

**Shropshire Children’s Services**

**Quality Assurance Framework**

**April 2018**

**SECTION 1: Introduction**

Shropshire Children’s Services were recognised to provide services to children, young people and their families that are overall ’Good’ in November 2017, by Ofsted. This grading was impacted by their recognition of a robust Quality Assurance Framework implemented across Children’s Services by Senior Leaders.

*“The robust quality assurance framework and good use of audits and peer reviews contribute effectively to performance information and practice improvements. Managers know very well the strengths and weaknesses of their services, and accurately assess their own performance”.* (Ofsted, November 2017)

We have worked hard to embed our Quality Assurance Framework and raise our standards for practice, changing the culture within children’s services to ensure that work is completed in a timely way and that expectations for quality is understood.

*“An embedded quality assurance culture, underpinned by rigorous performance monitoring, audits and peer reviews with a strong focus on safeguarding and early help in 2015 and 2016, has informed learning and practice development across all areas of the service.” (Ofsted, November 2017)*

We were pleased that the inspection recognised our improvement journey, but we are not complacent. This is an exciting time for practice in children’s social care with many national developments including the Accreditation of Social Workers, learning from the innovation fund, development of the ‘What Works Centre’ and Social Work England. There are also a number of regional developments, which will support us to innovate including Teaching Partnerships and the West Midlands regional ‘Future Social’ initiative. As practice evolves, we will need to evolve our approach to Quality Assurance, utilising innovative tools and continuously ensuring that we have a shared understanding of ‘Good’ practice to reach our vision for children.

The vision of Shropshire’s Children’s Trust, as set out in the Children, Young People and Families Plan is that:

***“All children and young people will be happy, healthy, and safe and reach their full potential, supported by their families, friends and the wider community.”***

Shropshire Children’s Services exist to make a positive difference to every child and we know we only have one chance to get it right. The delivery of quality services is dependent upon a whole system approach to organisational competence, which reflects continual improvement and a learning organisation. Thus, quality assurance activity is an essential part of our work to ensure that we are providing the best services we can to children, young people and their families. The Quality Assurance Framework provides us with a range of mechanisms to identify good practice and areas for development, measuring our progress against our priorities and ultimately improve outcomes for children.

**SECTION 2: Aim of the Quality Assurance Framework**

The overall aim of this framework is to:

* **Ensure services are effective and high quality -** We are accountable for providing services, which are of a high standard. Professional staff working with children, young people and their families come to work because they want to make a positive difference to people’s lives.
* **Demonstrate continuous improvement -** Share findings of Quality Assurance reports, provide feedback to staff and managers and identify areas for improvement, which contribute to subsequent action plans to improve practice.
* **Meet national requirements for self-assessment and quality assurance -** Key recommendations from review bodies has called for strong quality assurance and auditing systems. This includes how we are using evidence to identify improvements. This includes actively seeking the views of children, young people and their families in the planning and delivery of services.
* **Measure the impact of service delivery** - This is central to achieving improved outcomes for children at all levels of need. Our systems collect information from a range of sources, which inform analysis of local needs at a community level, at a service performance level, and information relating to individual children and their families already receiving services. This information helps us to check that services are being delivered effectively and to standards that enable children’s welfare to be safeguarded, promoted and makes a difference.
* **Ensure the voice of the child** has been heard and taken into account of in assessment, planning and decision-making.

Everyone who works within children’s social care and wider children’s services has an important contribution to make to ensure we do the best we can for the children and families we work with. The aim of this document is to create a framework, which is easily understood by all workers, and managers across the Children and Families Service with mechanisms to quality assure practice and services delivered.

**SECTION 2: Our Approach Quality Assurance**

**Definition of Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance is an umbrella term, which embraces all activity that contributes to service improvement through satisfying the organisation that agreed standards are being met. Quality assurance is more than meeting targets and counting activity, it includes a qualitative approach, which measures standards and identifies areas for improvement, utilising a range of methods and intelligence. It is systematic and themed, cross agency and single agency.

There are three key elements of our approach to Quality Assurance:

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* **Quantitative:** Regular monitoring of performance data to ensure that we are meeting our performance indicators and targets and delivering good quality services to be delivered.
* **Qualitative:** Regular measuring of the quality of the work being carried out, utilising audit, observation and management oversight.
* **Outcomes:** Utilising an outcome focused approach wherever possible to measure the impact of services delivered to service users.

The combination of these three elements enables Children and Families to review work carried out and provides learning and areas of focus for improvement. Analysis of this information creates intelligence we can use to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of services. Information helps us understand whether we are delivering services to children and families in a timely way to a good standard. It enables us to benchmark performance against other service providers so that we can identify and consistently deliver best practice.

Our framework for quality assurance and service improvement is both reflective and pro- active. By examining past service delivery against good practice standards e.g. through audit, and considering service users views about the services received, we can measure the impact and quality of service delivery. By learning from this work and providing training, supervision and support to our staff we will seek to resolve identified issues before they become entrenched as poor practice.

