

Guide to conducting your audit

Please read this guide before you start your audit

This guide is aimed at the project leader for a whole-school approach to child sexual abuse, and at the 'area coordinators' conducting your education setting's practice audit across the six areas of practice. It explains how you can complete the audit – with the input of your colleagues, pupils and their parents/carers – so that you gain a clear understanding of staff practice, knowledge, skills and confidence in relation to child sexual abuse. An effectively conducted audit will support the development of a realistic and focused improvement plan which strengthens your setting's ability to identify, respond to and prevent child sexual abuse.

Structure of the audit template

The audit template (which you can [download as a Word document](#)) helps you to capture your setting's practice in relation to all forms of child sexual abuse, across six broad areas of practice:

- (1) How the setting's **ethos, values and culture** promote safe and respectful relationships between all members of the community.
- (2) How the staff team is **equipped to notice, respond to and prevent** child sexual abuse.
- (3) How learning opportunities throughout the curriculum **promote safe and healthy relationships**.
- (4) How engagement and support for pupils is **underpinned by an understanding of child sexual abuse and trauma**.
- (5) How **engagement with its community and professional networks** informs the setting's response to child sexual abuse.
- (6) How the setting **responds to concerns about child sexual abuse** – is it prompt, fair and consistent?

For each of these six areas of practice to be audited, the template lists between three and five **key themes**. These are set out in the first (pink) column of the template.

The second (green) columns lists the elements of knowledge/practice to be audited under each key theme. These provide prompts for you to consider the practice in your setting.

Suggested planning outline for the audit

The audit is designed to be completed in three stages. Across all stages, the **project leader** holds overall responsibility for coordinating the process, while each **area coordinator** is responsible for gathering and presenting evidence for their allocated area of practice.

<p>Stage 1: Introductory meeting</p> <p>Led by the project leader</p> <p><i>Estimated time: 1 hour</i></p>	<p>A structured briefing for all area coordinators, used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the purpose and structure of the audit • walk through the audit template together, so everyone understands how evidence should be recorded and rated • confirm which colleague(s) are coordinating each of the six areas • agree a timeline for Stages 2 and 3, including a date for the reflection and rating meeting • discuss whether to use pupil surveys, staff surveys or focus groups (see below) – and, if so, agree who will lead these and when.
<p>Stage 2: Evidence gathering</p> <p>Led by each area coordinator, working independently between Stages 1 and 3</p> <p><i>Estimated time per area coordinator: 1–3 hours for core evidence gathering, plus additional time if surveys and/or focus groups are used</i></p>	<p>Each area coordinator gathers evidence for their area of practice, drawing on a range of sources to build a rounded picture of how child sexual abuse is currently noticed, responded to and prevented in your setting; methods used may include brief observations, short conversations with relevant colleagues, and a review of relevant documents, policies or records.</p> <p>As they conduct the audit, the area coordinators should note their evidence and any areas for improvement that they identify, ready to present their findings at the reflection and rating meeting.</p>
<p>Stage 3: Reflection and rating meeting</p> <p>Facilitated by the project leader; all area coordinators attend and present their findings</p> <p><i>Estimated time: 1–1.5 hours</i></p>	<p>The group reconvenes for a session where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each area coordinator briefly presents the evidence they have gathered for their area of practice • the group discusses and agrees a rating for each line of enquiry, and records the evidence gathered • promising practice and gaps in practice are noted • initial ideas for the improvement plan are captured in the final column of the audit template. <p>Because each area coordinator should arrive prepared with their evidence, this meeting is focused on discussion and recording rather than starting from scratch; hence it can be completed in a relatively short time.</p>

Types of evidence to collect and include

A broad range of evidence will strengthen your assessment of current knowledge and practice in each area of the audit. Consider how you can represent a wide range of people across your setting's community, so that different views and perspectives can inform your assessment.

To help you gather views, we have produced:

- questions for each area of practice, which you can use to lead discussions with staff, pupils and/or parents/carers and with governors/trustees
- sample pupil surveys for different age groups
- a sample staff survey.

You can download all of these on our [Whole-school approach: Audit](#) webpage.

Below are some suggestions of evidence that you might include under each of the six areas of practice. Not all of these will be relevant to your setting, and of course you are likely to have other evidence to include; please do not limit yourselves to the suggestions listed here.

(1) Do your setting's ethos, values and culture promote safe and respectful relationships between all members of the community?

- Examples of how/when your setting shares information with pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders about positive relationships.
- Examples of how the setting's practice promotes positive relationships.
- Examples of how the setting elicits the views of stakeholders when planning for change and developing provision.
- Meeting minutes, action and strategy plans, examples of work delivered by external services, impact of training, raising awareness and partnership work.
- Examples of how the setting co-produces or collaborates on initiatives, improvement activity, policy and practice reviews.
- Examples of how recruitment, induction and development activities promote the setting's values.
- Assembly themes, guest speaker input, pupil focus groups and activities.

