



Brighton & Hove  
**BHSCP**  
Safeguarding  
Children Partnership



# **BRIGHTON & HOVE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP**

**Quality Assurance Framework  
2024**



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<b>Document properties</b>	<b>Version details</b>
Document name	Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership Quality Assurance Framework 2024
Document owners	BHSCP
Version	1.0
Previous version	NA
Review plan	Annually from publication date
Review date	22/10/2025



## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out the activities undertaken by the Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP) and by individual agencies which contribute to service development and continuous learning and improvement.

The Quality Assurance Framework outputs provide the Partnership with an overall picture of how effective the BHSCP is in keeping children safe and promoting their wellbeing.

This work is key to our partners gaining an understanding of:

- How effective the BHSCP's arrangements are at keeping children and young people safe across the city.
- How best to identify and replicate best practice.
- The methods we use to identify and address areas for improvement.
- Where to deploy resources and inform our business plan priorities.
- The lived experience of children and young people in receipt of services. This means that the BHSCP ensures that children and young people are at the centre of decision making at both an individual level and also when developing and designing child safeguarding services across the partnership.

## 1. The BHSCP's Vision, Values and Governance Arrangements

**1.1** The BHSCP's **vision and values** are at the heart of this framework.

The BHSCP **vision**: "Children and young people in Brighton & Hove live a life free from fear, harm, abuse and exploitation, enabling every child in every part of the city to achieve their potential."

The BHSCP's vision is underpinned by its **core values**:

- A child centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each citizen, practitioner and organisation should play their part.

## 1.2 Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA 2024) and Independent Scrutiny

Statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguarding Children (WT23)<sup>1</sup> requires all safeguarding partners to ensure effective independent scrutiny arrangements are in place in their local area. Independent scrutiny provides assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a full range of scrutiny methods.

Our revised multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements (MASA) came into force on 2 September 2024, ensuring the requirements set out in WT23 are fully met. These arrangements replaced those under previous guidance and will be reviewed annually and take into account any future updates to Working Together to Safeguard Children. Full details of the current MASA are available from [Local Safeguarding Arrangements – \(bhscp.org.uk\)](https://bhscp.org.uk)

Statutory guidance WT23 describes the role of independent scrutiny:

‘Provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.’ (2023, p.37)

‘Independent scrutiny should drive continuous improvement and provide assurance that arrangements are working effectively for children, families, and practitioners. It should also consider learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews, national reviews and thematic reports. The **Independent Scrutineer** or **scrutiny group** should be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and expertise in the area being scrutinised and consequently add value to the work of local agencies.’ (ibid)

## 1.3 Quality Assurance Subgroup and Independent Scrutiny in Brighton and Hove

Our Quality Assurance Subgroup is chaired by an Independent Scrutineer and supported by one of our experienced Lay Members. This provides effective and rigorous support, insight, and challenge within the Subgroup, driving continuous improvement and assurance.

