assessments:

Fully Met – the document is up to date and shows how the agency is meeting the requirements

Partially Met – the document is in place but may need further review / amendments to ensure it meets all current requirements

Unmet – there is no document in place to show how the agency is meeting this requirement and we are not sure that it is being met.

Moderation and Quality Assurance

This process has been designed, as far as possible, to bring it in line with the moderation and QA processes already used as part of the S175/157 (Education) process.

The SSCP will request that agencies submit their self assessments by a given date, once a year. All submissions will then be reviewed by the SSCP Business Team and a 33% sample (18) identified for further moderation. (This is the quality assurance stage).

Moderation will be carried out on the sample chosen. The sample will be made up of a cross section of statutory agencies from across all sectors (Health, Police and judiciary, Local Authority, District and Borough Councils) with a mix of agencies that have assessed themselves with either (a) a high % of Fully Met grades, (b) a medium % of fully mets/partially mets and (c) a higher % of unmets/partially mets. All grades for all submissions will be reported and analysed by the SSCP Business Team during the quality assurance stage so that an appropriate sample can be selected.

The aim is for all agencies to be taken through the moderation cycle at least once every 3 years. All agencies will be reviewed annually as part of the quality assurance phase of the process and will receive feedback from the SSCP.

The moderation phase will take the form of a face to face meeting (either in person or virtual) between a small panel (made up of a Senior Manager (SSCP sub group chair or member of the SSCP Executive), an independent representative from the sector of the agency being moderated and a representative from a different sector to the one being moderated. This process will be planned and supported by a member of the SSCP Business Team.

On completion of the Moderation Process all agencies will receive written feedback from the SSCP.

Reporting

The findings and outcomes from the annual self assessment process will be presented to the Learning from Practice Review for comment before finally being presented to the Executive Group for formal sign off. This will be a joint Section 11 / S175 annual report, produced and presented by the Surrey LADO (who leads the S175 process) and the SSCP Lead for Section 11.

Section 11 Self Assessment Timeline

This timeline has been developed to:

- To give agencies the opportunity to contribute to their self assessment throughout the year
- To provide agencies with the opportunity to share information, good practice and support each other within their forums
- To bring the reporting timescales into line with those of the S175/157 process (Schools) so that a final joint report can be presented to the Partnership on an annual basis.

Stage	Time Period	Output
Launch the new approach	Sept 2023	Letters, templates and briefings
Autumn Forum meetings	Sept / Dec 2023	Self assessments and discussion
Spring Forum Meetings	Jan / March 2024	Self assessments and discussion
Summer Forum Meetings	April/June 2024	Self assessments and discussion
Letters to agencies to request in completed self assessments	June 2024	Feedback to agencies
Self Assessments submitted to SSCP	July 2024	
QA Process completed and sample selected	July / August 2024	Grading and themes analysis report produced by SSCP team Sample list for moderation
Moderation phase	September 2024	Panels held and findings reported
Joint S11 and S175 report produced for SSCP	October 2024	
New template agreed and sent out for 2024/2025	September 2024	