



Safeguarding Sub (Community & Children's Services) Committee

Date: TUESDAY, 2 JULY 2024
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS, 2ND FLOOR, WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members Ruby Sayed (Chair)
Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chair)
Joanna Tufuo Abeyie
Anne Corbett
Mary Durcan
Eamonn Mullally
Jacqui Webster
Ceri Wilkins
Philip Woodhouse

Enquiries: julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Ian Thomas CBE
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

3. **MINUTES**

To approve the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on 16th April 2024.

For Decision
(Pages 5 - 10)

4. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE SELF-EVALUATION SIX-MONTH REVIEW**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 11 - 32)

5. **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-25**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 33 - 46)

6. **MULTI AGENCY CHILD EXPLOITATION UPDATE**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 47 - 54)

7. **INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 55 - 58)

8. **QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 59 - 86)

9. **CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 87 - 94)

10. **ADULTS' PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 95 - 98)

11. **LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO) ANNUAL REPORT**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 99 - 102)

12. **QUESTIONS OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

14. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

For Decision

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To approve the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2024.

For Decision
(Pages 103 - 104)

16. **NON PUBLIC APPENDICES**

To receive the non-public appendices in respect of the following:

For Information

- a) **IRO Annual Report** (Pages 105 - 132)
- b) **Childrens Performance Report** (Pages 133 - 162)
- c) **Adult Performance Report** (Pages 163 - 174)
- d) **LADO Annual Report** (Pages 175 - 184)

- 17. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

- 18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

SAFEGUARDING SUB (COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16 April 2024

Minutes of the meeting held at the Guildhall EC2 at 2.00 pm

Present

Members:

Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chair – *in the Chair*)

Mary Durcan

Eamonn Mulally

Ceri Wilkins

Officers:

Chris Pelham

- Assistant Director, People, Community
and Children's Services

Rachel Talmage

- Community and Children's Services

Debby Rigby

- Community and Children's Services

Ellie Ward

- Community and Children's Services

Rachel Talmage

- Community and Children's Services

Laura Demetriades

- Community and Children's Services

Wioletta Lewandowska

- Community and Children's Services

Debby Rigby

- Community and Children's Services

Sharon Cushnie

- Community and Children's Services

Mandy Horsburgh

- City of London Police

Rhys Campbell

- Town Clerks

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Joanne Abeyie*, Ben Murphy*, Anne Corbett* and Ruby Sayed (Chair).

**Members joining remotely.*

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2023 be approved.

4. **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q3 2023/24**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which updated Members on safeguarding performance across the Adult Social Care Service during the first nine months of 2023/24. Members noted a detailed appendix in the non-public agenda.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

5. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT – Q3 2023/24**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director, Community and Children's Services, which updated Members on performance across the Children and Families Service.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELF-ASSESSMENT**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which presented the City of London Corporation's Adult Social Care Self-Assessment 2024, in support of the inspection of Adult Social Care Services by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Members noted that the self-assessment shows our practice and service to residents is of a good quality but there are areas of development, around systems and processes, which could strengthen the service further. Members also noted the links to work streams around homelessness and mental health services.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

1. The Chair thanked officers for a helpful report, particularly the case studies in illustrating how this work makes a difference to people's lives.
2. There have been a number of changes in mental health care over the last few years and, whilst a lot of work is underway, there are considerable pressures on these services both locally and nationally.
3. It was suggested that carers and safeguarding be highlighted in future reports.
4. The CQC ratings in respect of residential care had been circulated separately and could be added to future reports.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. **CARE LEAVER OFFER**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which presented the fully revised offer to Care Leavers supported by the City of London Corporation. Members noted that the input from Public Health would be added before the report is presented to the Community and Children's Services Committee. The web page would also be ready by this time, providing more accessible links. The Chair commended the extensive key features of the 23/24 offer, noting that this goes beyond all other UK offers.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted and recommended for approval at CCS, noting the addition of Public Health’s input.

8. **2023-24 CITY OF LONDON QUALITY ASSURANCE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services, which presented the Quality Assurance Annual Report.

Members noted that, overall, the survey response had been very good. There were some issues in engaging with looked after children, as the care providers were very safety conscious. Officers would be doing more preparatory work in this area for next year.