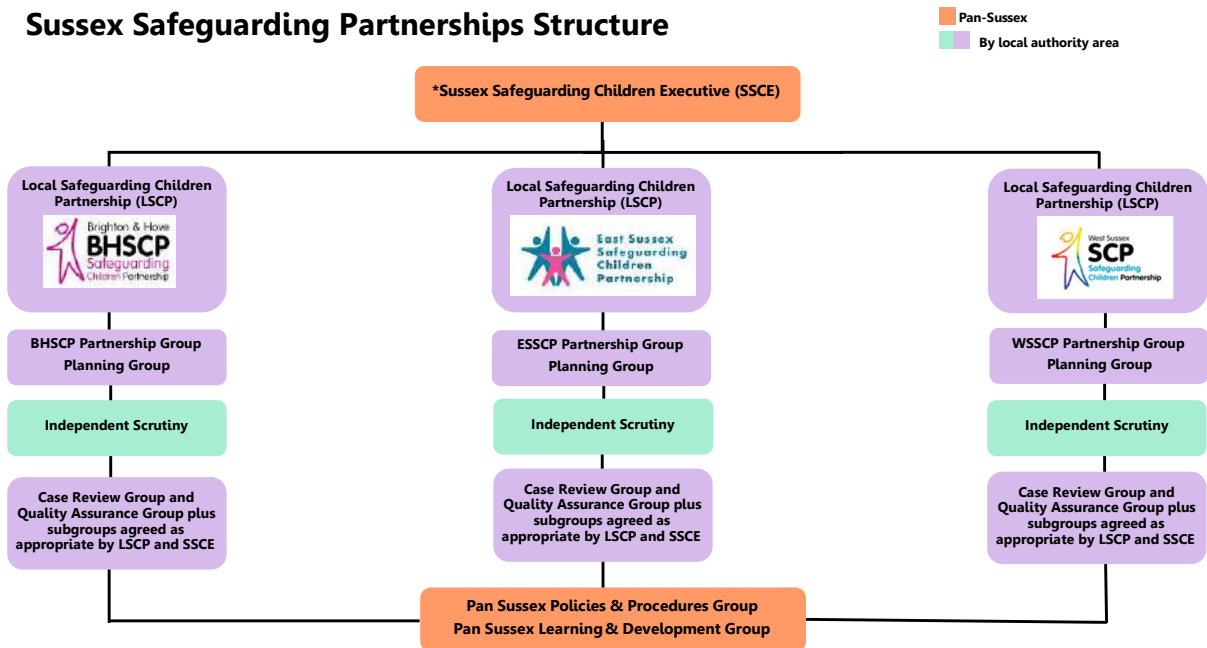
The BHSCP values the role of the Independent Scrutineer as a ‘critical friend’ and the oversight and challenge independent scrutiny provides the Partnership and individual agencies. Future plans for the Partnership generally may include an expansion of the Lay Member programme to include all appropriate Subgroups, and/or the introduction of Young Scrutineers to support the role of the Independent Scrutineer(s) and increase the inclusion of children’s voices in the Partnership.

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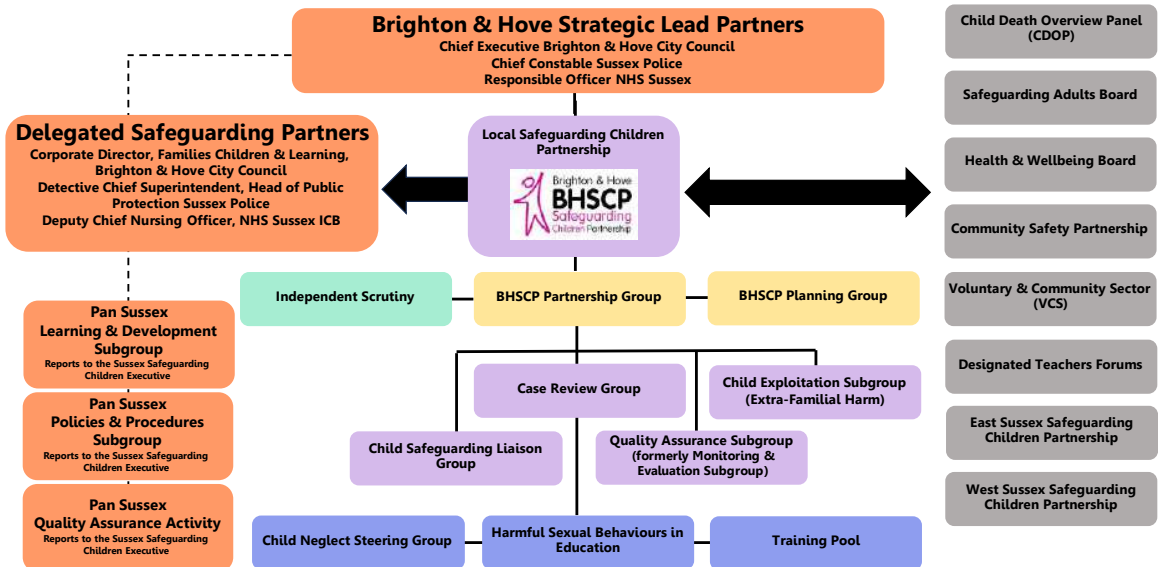
<sup>1</sup> [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101311/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2023-statutory-guidance.pdf)

