Section 11 Audit Summary

Context

HSCB member agencies were asked to submit Section 11 audits in January 2012.

In order to enhance the learning from Section 11 audits the HSCB agreed that there should be an opportunity for agencies / organisations to meet with Board members and discuss the learning from their audits. This process contributes to the HSCB scrutiny function and is a means of assessing the extent to which partners are fulfilling their statutory safeguarding obligations. It is also a mechanism for understanding how the HSCB can support partners in further developing any specific aspects of safeguarding arrangements.

How the audit was approached

Where there was a collaborative approach within an organisation, both strategically and operationally, to the Section 11 audit, feedback was more detailed and there was a greater depth of understanding about the agency learning.

A number of organisations/ agencies completed the action plan attached to the toolkit. Where this was the case agency learning was easily identifiable and made the reviewing process much simpler. It also enables the organisation/agency to implement improvements and will facilitate further review by the Board.

Professional practice officer support was offered and taken up by various agencies / organisations throughout the whole process. This was for a range of reasons, including clarification of language, advice on the completion of the toolkit and queries in relation to the feedback and challenge event.

The way in which individual agencies / organisations chose to complete the tool was diverse and feedback was largely positive in the way that the exercise helped agencies / organisations to focus on their Section 11 responsibilities and, for some, prompted collaborative approaches.

Most organisations chose to answer the presentation question using a power point, although some chose to give verbal feedback, both of which were equally effective.

Key Themes
• **Voice of the child** – Although most agencies could identify how they listened to the voice of the child on a case by case basis, the views of children in shaping the development of services was more ad hoc. However, most organisations did identify this as an area for development moving forward.

• The importance of access and the use of interpreters in working with children and families and working with a diverse population is a challenge for some agencies. All recognised that more work was needed and that a partnership approach might be helpful.

• **Child protection policies** – The audit process has highlighted the need for many organisations to update their child protection policies.

• **Supervision** – Agencies / organisations on the whole described safeguarding within the supervision process as being present on an ‘ad hoc’ or ‘when needed’ basis. However as a result of the audit many agencies already had plans to ensure that safeguarding became a standing item in all supervision.

• **Training** – There were various training needs identified for organisations through the audit process which included, Supervision training, Private fostering, E safety, safer recruiting, Safeguarding children, a shared responsibility: working together effectively, processes, principles and dilemmas.

• **E safety** – There has been learning around the impact of terminology on people’s perception of this subject area. For example agencies seeing children and young peoples use of computers as being the primary issue to consider, rather than taking a broader view in relation to the use fixed and mobile technologies within their agency / organisation.

• **Private fostering** – There was a consistent message throughout the feedback that there was a need for more information and training around private fostering.

• **Cross boundary working** – Agencies / organisations who work across boundaries have asked the HSCB to be mindful of how different Boards / Local Authorities have different processes and where possible identify opportunities for joined up working.

**Moving forward**

There was an expectation that there would be a commitment to the Section 11 audit review being an ongoing process rather than a stand alone event, giving agencies the opportunity to reflect on and update their action plans.