**Service User Feedback and the Child’s Voice**

We recognise the importance of service user feedback to quality assure practice and services. Ensuring that the ‘child’s voice’ is evident in practice is part of all review and audit activity carried out in the Children and Families Service. Shropshire Children’s Services has high standards for ensuring that children and young people are seen alone, have an opportunity to share their views and be involved in their plans and creating outcomes for their families. There are three levels of engagement and consultation utilised including:

**Individual level:** Consultation by workers and managers with families through visits and meetings.

**Group level:** Consultation with groups of children, young people and their families, through surveys and the use of existing service user forums. This enables opportunities to influence strategy, planning and recruitment.

**Strategic level:** Consultation with groups of service users regarding strategic decisions e.g. the Looked after Children strategy with the Corporate Parenting Board.

The IMPACT project commenced in September 2017 and the Head of Early Help, Partnerships and Commissioning chair the steering group. The purpose of the Steering Group is to improve and embed Service User Feedback across Children’s Services.

The Steering Group will work to ensure consultation methods are developed and embedded within practice and improve the gathering and reporting of Service User feedback. The group with develop Service User Forums to allow effective engagement to consult on proposals and developments across the service and mechanisms for capturing the views of service users.

The priorities of the project are:

1. To embed our consultation documents across service areas
2. To develop and utilise Service User Forums
3. To develop a Service User in Practice Week
4. To ensure all commissioned services gather and report on Service User feedback

The IMPACT Project will allow Children’s Service has to evolve and develop influenced directly by the people the service is for. It will allow us to identify areas of good practice and overcome barriers in service user engagement.

**Practice Priorities**

In order to support our continuous improvement journey we have created 5 practice priorities informed by previous learning from our quality assurance framework. This helps our practitioners and managers to focus on the right areas for improvement. Our practice priorities for 2018 to 2019 are:

1. Plans and Planning  - We will continue to ensure every child has an outcome focused and SMART plan, informed by a robust assessment of risk and need and updated after every review. Plans will contain outcomes which are important to the child and actions being taken by all professionals. Planning for permanency will be evident on children’s case files and a focus for progression.
2. Management Oversight and Supervision  - Managers will ensure that there is evidence of regular management oversight and reflective supervision on all case files.  Workers will be supported and will have access to good quality reflective supportive.  Workers will be able to access management support when needed and key decisions taken outside of supervision will be recorded on the case file.
3. Assessments - Our assessments will be informed by evidence based tools and research, focused on the SRAF and risk/resilience models, with clear analysis leading to effective planning. Assessments will contain all relevant information for the child including Health and Education
4. Meetings and Reviews - The purpose of all meeting and review will be to create, review and revise plans for children. Workers will ensure all necessary paperwork for meetings and review are completed in a timely way to inform planning, all relevant professionals are invited, children and their families attend these meetings and that agenda are utilised to drive planning forward.
5. Visits - Visits will be timely, purposeful and include direct work which creates change for families. Children will be seen alone, and their wishes and feelings will be clearly recorded.

**Equality and Diversity**

Shropshire is committed to delivering consistent and high quality services across children’s services and to ensure that all children, young people and their families will have equal access to the services provided that meet their level of need.

Shropshire Children’s Services recognise the diversity of the children, young people and families we work with. We recognise that each family has their specific needs and the range of specialist services that we provide reflects this, enabling families to make sustainable changes. Anti-discriminatory practice will continue to be promoted across the service and permeate all quality assurance activity carried out and all children, young people and their families’ views will be included in our work regardless of language, culture, disability and gender. This will include learning from complaints and compliments.

We will also have a strong focus on recognising culture, diversity and identity in 2018 – 2019, ensuring that this is evident in our assessments, plans and reviews.

**SECTION 3: Quality Assurance Framework**

The Quality Assurance Framework permeates the work we do and all managers are required to carry out quality assurance activity as part of their day-to-day role to ensure that children and their families are receiving a high standard of services, which meet their individual needs.

The Quality Assurance Framework permeates the organisation and is clearly led and participated in by the Senior Leadership Team.

*“Senior managers are visible and know their services well. They use effective quality assurance information, performance reports, single-agency and multiagency audit activity, peer reviews and feedback from staff and complaints to scrutinise and improve practice and its impact for children and their families.” (Ofsted, November 2017)*

Quality and performance is an established agenda item at meetings across the service including team meetings, Senior Leadership Team meetings and End-to-End management meetings. Quarterly Quality and Performance Meetings are held with the Senior Leadership Team and chaired by the Director of Children’s Services and the Head of Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding chairs a meeting for all managers with this focus.

We recognise the importance of communicating the findings from Quality Assurance Activity across the workforce and utilise a range of methods including the “Weekly Brief” communication, which is sent to all children’s services workers and managers.

A ‘Practitioner’s Forum is held on a bi-monthly basis to gather the views of practitioner’s within children’s services and discuss practice improvement, chaired by the Principal Social Worker. This works to identify any barriers to practice improvement and innovate solutions to address these.