The Chair asked about the role of the Achieving Excellence Board, which scrutinises a lot of the reports before they come to this Sub Committee. The Chair of the Board is able to support Members in their safeguarding knowledge, from an independent perspective. Members were reminded of the successful training session facilitated by the Chair of the Board about 18 months ago and the Chair (of the Sub Committee) suggested that this be repeated in the new Civic Year.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. **CITY OF LONDON SAFEGUARDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE, 2023-24 PARTICIPATION ANNUAL REPORT**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services, which presented the Participation Annual Report.

Members noted that young people are encouraged to get involved on a formal and informal basis, noting that it might take a while to build confidence. The average attendance at meetings is between 7 and 10 and there are a lot of communication via What’sApp and email groups. Members noted a recent well attend Eid Celebration supported by Social Workers and the Virtual School. The Chair advised that the non-public version of the report had included more photographs.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. **ADULT PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services, which updated Members on the role and statutory responsibilities of the Adult Principal Social Worker (PSW). The officer advised that she works with various community groups, including carers, the Bangladesh Women’s Group and individuals in the deaf community, insofar as those engaged with Adult Social Care.

Members noted the offer in Children’s Services, where staff are trained in BSL and signers are used when required for both parents and children. The team work with the Deaf Parents’ Association to ensure they are connected with

national networks. The Chair suggested that if more work is required with the deaf community, then it should be escalated to the Grand Committee.

Members noted that questions on mental health had been raised at several ward motes. At the Aldersgate Ward Mote, there had been a particular focus Men's mental health and the Chair asked if a report could be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in the near future.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

11. **VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which updated Members on the work of the Virtual School, as set out in the School Development Plan. The officer agreed to share cohort data in the non-public part of the meeting. Members noted that young people have access to Prospects, with at least 30 having contact each year. The Chair suggested that this report should also be presented to the Grand Committee for information.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) UPDATE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, in respect of the City of London's Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2020–24; which set out three key outcomes to be achieved by 2024. The report provided an update on progress in implementing the second key outcome; i.e. – to ensure that all children and young people with SEND are well-prepared for and have successful transitions to adulthood.

Members were concerned at the swimming sessions at the Golden Lane Leisure Centre being halted, due to the poor condition of the pool, and the cessation of the football and gym sessions. Members noted that the Assistant Director, Commissioning and Partnerships had been made aware. The swimming sessions were part of respite care packages and officers were seeking alternative offers.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

13. **WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (UPDATE)**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which updated Members on the work undertaken by the City of London's Education Team since September 2023, in response to new guidance, together with progress against the implementation of the Attendance Strategy.

Members noted that term-time leave had increased, particularly around Christmas. Persistent absence is mainly due to illness and the Aldgate School is managing attendance very well. There might be some connection to the

pandemic but this is monitored very carefully and the officer agreed to reference this work the next report.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

14. QUESTIONS OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no items.

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Items
17 – 20

Paragraphs
1 & 2

17. CITY OF LONDON POLICE UPDATE

The Sub Committee received a report of the Commissioner, City of London Police.

18. NON PUBLIC APPENDICES

The Sub Committee received the following non-public appendices:

18.1 Adult Social Care Safeguarding Performance Report Q3 2023/24

18.2 Children and Families Service Performance - Month 6 2023/24 (September 2023)

18.3 City of London Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, 2023-24 Participation Annual Report

19. NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

There were 3 questions whilst the public were excluded.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There was one item whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Agenda Item 4

Committee: Safeguarding Sub Committee	Dated: 02/07/2024
Subject: Children and Families Service self-evaluation six-month review	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Providing Excellent Services Diverse. Engaged Communities.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Hannah Dobbin, Strategy and Projects Officer, Department of Community and Children's Services	

Summary

This report provides an update for Members on the City of London Corporation (City Corporation) Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) Children and Families Service self-evaluation (SEF) 2022–23.

The six-month review of the 2022–23 SEF was completed in March 2024 and considers progress against the areas for development identified in the SEF that was completed in September 2023.

Progress is being made across a range of priority areas. There will be an ongoing review of impact across these, as well as new and emerging areas in the next three to six months as we move to a new SEF.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The children and family services SEF is completed annually. The most recent version is for 2022–23, and was completed in September 2023. The SEF sets out achievements across Children’s Social Care and Early Help services, linking to Special Educational Needs, the Virtual School and Adult Social Care. It also identifies areas for development over the coming year.
2. The six-month review of the 2022–23 SEF was completed in March 2024. It considers progress against the areas for development identified in the September 2023 SEF.