(2) Is your staff team equipped to notice, respond to and prevent child sexual abuse?

- Examples of continuing professional development activities to raise staff members' awareness of all types of child sexual abuse.
- Evidence (from evaluations, skills and knowledge audits, etc) that continuing professional development and information sharing have strengthened staff knowledge, skills and confidence in identifying and responding to child sexual abuse.
- Mechanisms for children to share concerns about child sexual abuse.
- Mechanisms for staff to record and report concerns about child sexual abuse, including if they have concerns about other staff (even members of the senior leadership team or the designated safeguarding lead/professional).
- Mechanisms for monitoring the setting's safeguarding information systems.
- Examples of how data analysis shapes practice and/or drives improvement activity.
- Mechanisms (e.g. safeguarding briefings) for sharing information with/between staff.

(3) Do learning opportunities throughout the curriculum promote safe and healthy relationships?

- Examples of how your setting creates safe spaces for pupils to share concerns.
- Examples of engagement with external partners to enhance the RSE curriculum.
- Examples of targeted work with individual pupils or groups of pupils.
- Indicators that pupils have age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships.
- Scrutiny of RSE provision (e.g. through learning walks, perusal of pupil work, discussion of planning and delivery).
- Evidence of how pupils demonstrate their understanding of child sexual abuse in different contexts, such as online, between peers or within family networks.
- Pupil and staff feedback on the quality, content and relevance of the RSE curriculum content.
- Examples of cross-curricular learning that promotes safe and healthy relationships.

(4) Is engagement with and support for pupils underpinned by an understanding of child sexual abuse and trauma?

- Examples of how your setting's vulnerable learner protocol (or similar) supports pupil well-being.
- Opportunities for pupils to share concerns about child sexual abuse.
- Mechanisms for staff to discuss and determine how best to support children if they have concerns.
- Examples of how trauma-informed practice is incorporated in your setting to support pupils
- Pupil feedback about the setting's reporting system for incidents of harassment and abuse.
- Pupil feedback about how incidents and/or concerns are followed up.
- Examples of how your setting involves pupils in decision-making following incidents of abuse or harassment.
- Examples of how supportive activities engage marginalised groups of pupils.

(5) Is your setting's response to child sexual abuse informed by engagement with your community and professional networks?

- Examples of how your setting engages with its community networks.
- Examples of how the setting responds to information from its community networks.
- Opportunities for pupils to share information about concerns or harm in their communities.
- Examples of engagement with external partners to enhance the curriculum and safeguarding.
- Examples of how the setting shares information with its community networks.
- Examples of collaboration that raises awareness of child sexual abuse or provides advice and support for those affected.

(6) Does your setting respond to concerns about child sexual abuse promptly, fairly and consistently?

- Pupil views (expressed through focus groups/surveys/questionnaires) about the issues affecting them.
- Pupil views about how incidents are managed and followed up.
- Examples of good practice in the response to incidents of harmful sexual behaviour.
- Your setting's policies relating to child protection and child sexual abuse.
- Examples of how data is used to inform practice about child sexual abuse.
- Evidence of how resources are 'deployed' fairly across the pupil population.
- Feedback from external partners, including statutory organisations.

- Anonymised case studies, reviews or external monitoring activity outcomes.

Completing the audit template at the reflection and rating meeting

Consider the different **elements of knowledge/practice to be audited** within the key themes for your allocated area of practice. For **each** of these elements, discuss and agree which of these three 'practice descriptors' most accurately describes current practice in your setting:

- **Consistently strong** (sustained across the setting; backed by multiple types of evidence)
- **Some good practice** (working well in places; ready to be shared or embedded)
- **Emerging area of practice** (starting with promise; needs clarity, time or support to take hold)

In the column corresponding to the appropriate descriptor, record your evidence for that element:

- Use bullet points to list any examples of practice, policy, initiatives and activities. (You can also add hyperlinks to relevant documents/activities.)
- You can use the same piece of evidence more than once and in more than one section.
- Do not worry if you cannot populate all sections of the audit, or if there are gaps in some sections. This will be addressed in the improvement planning phase.
- If you want to highlight an additional element of good practice or knowledge which is not covered in the audit template, feel free to add an additional row within the key theme that it relates to best.

In the final column, note any initial ideas you have about possible **improvement plan activities** to address any areas of development. These can relate to current or planned activity, or be ideas for new ways of working. Again, do not worry if there are gaps here.