Feedback from frontline staff regarding Quality Assurance activity such as performance data is also communicated back regularly to senior management by managers within the service and the Principal Social Worker, who meets with the Director of Children’s Services on a monthly basis.

**Performance Data Collection and Analysis**

We recognise the importance of performance data in enabling managers to:

* Improve and maintain services.
* Report against targets, metrics, programmes and activities.
* Ensure performance meets both local and national targets and informs performance against statistical neighbours.
* Understand the direction of travel and evaluate the impact of change.

Children’s Services produce a range of performance reports and dashboards measuring key performance indicators (KPI) and key activities and outcomes that are reported to the Directorate Management Team, Corporate Management Team, SSCB, and scrutinised by Members. Performance data is embedded across children’s services and workers are able to check their own performance information at any time through the team manager’s matrix, ensuring that they proactively meet KPI’s.

Children’s Services is subject to a wide range of standards both national and local. The Council’s overall performance is measured against externally reportable performance indicators, which contribute to judgements made to assess performance.

**Audit Activity**

A fundamental part of the Quality Assurance Framework is case file audit. Audit is not a ‘one size fits all’ activity and can be used in a variety of ways to:

* Gain an over view of a child’s life
* Ensure that the child’s voice is present in work undertaken
* Review social work/ manager compliance with key standards; For example, case recording/supervision notes/statutory reviews
* Gain a snap shot of current practice; for example, the quality of core groups
* Gauge the quality of practice across the service; for example, evidence of supervision
* Gauge the quality of practice in a certain part of the service; for example, children seen alone as part of the assessment process.
* Understand and analyse specific trends; for example, the numbers of out of date assessments.
* Review multi agency audits; for example, SSCB audits

Effective case file audits are part of a broader quality assurance process, which links audit findings to changes in practice, whether individual or organisational, and review.

**The Quality Assurance Cycle:**

**Review and Improve**

Our QAF is based on a cycle of quality assurance activities in order for information to be routinely collected and used to improve services and to improve outcomes for children and young people. The framework works on a continuous programme of quality assurance activities throughout the year. The programme identifies roles, responsibilities, frequency and the purpose of those activities based on the following cycle of activities:

**Stage 1 — Set Priorities / Standards/ Review**

This relates to having a consistent set of standards by which we are measuring the quality of our work and performance against the priorities set for Children’s Services. Quality is the degree of excellence provided, or the degree of worth derived from a service from the point of view of children, young people and families.

Services involved in working with children and young people have a number of standards to which they work: as individuals through targets / appraisal; as teams and services – through team / services plans and performance measures; and with partners. Some standards are set nationally – for example by Ofsted; some are statutory, and others are set locally to reflect the Council’s aspirations for continuous improvement in the provision of Children’s services. Consequently, standards vary in terms of how and what is measured, some may be performance indicators, some are qualitative – such as the views of children or learning from complaints; others are outcomes from audits against set criteria. Standards enable us to measure the impact of our services against set targets, outcomes or criteria and use this to inform services for the future.

**Stage 2 — Programme of Quality Assurance Activities**

The quality assurance framework operates through a programme of planned quality checks and activities, which identifies specifies roles, responsibilities and the purpose of those activities. These activities and quality checks are undertaken at all levels of the organisation, including the Director for Children’s Services.

**Stage 3: Gathering, Analysing and Interpreting Information**

Analysis and interpretation of the range of quantitative and qualitative information gathered through the quality assurance framework is used to inform standards, measure progress against priorities, measure impact and outcomes for children and young people, and to inform improvement and changes to services.

Systematically capturing this information, analysing and interpreting this broad range of information and outcomes from quality assurance activities enables services to measure impact, identify trends in performance, and predict future demand and plan.

**Stage 4 — Feedback/Sharing of Findings**

Clear communication of how the system is performing against our quality standards promotes staff satisfaction when things are going well, and begins the process by which we start to identify and make improvements when they are going less well. Where appropriate we should aim to share this with service users as it raises confidence that we are listening to their views and that we are committed to continuous improvement.

**Stage 5 — Review and Improve**

Evidence, learning and intelligence produced through the QAF and the programme of activities, and the standards are reviewed and benchmarked against other providers to identify areas for development, where we are delivering best practice, and to identify other providers or local authorities who deliver best practice. This enables us to measure how well our services are meeting the needs of children, young people and their families and implement changes to services to reflect those needs.

**Quality Assurance Framework Tools**

There are a range of mechanisms and tools that are utilised to gather information and to improve practice once learning has been gained and actions for improvement identified. These include:

1. **HR and Staffing**

Use of HR and staffing information is essential for services and managers in being able to plan and provide a quality, sustainable and consistent service. This includes information about vacancies, staffing numbers, starters / leavers, levels of qualification, performance development of staff, DBS checks of staff, recruitment and retention and more. This element of the QAF enables services to manage workloads; to inform and develop services; in succession planning; and informs strategy.