# 1.4 Safeguarding Children Partnership Structures under the MASA 2024

## Sussex Safeguarding Partnerships Structure



## Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Structure



## 2. BHSCP Quality Assurance: Key Indicators/Sources of Information

- Performance Data
- Audits – single and multi-agency
- Lay Members
- Independent Scrutineer: challenge and reflection
- Complaints and Compliments
- Independent Chair of the Quality Assurance Subgroup
- Independent monitoring and inspections
- Feedback from children and their families.
- Feedback from practitioners
- BHSCP Annual Report
- Peer Reviews
- Learning from local, regional and national child safeguarding practice reviews
- Single agency reports

In addition, where feasible, to enable the early identification of new safeguarding risks and issues, and to ensure a joined-up response across Sussex, where appropriate, a new collation and analysis of data function will be developed under the new MASA. Decisions regarding such initiatives will be determined by the pan Sussex leaders through the Sussex Safeguarding Children Executive (SSCE).

This function will include:

- Development of a Sussex wide 'dashboard' of indicators, in response to joint areas of risk and Sussex safeguarding priorities.
- Delivery of a Sussex Information Sharing Agreement.
- Delivery of the Section 11 audit and scrutiny process.
- Supporting the SSCE on discrete pieces of work, such as delivering needs analysis on key areas of need.
- Facilitation of a twice-yearly meeting between key multi-agency colleagues to review the dashboard and escalate indicators, prior to the SSCE meetings.
- Establish and maintain a network of colleagues who have access to relevant data.

Pan Sussex Quality Assurance work such as audit themes will provide both a broader picture, greater consistency across Sussex and promote resource efficiency.

BHSCP will continue to deliver a data and audit function locally, via our Quality and Assurance Subgroup.

Key functions of this subgroup include the analysis of performance data and reports, alongside workforce development and summary audit reports with an emphasis on analysis, findings, action and learning, with the ability to drill down into services or themes but there also needs to be a “golden thread” running through the BHSCP’s multi-agency work.

### 3. BHSCP Business Plan 2023-26 Priorities

Our quality assurance work also links to our business plan priorities detailed below, to enable us to track progress made in these priority work areas. The current BHSCP business plan runs from April 2023 – March 2026 and has 4 areas of focus:



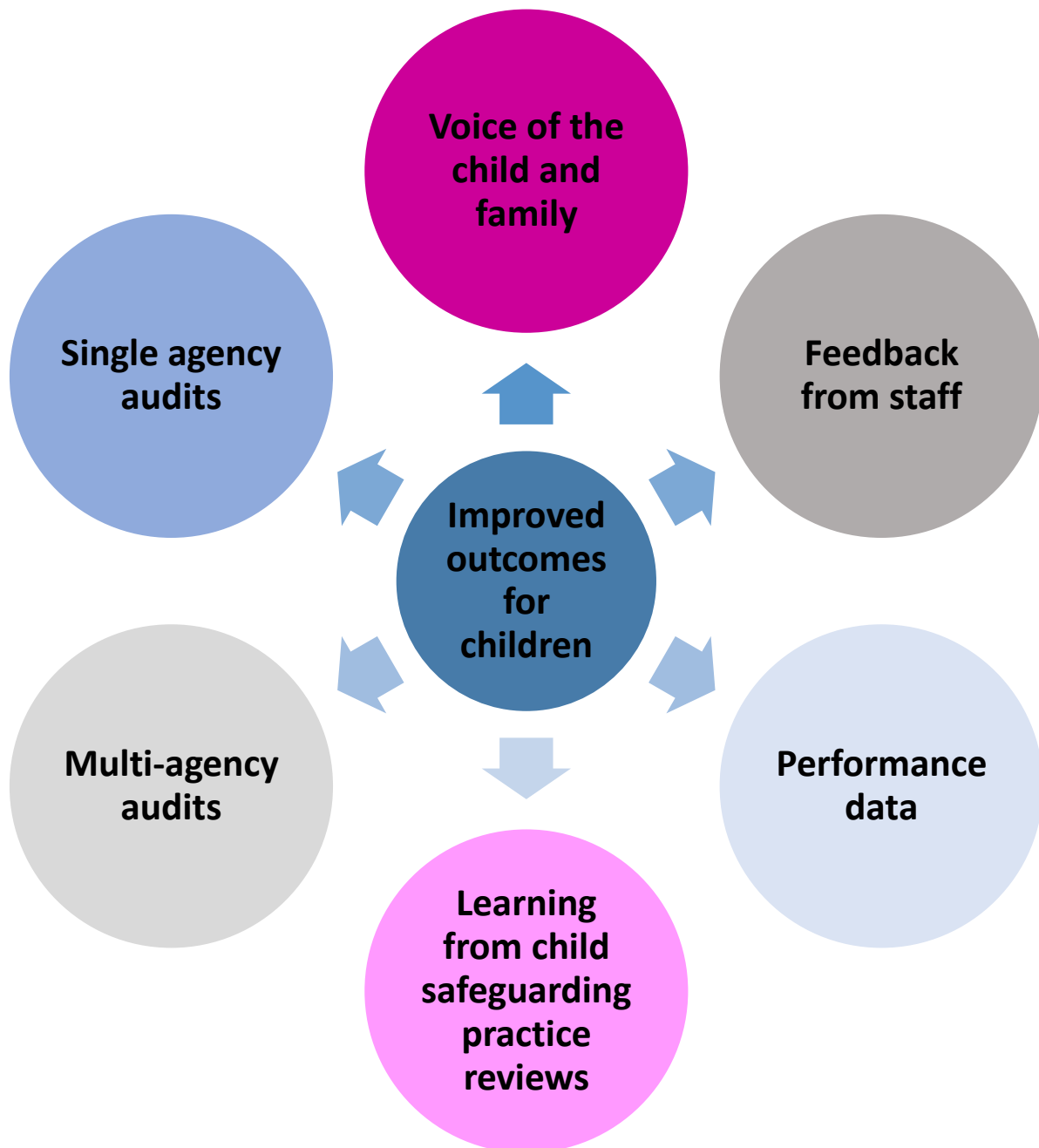
**Priority 1: Partnership Engagement and Accountability:** The transformation phase from the Local Child Safeguarding Board (LCSB) to the Partnership in its current form as BHSCP has concluded. Therefore, whilst engagement and accountability continue to be part of the foundations and daily business of the Partnership; the Business Plan 2023 – 2026 focuses on the Priorities 2,3 and 4.

**Priority 2: Safeguarding children from violence and exploitation:** Lead Agency: Sussex Police

**Priority 3: Reducing neglect, recognising the impact of poverty and disadvantage:** Lead Agency: Brighton & Hove City Council

**Priority 4: Mental Health and Emotional Health and Wellbeing:** Lead Agency: NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB).

## 4. Quality Assurance Framework - Key Elements



### A Child Centred Approach to Quality Assurance



**4.1 The Voice of the Child and Family** We seek out the voice of the child and their family through an understanding of their specific needs including children who are at risk of abuse, or who have individual needs, or where they are living in homes in which family members reside who have complex or challenging needs to address. This includes participation activities that enable partner agencies and organisations to understand how their services and interventions are experienced by children and families. This insight is used to develop and improve services and practice to make a positive difference to children, young people and their families. Families who are the subjects of learning and practice reviews are encouraged to participate in learning review activity; to help professionals to understand how the family felt about the services provided to them, and feedback about how to improve outcomes for families by building on strengths and developing practice where required.

