

Directorate for Children and Young People Services



Quality Assurance 12 month overview Report (September 2024)

“We all need people who will give us feedback. That’s how we improve.” Bill Gates

Introduction and Aim of this report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the quality assurance work that has taken place over the last 12 months up to August 2024. Our quality assurance process has many strands including Learning Conversations between a manager and a practitioner; practice learning days; specific deep dive audits and direct feedback from children and families. This report is set out following the categories used in our learning conversation forms. Learning conversations take place between managers and practitioners from Assessment & Intervention teams, the Youth Engagement Service, Children Looked After teams and the Care Leavers service with each manager completing one learning conversation a month with a member of staff that they do not manage. This approach was introduced in June 2023 and since this time we have sought to finesse and improve the process. The questions on the learning conversation form have been amended over this timeframe to provide some more precise qualitative information which means that there cannot always be a direct comparison from month to month. Since February 2024 monthly QA overview reports have been produced, previously they were quarterly. The learning from our quality assurance activity directly influences the learning and development opportunities we provide our practitioners.

Throughout this report the quotes you see are those provided by children and families that we have spoken to when requesting feedback.

Acronym checker:

A&I – assessment and intervention
 CLA – Children Looked After team
 CL – Care Leavers
 CWD – children with a disabilities team
 LSW – Life Story Work
 YES – Youth Engagement Service

Engagement

Across all teams there is evidence that children are being seen in the majority of files that were reviewed but there has been a steady improvement in the evidence of the positive impact of these visits over the 12 months. 88% of children’s files that were reviewed in August were able to identify this which can be seen as a real strength and an improvement from a rate of 50% at the start of the year. There remains variation between different teams, however. Engagement is better evidenced in the Youth Engagement Service than in Assessment & Intervention and within A&I it is slightly stronger in A&I South than North. Children Looked After services saw an improving picture over the 12 months in terms of engagement with clear evidence in the latter months of children’s bedrooms being seen, of child being seen at home, alone and being spoken to regularly.

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The lack of evidence of life story work was a feature in Children Looked After and Care Leavers files that were reviewed earlier in this 12-month period (LSW is not a question that is specifically asked in A&I and YES learning conversations) and this generated a deep dive standalone audit which was backed up this finding and showed that it was a feature for development across all teams. A life story working group was developed and training has been delivered to all staff with a view to improving this practice.

The social worker is nice and I feel well supported

They have been lovely, they have come to the house and played with the children and made her feel comfortable

Management oversight and supervision

Rates of completion of supervision across all teams improved over this period – from 38% at the start of the period up to 65%. However, most workers will tell us they are being supervised the issue is this is not always recorded. There was some variation though with CWD and YES performing strongly; CLA showing strong completion rates with achievable outcomes being set but an area of improvement around evidence of reflection in supervision. A&I South performing better than A&I north in terms of the evidence of impact and timeliness of supervision. In order to gather further information around this, supervision forums were established as part of practice learning days across all services. This gave further context to how practitioners and managers experienced supervision. Across 2024 a new training package around supervision has been developed and delivered and it is expected that the results of this will be seen in to 2025.

S took me seriously and she listened to what I had to say

Partnership working

This has been a consistent strength across this period with the majority of files reviewed showing good partnership working across all teams – or at the very least some examples of

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good partnership working. This has dipped over recent months however – going from a high of 81% in December to 61% in August.

At this stage it is not clear whether this is because performance around partnership working has decreased or whether the auditing skills of our managers have improved. We asked a new question in May specifically around partnership contribution to plans and this was on the whole really positive with the vast majority showing good partnership contribution. This gives some reassurance about the input of partners into our work with children.



Assessments and planning

Over the 12 months there has been a changing picture around the quality of assessments.

There was slightly inconsistent performance across the teams. Assessments from CLA were felt to remain strong but A&I north and CWD fluctuated over the 12 months. There are some signs that this is an improving picture though with 80% felt to be addressing the risks in August. YES team assessments were felt to be of good quality on a fairly consistent basis, Evidence that work has been planned effectively has remained fairly consistent as can be seen from the table below. A&I teams seem to do better in this metric than CLA and Care leavers. Across all teams we are aware that we need to develop the language we use to write to and about children – this language needs to be easier to understand by children and their families. A working group has been established to identify how this can be achieved.

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R she is quick to get hold off, she is very good, any concerns she listens and addresses it, any concerns children or parents have, she shares this, she is a peace maker, she is really good, it is helping the children and us as family and the parents, she listens, she listens to the children, any concerns children have they feel comfortable sharing with R

Rob Fordyce
20/09/24