Recruitment and retention of experienced professional staff is a challenge to all local agencies, none less than children’s social care. Shropshire continues to invest in the prioritisation of this activity and works hard to ensure that it is the local employer of choice for social workers.

The Workforce strategy works alongside the QAF and has a key focus on staff retention through continuous development of social workers with career pathways supported by training and development opportunities.

Feedback from staff is sought in a range of ways – in supervision, employee surveys, children’s social work health check, working groups, practitioner’s forum team meetings and through the Council’s whistle blowing process.

1. **Workforce Development**

Shropshire invests in an ongoing training programme for professional social workers to support continuous professional development. The programme incorporates promoting performance, quality, improving outcomes for children and their families, value for money and assessment of learning and development.

The Directorate (Social Care) Learning and Development Team supports a workforce of staff dedicated to working with children and young people who have met threshold criteria for social work service. Continuous Professional Development arrangements are in place and are reviewed by the Learning and Development Group.

An annual health check of Children’s Social Work services has been well established and includes a staff survey and focus groups.

The Workforce Development and Learning Manager works closely with others in the Quality, Performance and Assurance service and the Principal Social Worker to ensure that we are able to embed the learning from the quality assurance framework in our training and that the workers have the right tools and knowledge to do the job.

1. **Supervision and Appraisal**

Shropshire has a clear policy regarding the use of the supervisory relationship between social worker and manager. It is expected that supervision provides critical reflection and analysis of practice. Supervision files are audited on a monthly basis by service managers and observation of supervision is undertaken for each manager at least once a year.

Performance Appraisals are held annually and reviewed every six months to ensure all staff can maximise their competence. There are also well-established Capability and Disciplinary Procedures which can be followed if performance issues are identified in staff.

1. **Observation of Practice**Practice observation is undertaken of the quality of professional practice across a range of roles and responsibilities. This is a key quality assurance activity, which promotes reflective practice; assure compliance with policy and procedures, and staff development. The findings of practice observations are collected and analysed centrally to identify themes for wider learning. In 2018 – 2019, we will have greater emphasis on the observation of practitioners by managers and by service managers of managers linked to our supervision policy and appraisal. We hold ‘Service User and Feedback Week’ twice annually, which will involves each manager at every level in the organisation observing practice in an open case utilising a standard analysis tool.
2. **Practice Workshops**

Workshops and briefing sessions are used in front line teams to promote good practice. The focus may be dictated by issues emerging from qualitative audit, new practice initiatives, learning from complaints, best practice identified from performance or customer feedback, or any other element of the quality assurance framework. The Principal Social Worker also regularly visits team meetings to communicate key themes from audits and any practice changes.

1. **Case File Audit Programme**

Audits are approached by:

* Looking systematically and objectively at samples of practice, using the Audit Schedule and its associated tools;
* Seeking the views of service users at various points of delivery
* Collating and analysing the findings
* Sharing the issues which emerge with staff, managers and others
* Deciding the actions needed both to promote good practice identified and to make improvements where needed.
* Providing support for staff to achieve required changes
* Re-auditing to measure that improvements have been achieved and maintained.

All managers and IROs complete Child Journey audits on a monthly basis.

It is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure that they have completed the ‘Child Journey Audit Checklist’ prior to the audit.

1. **Oversight of the IRO/CP Chair**

After every LAC review or CP conference, a ‘RAG’ is completed. This allows the chair to indicate if there are any practice problems or drift and delay which is then highlighted to the worker and the team manager. The Principal IRO meets with team managers on a monthly basis to ensure progress is maintained and regularly reports findings to senior management.

1. **Serious Case Reviews / Learning case reviews**

Working Together 2015 places a duty on Safeguarding Children Boards to undertake Serious Case Reviews and other case reviews that do not meet the threshold for a serious Case Review. The decision to undertake a serious case review is made by the chair of the SSCB. The Director and Head of Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding are responsible for ensuring Children Services staff’s engagement in any review commissioned by the SSCB and for the completion of any action plan. Action plans are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team.

The SSCB via Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) also carries out a review of the circumstances of the death of every child who lives in Shropshire. This is to identify modifiable factors in the circumstances of the child’s death and to inform action that can be taken to reduce the deaths of children/young people. An annual report is produced in respect of the learning and presented to the SSCB.

1. **Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)**

The SSCB is responsible for commissioning at least 3 thematic interagency audits per business year. This is in addition to coordinating regular Section 11 audits. The learning is fed back to constituent agencies for them to disseminate as well as being embedded in SSCB and service training plans.

The Principal Social Worker and Service Manager for Quality, Performance and Assurance is also the subgroup chair for the Quality and Performance subgroup of the SSCB and attends the Learning and Improvement subgroup, enabling a direct route to share learning with Children’s Services.

1. **Oversight of Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)**

The Local Children Safeguarding Board has a statutory role in assessing the effectiveness of multi-agency work to safeguard children and young people. It receives regular reports on the performance of agencies in the professional network.