**4.2 Engaging with front line staff and our community groups** is also important and this is achieved using a variety of methods including briefings to staff, involvement of frontline practitioners and managers in learning reviews (see below); participation in BHSCP audits; via discussions at the Child Safeguarding Liaison Meetings; and staff surveys. The independent scrutineers also meet with frontline staff and seek feedback via the Partnership Group and Quality Assurance Subgroup.

**4.3 Child Safeguarding Practices Reviews (CSPRs)** and other learning reviews, including local, regional and national learning, analyse what happened and why following a serious child safeguarding incident and identify learning to improve future practice standards. The BHSCP is responsible for ensuring that learning from CSPRs, as well as relevant reviews across Sussex and national learning are shared and acted upon. The Case Review Group (CRG) makes sure cases meeting threshold for a local review will be commissioned and staff involved are able and given the time, support and space to enable them to attend, thus contributing to and enriching the learning process. The CRG's learning from a strengths-based stance, promotes building on practice strengths and opportunities whilst addressing areas requiring improvement. The CRG is committed to sharing learning in an appropriate and transparent way with children, and their families; practitioners and their managers; and the wider partnership in the local authority area and beyond.

**4.4 Multi-agency and single agency audits** provide an opportunity for staff and managers to use audit activity to encourage a reflective environment which in turn supports organisational and partnership learning. The BHSCP uses audits to identify the quality of practice and lessons to be learned in terms of both multi-agency, single agency and multi-disciplinary practice Two deep dive BHSCP audits are delivered per annum and a local Sussex s11<sup>2</sup> audit every two years. Assurance Request proforma

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<sup>2</sup> Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 - Places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

are used to provide additional information and assurance to the Partnership and Lead Partners based on audit recommendations.

**4.5 BHSCP Data Dashboard** - this key performance measure was in development throughout 2022 by the Quality Assurance (previously known as Monitoring and Evaluation) Subgroup membership. Data should not be viewed as a straightforward measure of good or bad practice but interrogated to see what lies behind it. The BHSCP uses a range of data from across multi-agency safeguarding systems to triangulate with other evidence and information to understand potential safeguarding implications. The BHSCP data set analysis combined with qualitative feedback for example from written records, observation of practice and feedback from children, families and young people and practitioners develops a clearer picture of what is happening with regard to front line practice. Additional Information Requests (AIRs) are used to gather further detail from agencies, and these are presented to the Quality Assurance membership as a means of providing assurance to the Partnership and Lead Partners. This approach helps the BHSCP to develop and test hypotheses around the quality of child safeguarding practice across the city.

**4.6 The BHSCP's Learning and Development** offer is linked directly to and informed by quality assurance work. The BHSCP Learning and Development offer is scoped by partner agencies who review and enhance the multi-agency training offer in light of findings from sources including audits; learning from both local, regional and national reviews; and business plan priority work. The BHSCP Learning and Development offer includes training commissioned from external providers, community and voluntary sector agencies and experts by experience, alongside training delivered via the multi-agency Training Pool with support from the Learning Development Officer.