Current Position

3. Teams across DCCS are working together to make positive progress against the areas for development.
4. Successes include developing direct work with children, launching the Children in Care Council (CiCC) pledge and Care Leavers Compact, approving ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers, and agreeing experience of care as a protected characteristic. Care leavers have also been guaranteed free bus travel.
5. Significant progress has been made around strengthening the offer for care leavers and the early identification of needs that global majority children and young people have. As well as the Virtual School restructure, Virtual School Advisory Partnership, and influencing national policy around educational outcomes for care leavers and kinship care.
6. Work continues around reviewing the short breaks offer and piloting the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Neglect Tool to help identify and respond to children’s individual needs.
7. There will be an ongoing focus on the impact of new or revised offers and activities over the next six months.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

8. Strategic implications – The Children and Families Service SEF aligns with the Corporate Plan 2024–2029 outcomes of providing excellent services and ensuring that there are diverse, engaged communities. Aims of the DCCS Delivery Plan include: people of all ages and all backgrounds are prepared to flourish; people of all ages and all backgrounds can live independently, play a role in their communities and exercise choice over their services; people of all ages enjoy good mental and physical wellbeing; people of all ages and all backgrounds feel part of, engaged with and able to shape their community.
9. Financial implications – none.

10. Resource implications – none.
11. Legal implications – none.
12. Risk implications – none.
13. Equalities implications – an equality impact assessment has not been completed as there are no fundamental changes.
14. Climate implications – none.
15. Security implications – none.

Conclusion

16. DCCS is committed to delivering excellence for City of London children and their families. The SEF enables teams to reflect, monitor and assess progress against this aim. The six-month review demonstrates that good progress is being made against identified development areas. This will continue to be reviewed as we move towards the completion of 2023–24 SEF.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Self-evaluation Children and Families Service 2022–23 six-month review. March 2024.

Hannah Dobbin

Strategy and Projects Officer

Department of Community and Children's Services

T: 020 3834 7622

E: hannah.dobbin@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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MARCH 2024

Self-evaluation children and families service 2022-23

Six-month review

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Context and purpose



This six-month review considers progress against the identified priority areas for development in the City of London Corporation's (City Corporation) children and families service self-evaluation (SEF) completed in September 2023. It allows for reflection on what has been achieved, the difference it has made and what needs to be the focus for the next six months.

Progress will be reviewed again at the year point and an update provided in the September 2024 SEF.

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Overview of progress

- Successes include developing direct work with children, launching the Children in Care Council (CiCC) pledge and Care Leavers Compact, approving ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers and agreeing experience of care as a protected characteristic. Care leavers have also been guaranteed free bus travel.
- Significant progress has been made around strengthening the offer for care leavers and the early identification of need for global majority children and young people. As well as the Virtual School restructure, Virtual School Advisory Partnership and influencing national policy around educational outcomes for care leavers and kinship care.
- Work continues around reviewing the short breaks offer and piloting the NSPCC Neglect Tool.
- There will be a focus on the impact of new or revised offers and activities over the next six months.



Progress against areas for development 2022-23

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My London artwork by a City of London Young Person

SEND – linked to SEF areas for development in the children’s social care service development plan



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for the next six months
<p>1. Act on Aidhour audit May 2023 in particular expanding use of direct work with children through different tools to meet their communication needs, parent carers want redesign of parent carer assessments and benchmarking us against neighbours and statistical neighbours.</p>	<p>Tracking Aidhour audit recommendations monthly and confident that all are completed or in progress.</p> <p>Redesigned parent carer assessment aligned with neighbouring boroughs of Islington and Hackney. This has created one, holistic family assessment where a separate child and family assessment is only offered if requested.</p> <p>The parent carer assessment has been used once so far. The parent said that they were happy as it focused on their needs and that the City Corporation had listened and made changes.</p> <p>Created a shared drive for direct work resources which has provided a platform to share best practice examples and support continuous staff development.</p>	<p>Continue to build confidence in staff to implement learning.</p> <p>Further direct work training for all Children’s Social Care and Early Help team members.</p> <p>Use team meetings to share ideas on direct work to continue improving knowledge and sharing best practice.</p> <p>Continue to put training into practice and use resources to help autistic children to share their own experiences and wishes and feelings with us.</p> <p>Continue to use the parent carer assessment when appropriate and record impact.</p>