The SSCB runs the local multi-agency safeguarding training programme that provides guidance and direction for staff involved in safeguarding children and young people. Through the work of its sub-committees and, in particular the practitioner forum, it seeks to ensure that practitioners from all sectors and agencies are appropriately informed about and able to influence the work of the SSCB.

The Chair of the Board is able to provide appropriate challenge to all member agencies.

1. **Complaints, Compliments and Customer Feedback**

Our Statutory Children’s complaints procedures and processes include capturing and utilising learning from both compliments and complaints. Learning is gathered and shared with services and teams, is incorporated into supervision and training with staff, and is used to develop services and improve outcomes. Learning from compliments is a valuable source of customer feedback and is shared with services to inform best practice and improve outcomes for service users.

The Complaints Service monitors complaint activities, trends, timescales for resolving complaints, across teams, services and at all levels of the organisation. Regular reports on themes and trends are reported to services, management and leadership teams, and feeds into the quality assurance framework. There the Children’s Complaints Annual Report is an important source of learning to improve future performance and is an opportunity for scrutiny by Members about the performance of the Complaints Service itself, to identify trends and themes around complaints, and to give Members opportunity challenge performance and outcomes from the complaints process.

1. **Voice of the Child**

Services and staff actively ensure children, young people and their families are involved in decisions affecting them, and are able to influence these.

A range of tools are used to gather the views of children and young people at every contact by social workers and by IRO’s. Managers authorise all assessments and plans for children.

* **Assessment**

The views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families are actively sought, recorded and taken into account when an assessment is being undertaken. These views do influence the planning of services in response to identified need.

* **Looked After Children (LAC)**
  + Views and wishes of Looked After Children (LAC)are sought at every contact and in assessment and reviews.
  + Views of children are sought in preparation for the annual review of foster carers.
  + Parents and children are surveyed following statutory reviews where the plan for the child is to leave care to seek views about the review and service delivery by the Independent Reviewing Officers,.
  + The Corporate Parenting Panel links with the Children in Care Council (Care Council Crew) to gather views on services and developing needs from children in care and care leavers.
  + **Child Protection**

Children, young people(if in attendance) and parents are asked to complete a questionnaire (written or interview) after the child protection conference where it was decided that the child protection plan was no longer needed, to ascertain their views about services received (what worked!). These are included in this framework and will be included in quarterly reporting to inform performance analysis. Check CP

Children of sufficient age and understanding are invited to complete consultation documents to express their views to conference if they do not attend.

1. **Multi-agency Audits**

Senior Managers contribute to multi-agency themed audits as part of the SSCB quality framework as required. Partners also contribute to audits relating to the effectiveness of Early Help.

1. **Senior Management Oversight and Leadership**

The role of the Chief Executive and senior managers is to ensure that services for children are well-organised, timely in delivery, and constitute value for money. Senior managers will have meetings with front line teams; chair their own management team meetings, look at case files and trouble-shoot in situations where practice or management issues arise. Senior Mangers ensure quality assurance processes are consistently implemented and that learning informs practice change to safeguard and improve outcomes for children. This is ensured for example through Corporate Parenting Panel, Senior Leadership Team meetings; Social Work (monthly) End-to-End, and individual supervision and appraisals.

1. **Oversight of the Children’s Trust**

The Children’s Trust has a key role in ensuring that outcomes for all local children are optimised and that children’s experience of growing up in Shropshire is as good as it can be.

The SSCB reports to the Children’s Trust Board in its Annual Report and challenges the Children’s Trust in ensuring that Safeguarding is at the very top of the Trust’s agenda. The Children’s Trust is responsible for the production of the ‘single plan’.

1. **Lead Member and Scrutiny Oversight**

The political processes in Shropshire are intended to ensure that good delivery of quality and timely services for children sits alongside value for money and appropriate strategic planning that fits with the overall local priorities.

The Lead Member for Children’s takes an active role in the work of the partnership including attending the SSCB as a participant observer and is a member on the Fostering Panel. The Lead Member meets young people as part of their corporate parenting role and chairs the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee, as part of Local Authority political oversight, receives a regular report in Safeguarding from senior officers. Children and Young People’s Scrutiny receive regular performance reports across a range of performance activities. The Leader of the Council has overall political oversight.

1. **Statutory inspections**

OFSTED is the regulatory body that has responsibility for inspections of services for children in need of help and protection; children looked after and care leavers and reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. We have recently been graded as ‘Good’ by Ofsted and are utilising the recommendations made by Ofsted to improve our practice.

1. **Sector Led Improvements**

Shropshire Council is actively engaged with the Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands (sector-led organisation) that supports local authorities and their wider public sector partners in their drive to increase efficiency and improve local public services.

