

QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Executive Summary

October 2021



**Kent
County
Council**
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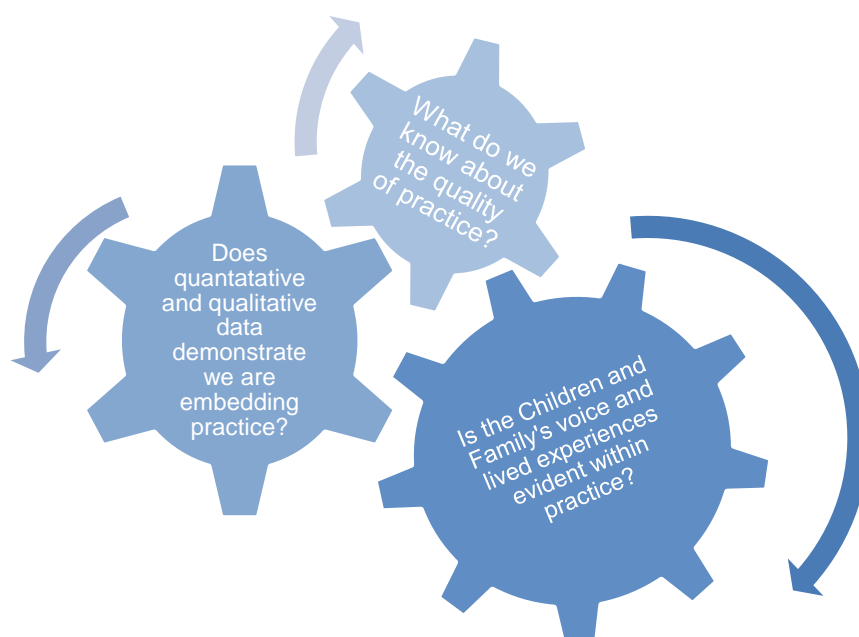
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1. Introduction

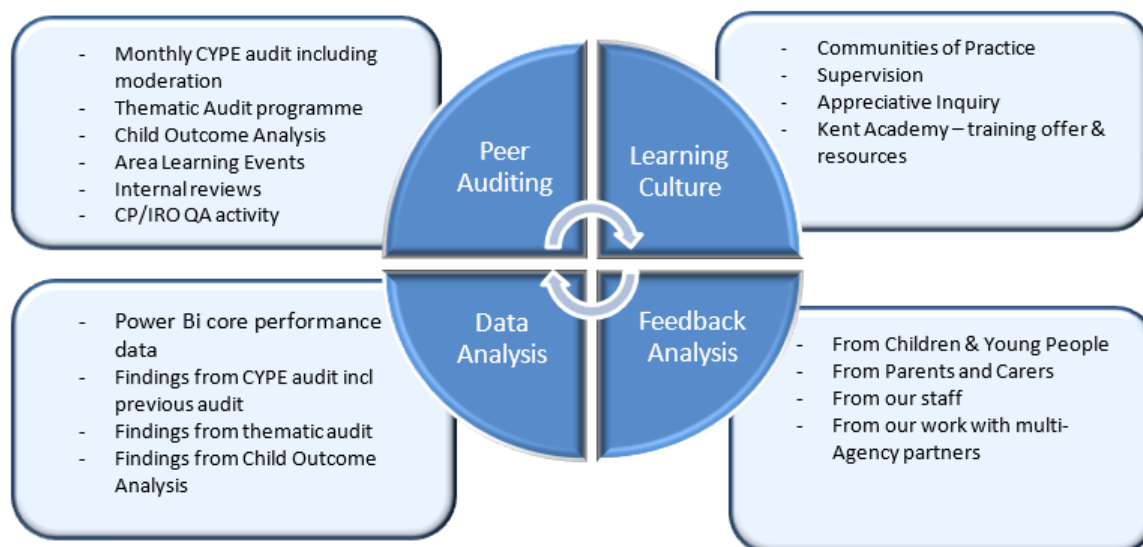
1.1 Our Quality Assurance Framework

This Quality Assurance Framework (the framework) outlines all the Quality Assurance activity within Integrated Children's Services (ICS) and where appropriate CYPE colleagues. The Framework outlines the purpose and processes of each element and how we bring those elements together to understand the experiences of the children and young people of Kent, work with each other and with partner agencies to improve the service we deliver to enable the very best outcomes for the children and families of Kent.

Our Quality Assurance activity enables us to relate quantitative performance management data and information with activity which considers the quality of services we provide and the outcomes we aspire to achieve. Our [Kent Practice Framework](#) is our means to deliver better outcomes for children and families. The Quality Assurance activity aims to align our Kent values and aspirations for children and families by collaboratively working with practitioners and families through the auditing process, feedback mechanisms and how we understand data and performance information and measures.



The **four key** areas supporting the framework are designed to create a continual cycle of review, learning and action planning with an acknowledgement that responsive learning is on a continuum, Kent's commitment to **a learning culture** supports a mentality of "we're all in this together" using open and honest communication, focussing on practice, the child/ young person's lived experiences and outcomes.



2. Auditing

2.1 Peer Auditing - Monthly CYPE auditing including moderation

The CYPE audit cycle consists of a 4-month cycle repeated 3 times per annum. The [CYPE Audit flowchart](#) gives details of the process including audit, moderation and appreciative inquiry. The Word version of the [Appreciative Inquiry tool](#) gives further detail.

Managers and practitioners complete the audit with a focus on the quality of the child/ young person's experience and impact in the following areas:

- Reason for referral & response
- Assessment
- Planning process and risk management
- Management oversight
- Child focused interventions and interventions
- Practitioner Feedback

Each section of the audit includes quantitative scaling questions and two qualitative questions where practice strengths and areas of development are identified. The auditor considers how the [Kent Practice Framework](#) is evidenced and influences the work and outcomes for the child/ young person. Performance reporting relating to completion rates and audit gradings are available on Power Bi CYPE Audit and

analysis of audit findings, learning and recommendations are included in the Unit's Tri-annual report.