SEND – linked to SEF areas for development in the children’s social care service development plan



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for the next six months
<p>2. Consider the development of a clinical lead within the team to support practitioners working with autistic children and young people.</p>	<p>The Clinical Lead has been in post since February 2024 and focuses on identifying unmet need early, particularly for children and young people with delayed speech or differences in communication. The Clinical Lead has also taken on the lead for short breaks ensuring children’s views are heard in reviews using creative tools. 11 children and young people who are receiving short breaks have been engaged this way. See case study on the next slide.</p> <p>Children’s Social Care and Early Help team have attended specialist training on communicating with autistic children (focus on non-verbal children).</p>	<p>Continue to ensure support is given across the Children’s Social Care and Early Help team so staff are confident in their skills to ensure that every child has the opportunity to share their thoughts and experience the activities they want to.</p> <p>Clinical Lead to facilitate group supervision, manage the children’s social care direct work lead and attend team meetings to share at tools for direct work.</p>

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‘The training was helpful in understanding different techniques that can be used to aid my support of autistic children, and to ensure their voice is heard in assessments and interactions. What I’ve learnt will be used in my practice going forward.’
Social Worker, Children’s Social Care.





Support practitioners working with autistic children and young people

Practitioners use creative tools, such as images and signing, to enable children and young people to have their voices heard as part of their short breaks review.

This child chose pictures to show they like singing, outside, swimming, dancing, football, music, jumping, horses, museums and computers. They do not like loud noises.



Do

you

like

playing

with



friends

after

school

?



SEND – linked to SEF areas for development in the children’s social care service development plan



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for the next six months
<p>3. Consider Saturday club for short breaks and for parents in the City of London.</p> <p>Page 21 Explore short break activities within the City of London so that SEND children have access to good quality local leisure opportunities.</p>	<p>Due to the small cohort size of children and young people accessing short breaks in the City of London, short breaks are tailored to individuals, providing stability linked to what can be accessed and the funding provided.</p> <p>Within this context, the Children's Social Care team is working with commissioning colleagues to look at what could be offered, including implementing a Saturday club. This is part of a larger piece of work that will include co-production with the City Parent Carer Forum to ensure that the views of children with SEND are included in the decision-making.</p> <p>It is too early to assess the impact as the offer is still being developed but the intended impact is to co-produce a short breaks offer that meets families' needs.</p>	<p>Continue to review the short breaks offer to identify new opportunities to meet need.</p> <p>Early Help team to engage with the City Parent Carer Forum about what they would like to see in the City of London to inform the review of the offer.</p>



Children in care

Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for the next six months
<p>5. Children's Social Care and Adult Education continue to work closely to develop an extended pre-apprenticeship programme.</p>	<p>Heads of services and Virtual School staff have met young people around the flexibility and accessibility of apprenticeships. Young people attended an information event on 1 February 2024 and met the apprenticeship lead. This supported young people to be more aware of their options and jobs that are available to them.</p> <p>The Partnership for Young London has advertised two apprenticeships that our young people are being encouraged to apply for.</p> <p>Virtual School staff are supporting young people to submit expressions of interest for opportunities. The closing date for many of the opportunities is the end of March so it is too early to demonstrate impact.</p>	<p>Getting young people onto apprenticeships that have some flexibility based on need, e.g. allowing them to go to appointments.</p> <p>Virtual School to continue to support young people to complete applications, particularly care leavers who have English as a second language, and help them focus on what they would like to do and make more informed choices.</p> <p>Information to be added to the Children in Care Council (CiCC) website so it is consistent and can be accessed at any time.</p> <p>Track and support young people who successfully applied for apprenticeships or other opportunities through the interview process and into the position.</p>



Children in care

Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for the next six months
<p>6. Focus on work safety conditions and enrichment around work hours with the aim of supporting young people into better paid jobs.</p>	<p>Supported care leavers with managing immediate financial concerns and shown them what opportunities, e.g. apprenticeships, are available to help them develop a longer-term financial view.</p> <p>The Virtual School invited care experienced young people to bespoke sessions at the London Careers Festival in February/March 2024.</p> <p>Young people are now more aware of opportunities available and what they need to get there. It is too early to demonstrate any impact beyond this.</p>	<p>Further work with young people to help them make informed choices about their employment options. For example, 1:1 and small group sessions with care leavers to increase employment opportunities.</p> <p>Virtual School to work with the Adult Education Service to provide English and maths classes for all 16–25-year-olds with English as a second language.</p> <p>Identify and support young people who have progressed from being aware of opportunities to successfully taking them up.</p>