**SECTION 5: Closing the Loop**

In 2018-2019 there will be a particular emphasis on ‘closing the loop’ on learning from quality assurance activity. The Principal Social Worker and Service Manager will collate all quality assurance activity and learning for Quality, Performance and Assurance who will analyse the impact of this utilising the following methods:

* + Regular reporting and discussion of themes from audits at key managers meetings and identification of actions.
  + Regular attendance at team meetings to share learning and actions with staff.
  + Tracking of ‘Inadequate’ actions to ensure that actions have been completed and actions have been done.
  + Group analysis by advanced practitioners and managers within the Quality, Performance and Assurance Service on a monthly basis of the progress we are making on the quality of practice and the five practice priorities.
  + Chairing of the Practitioner’s Forum by the Principal Social Worker to identify any barriers to practice and any innovations to address this.
  + Chairing audit-learning days for managers twice a year, to gain a greater understanding of how to identify learning from audits, develop consistency in quality, and develop a shared understanding of grading in practice.
  + One joint child journey audit per month with a team manager to support the development of consistency in auditing.

This framework includes a suite of audit and quality assurance tools, to build a cumulative picture focussed on outcomes, good practice and compliance. An analysis tool has been devised to aid this process and can be found at **appendix 4.**

All summaries or findings from the various audit processes will be returned to the Quality, Performance and Assurance Manager for evaluation and analysis. An analysis tool is included in the framework for this purpose.

The Quality, Performance and Assurance Service Manager, in conjunction with others (Advanced Practitioners, Performance colleagues, etc.) will produce **quarterly** **analysis and learning reports** to clearly communicate our performance against our priorities and outcomes for children and young people.

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| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Elected Members** | **Monitor Performance via Cabinet and Children’s Scrutiny Committee** | **Report** | **Quarterly** | **To monitor performance, benchmarking, practice, decision-making, outcomes and the views of children and young people.** |
| **Meet with Children and Young People** | **Regular opportunities** | **Bi-annually** |
| **Receive Annual Statutory Complaints Report for Children’s Services** | **Report** | **Annually** |
| **To be given an opportunity to consider the quality of social work practice.** | **Regular opportunities** | **Bi-annually** |
| **Lead Member** | **Visits to Social Work Teams for discussion with front line staff in relation to professional work** | **Visits / Observation** | **Annually** | **To meet, seek feedback in relation to practice, pressures and issues with front-line staff** |
| **Monitor quality of Corporate Parenting** | **Chairs Corporate Parenting Board** |  | **To ensure the LA is meeting its obligations as Corporate parent; monitoring quality of care to LAC and developing services to meet the needs of the LAC population** |
| **Receive IRO Annual Report and Virtual Head teacher Report** | **Report** | **Annually** | **To ensure the LA is meeting its obligations as Corporate parent; monitoring quality of care to LAC and developing services to meet the needs of the LAC population** |
| **Attend Shropshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (SSCB) as a participant observer** | **Attendance at SSCB** | **As per the meeting schedule (4-5 times per year)** | **Ensure the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding work** |
| **To be given an opportunity to consider the quality of practice.** | **Opportunity to undertake a visit as part of service user and practice week.** | **Bi-Annually** | **Able to observe and give feedback on practice of social workers and experience of service users.** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Chief Executive** | **Appoints Shropshire Safeguarding Board Chair** | **Reviews and Appraises** | **Annually** |  |
| **Receives Annual Report from Director of Children’s Services (DCS)** | **Report** | **Annually** | **DCS assures on quality of safeguarding through Annual Report** |
| **Visits Social Work teams for informal discussion with front-line staff** | **Observations** | **Annually** | **To meet, seek feedback and review practice pressures and issues with front-line staff** |
| **Monitoring via 1:1 with Director** | **Meeting and Report** | **Monthly monitoring** | **To maintain overview of service and performance issues** |
| **Receive SSCB Annual Report** | **Report** | **Annually** | **To maintain overview of service and performance issues** |
| **Receive IRO Annual Report and Virtual Head teacher Report** | **Report** | **Annually** | **To ensure the LA is meeting its obligations as Corporate parent; monitoring quality of care to LAC and developing services to meet the needs of the LAC population** |
| **To be given an opportunity to consider the quality of practice.** | **Undertake a visit as part of service user and practice week.** | **Bi-annually** | **Able to observe and give feedback on practice of social workers and experience of service users.** |

