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## One Minute Guide: Quality Assurance

### What is Quality Assurance?

Quality Assurance is part of the Children's Trust's commitment to achieving the best quality service for children, young people and their families, ensuring continuous improvement and the on-going development of service provision. It is a term that embraces all the activity that contributes to service improvements and achieving good quality outcomes for children. Quality assurance is an important element of a child-centred 'systems' approach to the delivery of services to children and young people, as highlighted in [The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report](#)<sup>1</sup>

### Who is responsible for Quality Assurance?

In the Children's Trust, quality assurance is everyone's responsibility. Heads of Service, Service Managers and Team Managers have a responsibility to quality assure the staff and services provided within their respective areas. They also undertake monthly auditing of selected case files for a service outside their own remit. Team Managers and Supervising Senior Practitioners are responsible for the quality of direct work and support to staff and each member of staff has responsibility for their own practice, ensuring the quality of the work they undertake.

The Quality Assurance (QA) Team undertake case record checks, case file audits and 'deep dive' or themed audits. A themed audit will examine an area of work across different services within the Children's Trust or will examine a particular theme over a period of time. A 'deep dive' focusses on a narrower area of service delivery to explore it in much greater detail. A themed audit or 'deep dive' review will use a variety of methods, such as case record audits and directly meeting with individual managers and teams from the relevant service and/or with other key stakeholders. Audits and reviews are requested by Children's Trust Management Team ([CTMT](#)) or are identified by the QA Team as in need of further exploration.

Audits are carried out against local policy and procedures, legislation, regulations and guidance. Quality assurance reports are shared with teams and service managers and audits are reported to the CTMT and Children's Services Management Team (CSMT). All reports include recommendations for change and development in policy, systems and/or service provision. Progress in implementing the recommendations is monitored by local managers and their progress reports are collated by the QA Team.

The aim is that front line practitioners and managers should feel involved and engaged in the quality assurance process, that it should be experienced as a supportive aspect of their provision of quality services. The QA Team, in the course of their work, may identify

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<sup>1</sup> [The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report - A child-centred system](#), Professor Eileen Munro (2011).

systemic difficulties facing staff or training needs that can then be taken forward to be addressed.

### **Other Quality Assurance activity:**

Casework Panel – meets monthly to review any case where there are concerns with regard to decision making or delay, or where there has been exceptional good practice that can be shared.

Children’s Rights and Advocacy – The Children’s Rights Advocate provides support and advocacy for children and young people who have complaints or concerns about the services they are receiving.

Complaints and Compliments – the [Complaints Team](#) co-ordinate the response to all complaints made under S26 of Children Act 1989 as well as Corporate Complaints relating to Children’s Services.

User feedback/children/young people’s participation – the Children’s Participation Officer works with the Children in Care Councils (CiCC). The “Don’t Whisper” Group (Senior CiCC) and the Junior CiCC provide avenues for on-going feedback from children and young people about the services they receive. These groups link to and inform the work of the Voice of the Child Working Group chaired by the Principal Child and Family Social Worker (PCFSW).

Independent Reviewing Service – IRO’s have a role in monitoring the activity of the local authority in relation to children and young people in care.

### **Who can I contact for advice, support or further information?**

The Team will be happy to provide more information and the Team is always pleased to hear from staff and managers areas or ideas for review or audit. You can contact them on [qa.team@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:qa.team@redbridge.gov.uk)