The Youth Justice, Regional Adoption Agency and SEN areas of the business require auditing in line with their own statutory guidance and therefore have different audit tools to the generic CYPE Audit Tool.

These services join the CYPE process for moderation and are also reported on in the Triannual Report.

2.2 Child Outcome Analysis

The Child Outcome Analysis (COA) programme enables detailed analysis of practice supporting senior leaders, managers, and staff to identify how district practice understands the lived experiences of children. COA's take place across a whole week and involve observations of a wide range of practice.

The key expected outcomes of the COA's are:

- A clear understanding of how social work practice, systems and processes impact children in Kent
- Analysis informs strategy development around the commissioning of quality provision and services for children in Kent
- Children's views will have a direct impact on service planning and provision.
- Corporate Director, Directors and Assistant Directors will have an overview of practice and development within each district and service area.

2.3 Thematic Auditing Programme

The Unit leads a thematic auditing offer to support wider learning and activity as deemed necessary across the business. These bespoke pieces of work are designed to build on and triangulate with the range of auditing and assurance activity across CYPE. Thematic audits are planned and implemented through a Quality Circle. The Quality Circle is chaired by the Assistant Director or Service Manager from the Unit.

Learning and recommendations from Thematic audits support analysis and planning for Child Outcome Analysis' lines of enquiry. Findings also inform ICS Directors and Assistant directors within the Area Learning Events

2.4 Area Learning Events

Area Learning Events are chaired by the Corporate Director for CYPE and attended by Directors of Integrated Children's Services, Assistant Directors, Area Service & Team Managers alongside the Assistant Director from the Unit and Principal Social Worker.

2.5 Multi Agency Audits

The Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership experienced structural reform since 2019 and is moving into a position to lead on multiagency audits. To date, CYPE has recently led on two multiagency audits regarding sexual abuse/sexual violence and suicide prevention. The new capacity within the KSCMP will identify learning from serious incidents identified by the KSCMP Practice Review Group to inform the nature of multiagency auditing.

2.6 Child Protection Chair / Independent Reviewing Officer Quality Assurance activity

Child Protection Chairs (CPC's) and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) offer additionality through the key Quality Assurance function within their role, highlighting good and outstanding practice, resolving practice issues arising through the care planning and promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

IRO's complete a Quality Assurance activity after each Child in Care review meeting.

CPCs undertake a Quality Assurance activity after each Child Protection Conference reviewing the quality of practice, consistency of practice and outcomes for children subject to Child Protection planning. The CPC and IRO QA is recorded on the child/ young person's file and shared with social workers and managers to inform practice, promote quality and improve outcomes for Kent's children.

3. Learning Culture

3.1 Learning Culture

Kent is committed to embedding and developing a learning culture across CYPE. The Practice Development service sits within the Unit leading the delivery of the [Kent Practice Framework](#) through various strands of work and delivering a fluid approach to practice quality and development broadly focussed across 3 areas:

- Delivering audits and learning from thematic analysis
- Research to address the gaps and build on identified strengths
- Developing & embedding practice

3.2 Communities of Practice

The focus of our Communities of Practice is drawn from our learning from all of our audit activity, current practice dilemmas, and staff suggestions. Each Communities of Practice is recorded and is available for staff to return to or to listen in their own time.

Available to all staff in Integrated Children's Services, Communities of Practice can be booked via [DELTA](#).

3.3 Supervision

It is our fundamental belief in Kent that effective supervision can help staff feel valued, prepared, and supported, and that our staff are the most important asset in fulfilling our responsibility to provide a quality service to the children, young people and families we work with.

Supervisors and practitioners (supervisees) are jointly responsible for ensuring supervision meets the requirements, the supervision framework is in place, is well developed, and is regularly evaluated through the quality assurance/audit processes to enable practitioners to reflect on and manage risk positively and safely and in line with Kent's [Supervision Policy](#)

3.4 Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry is embedded within the CYPE audit cycle and can also be used within individual and group supervision. Appreciative Inquiry helps practitioners think about and learn from what has gone well in their work with children and families and what they could do differently next time.

3.5 The Kent Academy

The Kent Academy was launched in July 2020. This web-based platform is shared with our adult services colleagues and hosts Kent's training offer for all practitioners and a plethora of resources for frontline staff to use in their work. Since June 2020, journals, webinars, podcasts, guidance etc has been uploaded on more than 40 different themes such as analysis and critical thinking, child exploitation, child sexual abuse and poverty.

Access to the Kent Academy can be found here [The Kent Academy](#)

4. Data Analysis

4.1 CYPE Management Information & Intelligence

CYPE Management Information & Intelligence is in place to support all services across CYPE to effectively record their work with children and families in a way that supports practice, to ensure good data quality of that information, to use that high quality information in reports, scorecards and dashboards that can support, inform and drive decision-making and service improvement. This wealth of information is increasingly being used in a joined-up way to provide a holistic view of children and young people to support integrated working, as well as feeding numerous statutory returns to government departments.

5. Feedback Analysis

We are committed to hearing and responding to the feedback we receive from all those who use our services. We seek feedback from **children, young people and families** to help us learn about the quality of the help received and include children and young people in the design and delivery of our services.

We also seek feedback from **staff** to understand confidence in practice and the organisational culture and encourage and seek feedback from **partner agencies**. Feedback is collated from the following channels, and whilst at different points in time and different methods, we make every effort to review the findings to support actions to improve the services we are delivering.