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| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Director of Children Services** | **Meet with Children and Young People** | **Direct / face to face / visits to homes**  **Pre-arranged / unplanned meetings** | **Six monthly as a minimum** | **Hear child’s voice / share their journey experiences** |
| **Visits to Social Work teams and Reviewing Service \ Attends Team Meetings for informal discussion with front-line staff** | **Observations** | **Annually as a minimum** | **To meet, seek feedback and review practice pressures and issues with front-line staff** |
| **Audit 1 case (with social worker)** | **Audit** | **Monthly** | **Monitor case records, quality of assessment, planning, management analysis, decision-making, evidence of multi-disciplinary activity** |
| **Supervision of Head of Service** | **Meeting** | **Monthly** | **To assess the effectiveness of the service area.** |
| **Receives Quarterly Quality Assurance Reports** | **Reports** | **Quarterly** | **To review all aspects of the Quality Assurance Framework to give assurance on robustness of quality of work taking into account Service User Feedback.** |
| **Receives Quarterly & Annual Statutory Children’s Complaints Report** | **Report from Complaints Manager** | **Quarterly**  **& Annually** | **To monitor and review complaints processes; gather assurance on performance, learning, actions and outcomes from complaints and compliments.** |
| **Review and scrutinise key performance measures from:**   * **Children’s Senior Management Team** * **Shropshire Safeguarding Children’s Board** * **Performance Team** | **Reports to Meeting**  **Reports to Meeting via SSCB**  **Reports**  **Reports \ Dashboard** | **Quarterly**  **Quarterly**  **Quarterly**  **Monthly \ Quarterly** | **To review performance and benchmarking; gather assurance on  performance and outcomes**  **Overview of Performance and QA and inform services.** |
| **Receive SSCB Annual Report** | **Report** | **Annually** | **To maintain overview of service and performance issues** |
| **Receive IRO Annual Report and Virtual Head teacher Report** | **Report** | **Annually** | **To ensure the LA is meeting its obligations as Corporate parent; monitoring quality of care to LAC and developing services to meet the needs of the LAC population** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Heads of Service** | **Audit of a case file with the worker** | **Audit** | **Monthly** | **To assess the effectiveness of practice and identify areas for development for individuals and the service.** |
| **Observations of front line practitioners across children’s services, including discussion with front-line staff** | **Visual Management e.g.**  **early bird meetings, observations** | **Minimum 6 monthly** | **To gather assurance about practice and service standards, provide opportunity for front-line staff to air concerns and identify areas for improvement individually and corporately.** |
| **Receives Quarterly & Annual Statutory Children’s Complaints Report** | **Report from Complaints Manager** | **Quarterly**  **& Annually** | **To monitor and review complaints processes; gather assurance on performance, learning, actions and outcomes from complaints and compliments.** |
| **Monitor and scrutinise performance data** | **Performance meetings** | **Quarterly** | **To monitor and scrutinise performance data** |
| **Make decisions on all external placements.** | **Decision Making** | **As required** | **To quality assure appropriateness of the need for accommodation requests.** |
| **Chair Legal Planning Meetings** | **Decision Making** | **Fortnightly** | **To ensure that decision making is robust in relation to initiating care proceedings.** |
| **Support thematic audits** | **Audit** | **As identified through performance, quality assurance or complaints** | **Identify areas for improvement individually and corporately.** |
| **Serious Case Reviews \ Internal Management Reviews \ Learning Reviews** | **Internal Management Review \ Learning Review** | **As required** | **Review and Action plans reported to DCS and monitored by Directorate Leadership Team** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Service Managers** | **Maintain oversight of performance information pertinent to service areas** | **Performance Reports \ Care First reports \ Meetings** | **Reports – monthly;**  **Meetings - Quarterly** | **To monitor and scrutinise performance data** |
| **Audit Childs Journey**  **1 cases per month** | **Audit** | **Monthly** | **Monitor the child’s journey, case records, quality of assessment, planning, management analysis, decision-making, evidence of multi-disciplinary activity** |
| **Themed audits pertinent to service areas** | **Audit** | **As and when required** | **To drill down on particular areas of practice to understand strengths and challenges in that area and to take action where required.** |
| **Serious Case Reviews \ Internal Management Reviews \ Learning Review** | **Internal Management Review \ Learning Review** | **As required** | **Review and Action plans reported to DCS \ AD \ SSCB** |
| **Receives quarterly Statutory Children’s Complaints Report** | **Report from Complaints Manager** | **Quarterly** | **To monitor and review complaints outcomes; gather assurance on performance, learning, and actions.** |
| **Direct observations of front line practitioners and Team Managers \ IROs** | **Visual Management e.g. attend meetings; observations** | **Quarterly** | **To gather assurance about practice and service standards, and provide opportunity for front-line staff to air concerns etc.** |
| **Audit of worker’s supervision file.** | **Audit** | **Up to 4 Per Year** | **To assess the effectiveness of the supervision and identify areas for development for individuals and the service.** |
| **Observe Supervision of Team Manager with supervisee.** | **Appraisal** | **Annually** | **To ensure that supervision is of good quality in line with supervision model contained in Shropshire’s supervision policy.** |
|  | **Complete quarterly Quality and Performance Reports to the Director of Children’s Services** | **Report** | **Quarterly** | **To ensure there is a clear understanding of issues across the Service areas and to identify what actions are being taken to improve performance, and to overcome challenges and barriers to social work practice.** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Team Mangers and Senior Social Workers** | **QA checklist all files at closure and at transfer between workers or teams** | **Audit** | **As and when this occurs** | **Ensure adherence to policy and procedures and any areas requiring attention are directly addressed with the worker concerned.** |