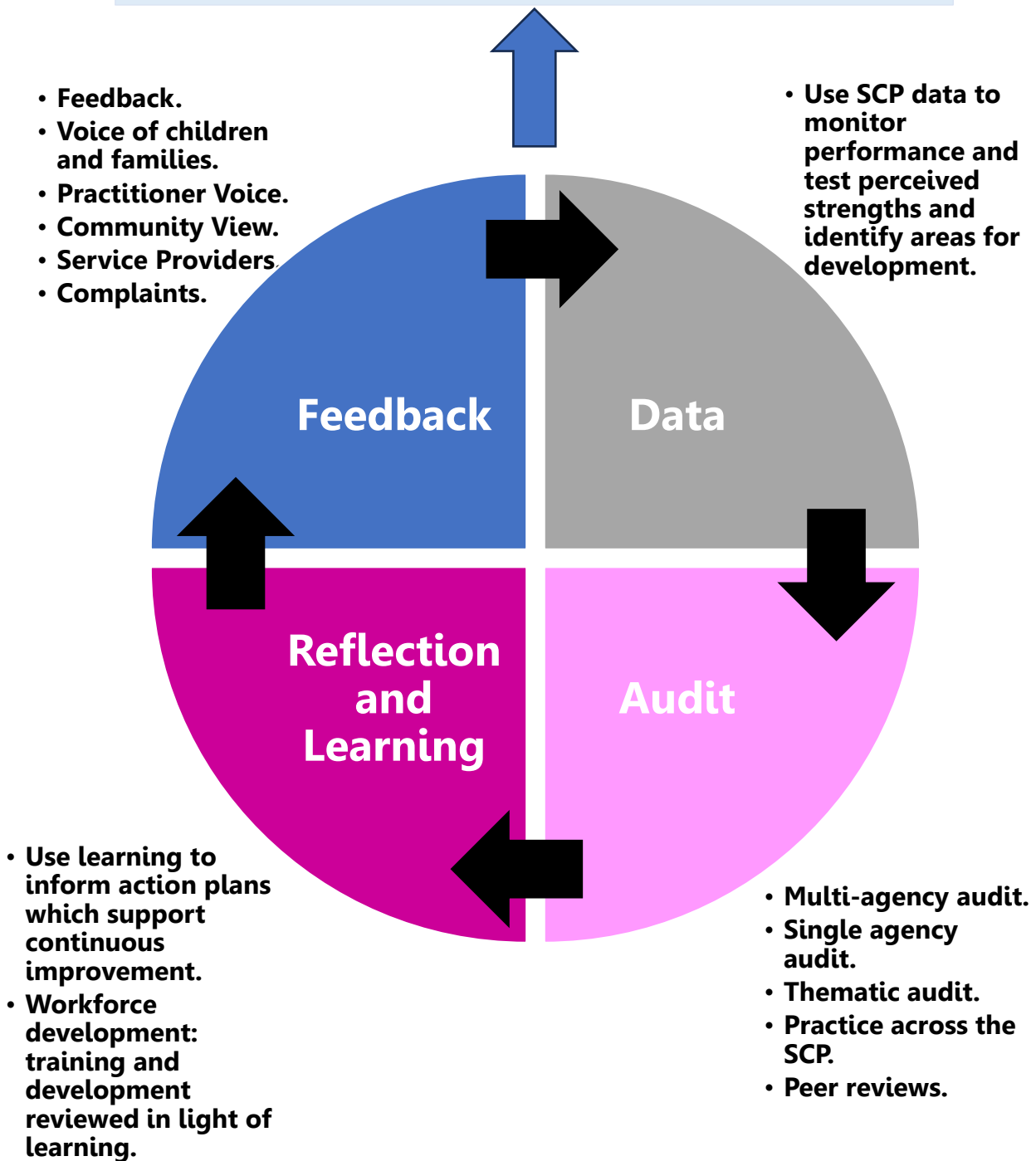
## 5. Identification of Risks and Priority Work

**Developing a hypothesis:** A key element of the Partnership's approach is to analyse sources of information (see diagram below) in order to identify potential issues, enabling a timely and informed understanding of potential risks.

This work supports a strengths-based approach in which the BHSCP objective is to continuously improve outcomes for children, young people and their families via service delivery enhancements across our partner agencies and organisations.

Hypothesis/es may be generated from data, or audit, or the voice of the child.

**Outcome: Children and families in Brighton & Hove receive the right support and services at the right time**



## Quality Assurance System