Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland's Safeguarding Children Learning

A flexible learning approach, frequency of learning, evidence & assessing competency.

The Safeguarding Learning, Development and Training Strategy supports a flexible approach and acknowledges different types of learning and development, in addition to traditional training events; it recognises and places value on the many alternate ways to gain valid learning experiences.

There will be a focus and emphasis on safeguarding learning being discussed and reflected upon after the event. Staff and volunteers will need to be given opportunities to undertake discussion and reflection on their learning, with their managers, and for this to be recorded in order to ensure that the minimum requirements are met.

> Learning activities should help to provide the knowledge and skills that contribute to staff being able to meet their competencies. Attending a training course does not automatically mean that the competency is met – **discussion and verification after the event is always required to assess.**

Different recognised activities that could contribute to competency could include:
- Taught courses (single agency, multi-agency, joint courses - in house or external provider)
- Practice based workshops (single, joint and multi-agency)
- ELearning/workbooks, use of articles – self-directed learning, distance learning
- Mentoring, shadowing, reflective supervision
- Conferences, LSCB briefings / Serious Case Review briefings
- Formal education/qualification pathway
- Peer reviews, conferences
- Learning/knowledge from previous qualifications
- Learning from practice / experience.

It is the responsibility of individual organisations to:

- Identify which Competency Group and National Occupational standards individuals, organisations and volunteers need to meet
- Ensure that relevant training, learning and development opportunities are accessible and individual members of staff or volunteers are supported to meet these needs effectively
- Identify on-going developmental needs

- Evidence and record that the minimum competency has been achieved following learning activities that have taken place within the previous 12 months
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are given learning, development and training opportunities within the appropriate timescales to enable individuals to meet their minimum requirements over a 3 year period, (specifically the opportunity for some interagency learning Group 3-9)

> Many staff will regularly receive support for their on-going professional development, and by virtue of the nature of their specialist roles, will access a variety of different learning opportunities. These opportunities should be recognised as learning that contributes to meeting the competencies for their group.

The LSCB Training Project Officer, Learning and Development Officer and Learning & Development Teams for organisations will also be able to give advice about how individuals and organisations can meet their training requirements.

Frequency of Learning

- The Safeguarding Competencies need to be evidenced for **Children's Workforce every 3 years as a minimum** and include at least 1 formal safeguarding learning activity. *(Evidenced every 2 years for Designated Safeguarding Lead in Education staff[1] and 3 years for the Children's Workforce.)*

Assessing, Evidencing and Recording the Competency Requirements

Assessing competence in the workplace is necessary to ensure that practitioners are **confident, competent and committed** to safeguarding.

Individuals are considered competent when they are able to consistently apply their knowledge and skills to the standard of performance required in the workplace.

The employing organisation has a responsibility to:
- Ensure that staff meet the required safeguarding competencies.
- Record and evidence how staff have met the requirements for their Group.
- Recognise and consider different learning activities, in addition to traditional training events that will contribute to meeting the required competencies.
- Identify and use a system to record learning that has been undertaken. The training strategy does not aim to be overly prescriptive about how this is recorded, but has

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[1] Keeping children safe in education. April 2015. Department for Education.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education

provided a template[2] that could be used to provide the evidence to record that the competencies have been met, if the organisation does not currently have its own systems in place.

- Provide evidence for the Competency Framework based on learning activities that have been undertaken within the previous 12 months.

For example, this could include:

- Supervision and appraisals /performance reviews / induction & probationary processes that have included opportunities to review the competencies.
- Where there is whole organisation training that contributes to the knowledge and skill requirement in the competency group, the organisation may keep a centralised record of the competencies met, the date, who delivered the training and which staff attended. **It is important that the opportunity to reflect on learning is also provided and recorded, to ensure the competencies were fully met.**

Assessment:

This is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competence has been achieved. This confirms that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, in line with the competency framework.

Evidence collected may be **direct**, such as observation of workplace performance, **indirect**, such as formal testing, or **supplementary**, such as testimonies from others.

Evidence is used by an 'assessor' (usually the supervisor) to make a judgement about whether an individual is competent.

It is the responsibility of the assessor to determine what and how much evidence is required to make the assessment judgement.