| **Observations of Practice** | **Observation** | **1 for each staff member per year** | **To ensure practice is to a required standard, and support professional development of individuals, as well as contribute to the learning of the organisation.** |
| **Childs Journey Audit** | **Audit** | **Monthly**  **1 case** | **Monitor the child’s journey, case records, quality of assessment, planning, management analysis, decision-making, evidence of multi-disciplinary activity.** |
| **Monitor and scrutinise performance data** | **Performance Reports \ Care First reports** | **Reports – weekly \ monthly in Team meetings and supervision** | **To monitor and scrutinise performance data** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Principal IRO** | **Analysis of Quality Assurance RAG ratings from conference and LAC reviews** | **Audit Analysis** | **Monthly (Quarterly report)** | **To ensure rigorous challenge and overall effectiveness of frontline practice.** |
| **Quality Assure minutes of Conference and Statutory Reviews** | **Oversight** | **Monthly** | **To support managing performance** |
| **Themed audits pertinent to service areas** | **Audit** | **As and when required** |  |
| **Direct observations of CP Chairs and IROs** | **Appraisal**  **Observation** | **Annually** | **To ensure practice is of good standard, keeping children safe and preventing drift and delay.** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **IRO \ Conference Chairs** | **QA of case management** | **Complete the Quality Assurance Form (RAG)** | **Every Statutory Review & CP** | **Gather assurance of quality, practice, standards and outcomes.** |
| **QA Care or CP planning** | **Through review of CP and LAC procedures** | **Every child who becomes CP or LAC** | **To ensure the safety and robust planning for our most vulnerable children** |
| **Ascertaining the views of others** | **Complete consultation with children, young people, their families and carers and other professionals** | **At LAC Review or at the end of a Child Protection episode** | **To consider the quality of practice afforded to families who are journeying through procedures** |
| **Themed audits that they as a service may have identified or involvement in SSCB audits** | **Audit** | **As identified through performance, quality assurance or complaints** | **To gather assurance about practice and service standards** |
|  | **Child Journey Audit** | **Audit** | **Monthly** | **To give provide scrutiny on practice in the service and support to improve this as well as recognising examples of good practice.** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Compass Service Manager** | **Audit of Front Door Decision Making**   * **A sample audit where a decision is made for cases not to progress to a social work assessment or s47** * **A sample of cases that have required a social work visit to inform the referral decision** * **All strategy meetings that have resulted in no further social work response** * **A sample audit of outcomes of referrals confirming written feedback and rationale to the referrer.** | **Audit** | **Weekly (producing monthly analysis)** | **To Quality Assure the decision-making at the front door, and to take action to ensure continued improvement.** |
| **Early Help Service Manager** | **Collating and analysing Early Help audits Using the ‘Targeted Early Help Open Case Checklist’ 30 audits per quarter will be undertaken by targeted Early Help Services (Children’s Centres (20), Targeted Youth Support (5), and Parenting (5))**  **Collate closure audits are completed on every case, which has received a targeted intervention from Children’s Centres, Targeted Youth Support and Parenting Team.** | **Report** | **Quarterly** | **Ensuring that there is ongoing oversight and quality assurance of Early Help practice.** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Principal Social Worker/Quality, Performance & Assurance Service Manager** | **Monthly analysis of practice with Quality, Performance and Assurance managers including Advanced Practitioner’s and Workforce Development Officer.** | **Meeting** | **Quarterly** | **To gather assurance about practice and service standards, and provide opportunity for front-line staff to air concerns.** |
| **Chair the Practitioner’s Forum** | **Meeting** | **Bi-monthly** | **To understand any barriers to practice improvement and any innovations suggested by workers and relay these to the Senior Managers.** |
| **To undertake themed audits including Multi Agency audits** | **Audit** | **As learning emerges as and when required** | **To gather assurance about practice and service standards** |
| **Carry out a joint audit with a team manager** | **Audit** | **Monthly** | **To understand the quality of audit and develop consistency in grading.** |
| **Chair group audit days (2 per year for each team manager).** | **Audit** | **Quarterly** | **Develop consistency in grading for audits and a shared understanding of what good practice looks like.** |
| **To Chair the SSCB QAP subgroup and multi-agency audits** | **Audit** | **Quarterly** | **To understand Shropshire’s multi-agency safeguarding and share the learning with children’s services.** |
| **Quarterly Reports regarding performance against the quality assurance framework and priorities.** | **Report** | **Quarterly** | **To share learning and actions from audits, ensuring that practice is improving at the required momentum and identifying any required actions to support this. Identifying any key themes in our current practice.** |
| **Appreciative Enquiry Days** | **Meeting** | **Quarterly** | **To learn from good practice and develop actions to replicate these across the service.** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Officers in the Quality, Performance and Assurance Service area** | **To meet with the QPA service manager on a monthly basis, contribute to the analysis of quality of practice and share learning with other areas of the service.** | **Meeting** | **Monthly** | **Contribute towards the analysis of quality of practice and share learning.** |
| **Role** | **QA Task** | **Method** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Practitioner Representatives from all Teams as required:** | **Multi- Agency Audits:**  **SSCB**  **Early Help Stakeholder** | **Audit** | **As and when required** | **To share insight into frontline practice.** |