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Care leavers

Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for next six months
<p>7. Continue to focus on strengthening the offer for care leavers including accessible publications and creating a robust housing offer for care leavers.</p> <p>Page 24</p>	<p>The Children's Social Care team is working with housing colleagues to progress the care leaver offer through internal sign-off before going to the Community and Children's Services Committee for approval in April 2024.</p>	<p>Care leaver offer to be agreed at the Community and Children's Services Committee and produce a young people's version.</p> <p>Publicise the offer at care leavers weekly groups so young people know what their rights and entitlements are.</p> <p>Incorporate the care leaver offer within the Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Care Leavers and Children in Care.</p>
<p>8. Ensure all care leavers know about the CiCC pledge.</p>	<p>The CiCC pledge was formally launched on 1 November 2023 and attendees were able to take away a hard copy.</p> <p>Launched a CiCC website which promotes the pledge and care leavers' rights and entitlements. Promotional material has been sent to all care leavers and social workers, and information has been shared in commissioning meetings with care providers. This has increased awareness of the pledge.</p>	<p>Continue to promote the pledge through the website and information sharing.</p> <p>Pledge to be included in the welcome to care pack for any child entering care.</p> <p>Review of pledge including impact analysis.</p>



Care leavers



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for next six months
<p>9. Children's Social Care to work with Adult Education colleagues to create ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers (including virtual school pupils).</p>	<p>The City Corporation funds 100 apprenticeships at level 2 and 3. 10% of posts will be ring-fenced for City of London care leavers creating targeted opportunities for these care leavers.</p>	<p>Go live with ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers and support young people through the application process into placements.</p> <p>Explore with care leavers apprenticeship opportunities that are not advertised if that is what they would like to do.</p>
<p>10. Explore the idea of adopting experience of care as a protected characteristic as part of the implementation of the Pan-London Care Leavers' Compact.</p>	<p>Experience of care was agreed as a protected characteristic by the Community and Children's Services Committee in December 2023.</p> <p>Greater London Authority launched the Pan-London Care Leavers' Compact on 5 March 2024.</p> <p>In March 2024, 36 (67%) of City of London care leavers had applied for the Transport for London's scheme giving them 50% off bus and tram travel. The City Corporation will cover the other 50% so City of London care leavers get free bus and tram travel. This will save around £800 per person compared to an annual bus and tram pass. Other care leavers have accessed a free bus pass via benefits to support them at college.</p>	<p>Implement the decision to make experience of care a protected characteristic and explore what difference this makes in practice.</p> <p>Continue to support care leavers to gain free bus and tram travel.</p>



Practice and strategic approach



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for next six months
<p>11. Implement remaining training of social care and early help teams on the NSPCC neglect tool and implement learnings and tool in practice.</p> <p>12. Continue improvement work through the Neglect Focus Group run by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHCSP) and focus on the pilot looking at the effectiveness of the tool in practice.</p>	<p>The Children's Social Care and Early Help team has been trained to use the neglect tool and a one-minute guide produced to promote its use. The tool is now used as a reference when assessments are being completed. It has not been used fully on any case yet.</p> <p>Sent a report to the Neglect Focus Group on the efficacy of this tool compared to other neglect tools.</p> <p>Gained permission from the to extend the use of the tool as a pilot for nine months.</p> <p>It is too early to evidence impact of the use of the tool but it is intended that the scoring system within the tool will be used to evidence positive change for the child and/or family.</p>	<p>Continue with the nine-month pilot of the tool and use it fully in a case.</p> <p>Produce impact report by the end of 12 months.</p>