The assessment must be **valid, reliable, flexible and fair.**

Many organisations are embedding this assessment of competence and evidence into existing systems and infrastructures (for example):

- Regular review and discussion within supervision.
- Reflective logs after training events – to use as a running record.
- Embedding into induction processes / probation assessments.
- Embedding into annual appraisals / Personal Development reviews (PDR's)

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[2] Available on the LSCB website

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- Using an annual sign off form to confirm competency – templates available via the LSCB.

This use of existing systems, allows organisations to use allocated time effectively, and discussions around competencies can support the organisation in undertaking inductions, probations / appraisals and looking at continuing professional development.

Understanding the role of evidence

Evidence is the information gathered which, when matched against the requirements of the competency, provides proof of competence. Evidence can take many forms and be gathered from a number of sources

Types of evidence		
Direct	**Indirect**	**Supplementary / third party**
- Direct observation - Questions / discussions - Demonstration of skills - Participation in team meeting safeguarding discussions	- Assessment of quality of a final product - Review of previous work undertaken. - Written tests that demonstrate underpinning knowledge.	- Testimonials from others - Reports from supervisors - Work diary - Log book - Records - Examples of reports / work documents.

Formal training sessions, whether classroom based or e-learning, can provide the underpinning knowledge to inform practice and support competence being met. However, they do not provide evidence of competence, unless there is some formal testing. Individuals should be deemed competent when they can relate **theory to practice,** in their everyday practice.

Safeguarding Children Learning, Development & Training

Rules of evidence collection:

Any evidence collected must demonstrate the **4 rules of evidence** listed below.

Relevant: Relates to the appropriate competency / competency group.	**Authentic:** Is the individuals own work.
Current: Recent enough to show that skills / knowledge can still be applied to a current work situation.	**Sufficient:** Provides enough to make a judgement about an individual's competence.

Holistic Assessment

Holistic assessment is the process of assessing across the competencies, rather than each competency in isolation. For example, an observation of an individual working directly with a service user may demonstrate some of the required competencies of the competency group.

While the process of holistic assessment is encouraged, assessors must be confident that an individual is demonstrating competence against the full unit(s) of competency.

Assessment Decisions

The evidence of competency must be reviewed and recorded by the organisation, and all assessment decisions must follow the 4 rules of evidence, detailed above.

The LSCB have developed evidence template logs which can be used, however this is not prescriptive as the final recording format. This is to allow organisations to be flexible in their approach, and to use existing processes and systems allowing them to embed this process into existing systems more easily.

Many organisations are using an approach of using the evidence log templates (appendix 4) and a running document within supervision and then using the template sign off document as a formal sign off document. (These forms are downloadable from the LSCB website.)

Data Protection

All assessment decisions must be recorded in a way that does not provide identifying personal information about service users

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Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland's Safeguarding Children Learning

Additional hints on learning, evidence and assessing competence....

Below are tips and hints that have been gained from direct application of the framework:

- Many people may feel overwhelmed when the see the competencies as a big list. A good way to assess competence is to discuss a safeguarding / potential safeguarding scenario with the practitioner. Then after this return to the competencies and look at how many the example has met / potentially met. This works really well and makes the evidence more meaningful than working through the competencies individually.

- Remember **one example may evidence many competencies;** you do not need to provide a separate / different piece of evidence for each individual competency!

- **You can cross reference evidence;** i.e. if there is evidence in a supervision log or a report (just refer / cross reference) rather than having to re-record, this is more efficient and also will allow you to work in a data protection compliant way.

- You will have many **existing skills as a supervisor** which will support you in assessing competency, i.e. performance management skills, reflective supervision skills etc. – these **are** fully transferable and relevant.

- Use of the framework can **identify strengths and areas for development** and can be used as a supportive management tool both for the practitioner, the organisation and may also identify learning / practice gaps & strengths in the organisation.

- **Good assessment and recording** can be useful evidence for inspections (internal and external).

- **Record relevant learning that happens in team meetings and briefings centrally:** if there is a discussion about a new policy and procedure relating to safeguarding and all staff are briefed via email and in a meeting record this centrally as evidence of learning.

- **There is lots of evidence from successful situations and also when things have been more challenging;** do not be afraid to recognise and draw from both experiences – its potentially all useful learning and evidence.

- Don't forget that we all naturally find it hard to recognise our own strengths and at times will minimise good practice 'as just doing the job'. The time to discuss and explore practice supports the development of the practitioner and recognition of existing practice!

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