Practice and strategic approach



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for next six months
<p>13. Strengthen early identification of need and speed of service provision for global majority children and young people.</p>	<p>In February 2024, members of the Children's Social Care and Early Help, Education Strategy Unit and Education and Early Years teams attended anti-racist training which considered identifying racism and how it affects the early identification of need in children. This facilitated helpful cross-team discussions and a shared understanding of, and advocating for, global majority children. It also provides a framework for challenge.</p> <p>Strengthening this area has been put into all service plans, the early help action plan and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) self-assessment (SEF).</p> <p>It is too early to evidence impact in terms of outcomes for children but confidence has grown among practitioners to advocate for services, e.g. speech and language services, for global majority children and young people at an earlier age.</p>	<p>Identifying need early and ensuring individual needs of global majority children are met.</p> <p>Tracking progress and outcomes for children.</p>



Practice and strategic approach



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for next six months
<p>14. Evaluate commissioned out-of-hours clinical family therapy support so that fathers are better able to access support.</p>	<p>The Clinical Lead has started an evaluation of the clinical family therapy support which is due to go to the Children's Senior Management Team meeting in June 2024.</p>	<p>Focus for next steps to be agreed in June 2024 after the evaluation has been completed and taking on board findings.</p>
<p>15. Heads of Children's Social Care, Quality and Assurance and Workforce Development to strengthen the offer to staff around lead roles.</p>	<p>Scoped out resources and support available in each lead area to ensure workers are clear about how to progress their expertise in these areas. Shared this with leads to support their knowledge and development.</p>	<p>Ensure that staff are accessing the resources and support identified and that this is supporting them to feel confident in their lead areas.</p>

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Practice and strategic approach



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for next six months
<p>16. Continue to work closely with the London Innovation Improvement Agency around peer review, work with adolescents and the Care Leaver Compact.</p>	<p>The Care Leavers Compact was launched on 5 March. Implemented all the features of the Compact, e.g. taken up a North East London offer so care leavers who are working or have no recourse to public funds will have an annual health card and free prescriptions so everyone will have their health needs met.</p>	<p>Delivering and assessing the impact of the Compact.</p> <p>Director of Partnership for Young London producing an impact report of the Compact across London in May 2024.</p>
<p>17. Continue to be an active member of the South East London Teaching Partnership (SELTP).</p>	<p>Head of Quality Assurance and the Principal Social Worker for Adults attend monthly steering group and quarterly boards.</p> <p>Generated ideas around issues such as mentoring and brought on board South Bank University as an additional academic partner which has increased training opportunities and the pool of student social workers the City Corporation could be matched with.</p> <p>A Goldsmith lecturer in social work attended the People's Directorate meeting to discuss AI and social work practice.</p>	<p>SELTP Annual conference to be delivered on 16 May to facilitate personal development, knowledge building and the sharing of good practice.</p> <p>Getting funding for the SELTP agreed with the Department for Education so can review plans within given budget. Plans currently include, for example, bite-size sessions around priority areas to continue to support learning and development at times accessible to staff.</p>

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Virtual School



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for next six months
<p>18. Restructure of the City Corporation's Virtual School.</p>	<p>Good temporary structure in place and delivering all statutory duties with flexible agency staff and overtime. Proposal for permanent solutions going through governance process for agreement.</p>	<p>Complete governance process to agree a permanent structure and funding. Implement structure delivering a highly responsive service within a constantly changing context.</p>
<p>19. Deliver the Virtual School Advisory Partnership (representatives from Adult and Children's Social Care, housing and homelessness, safeguarding and quality assurance, health and education).</p>	<p>The Partnership has met twice - December 2023 and March 2024 - and aims to bring partners together to improve outcomes for children with a social worker including care leavers up to 25.</p> <p>The Partnership has agreed to focus on apprenticeships and work experience. For example, partners are working together to provide care experienced young people with work experience and support with applications for educational bursaries.</p>	<p>Focus on apprenticeships and work experience with all representatives on the Partnership continuing to offer work experience and supporting engagement with apprenticeships.</p> <p>Funding from education service to run an increasing reading attainment programme for children aged 3-11 years old with a social worker.</p> <p>A preliminary evaluation report on the Partnership is due to go to the City Corporation's Achieving Excellent Board (AEB) in Summer 2024. AEB helps drive the transition to excellence and to sustain excellent practice.</p>



Virtual School



Actions	Progress and impact	Focus for next six months
<p>20. Play a strategic leadership role around Virtual Schools; the Virtual Headteacher will continue to sit on two national working parties - one on improving outcomes for UASC led by Frazier Stroud and the other on the extended role of Virtual Schools led by the National Association of Virtual School Headteachers.</p>	<p>Virtual Headteacher attended meetings with Department for Education to influence policy around increasing educational outcomes for age 18-25 care leavers and Kinship Care. A national Kinship Care Strategy was launched in December 2024.</p> <p>Virtual Headteacher working with the Share Foundation to ensure that young people get access to their Child Trust Funds. It is too early to assess the impact of the Child Trust Funds for City of London children and young people.</p>	<p>Consider in more detail implications of policy for practice and discuss funding arrangements around increasing educational outcomes for care leavers age 18-25.</p> <p>Virtual Headteacher to present on Child Trust Funds at the Virtual Headteachers National Conference to share information and increase awareness so more young people get access to their money.</p> <p>Identify City of London children and young people who are eligible to apply for the Child Trust Fund by May 2024 and support them to do the applications.</p> <p>Impact to be measured through increase in applications for Funds and follow-up with City of London young people who have accessed their Funds.</p>



'The Virtual School Advisory Partnership includes colleagues from education, health, social care and adult learning and each bring a perspective on the lives of children in care. The partnership is acting as a forum to share information, new policies and consider projects and ideas to effectively strengthen the work of the virtual school'

Tony Gallagher , Independent Chair Virtual School Advisory Partnership

'We are delighted that information [on Child Trust Funds] has gone out nationally through the City of London Virtual School Headteacher to all UK Virtual Schools to assist eligible care experienced young people to access their child trust funds.'

Share Foundation - Sharefound inspiring young people in care



Agenda Item 5

Committee: Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 02/07/2024
Subject: Children’s Social Care and Early Help Service Development Plan 2024-25	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Contribute to a flourishing society 1. People are safe and feel safe. 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Rachel Talmage, Children’s Social Care and Early Help, Head of Service, People Department, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

Summary

The Service Development Plan has been fully refreshed for 2024–25 and sets out the overarching programme of work for the Children’s Social Care and Early Help Service.

Key pieces of work include achieving every commitment from the Care Leaver Covenant and the Care Leaver Compact. Our Care Leaver Offer has been fully transformed and will be published in July 2024.

The purpose of this report is to enable Members to see the array of work supporting resident children in need of help and protection in the City of London.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Service Development Plan 2024–25 (see Appendix 1) sets out objectives to improve outcomes for children and their families. These are drawn from listening to children and families, from staff, audit, the Achieving Excellence Board, Serious Case Reviews, Ofsted inspections, and work from the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance. The Service Development Plan sets out how we will achieve excellent outcomes for every child and young person, and is in alignment with our annual self-evaluation.
2. In their Inspection of Children’s Social Care Services 2 March 2020 to 6 March 2020, Ofsted made two recommendations in their judgement on our practice (published April 2020).¹ These recommendations remain in the plan to ensure due focus and attention. No recommendations were made in their focused visit in November 2022 on our ‘front door’ offer, this means how calls and referrals and notifications are received, responded to and progressed.

Current Position

3. The new Service Development Plan 2024–25 takes into account the actions from the previous plan. Key achievements include:
 - those captured in our self-evaluation, the six month achievements are presented in a separate document
 - Two care leavers were offered apprenticeships with the City of London, and there are ring-fenced interviews for apprenticeships for care leavers
 - Parents and carers were spoken to in the recent audits
 - The Transport for London bus pass has 50% off for care leavers and City of London top-up the rest of the fare to ensure that every care leaver has free bus travel
 - Care leavers are recognised in a similar way to a protected characteristic
 - The Care Leaver Offer has been fully redesigned and refreshed with our care leavers, fully incorporating the Care Leaver Compact ambitions
 - Short Break Direct Payments have had formal reviews so that parent/carers better understand the offer and have the freedom to spend the money for the benefit of their children within clear guidelines.

Key Data

4. Performance data for the service is being considered separately within the Safeguarding Sub-Committee. Data is used to drive the actions in the plan and to evaluate progress for children.

¹ <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50149902> accessed 18 May 2024

5. By the end of Quarter 4, 95% of pathway plans, and 100% of initial health assessments for children in care were within timescale.
6. 100% of Education Health and Care Plans had input from social workers.

Corporate & Implications

7. Across every department, the Corporation is a parent to our children in care and care leavers. The ringfencing of interviews for care leavers, and the increase of apprenticeships available has led to two job offers for care leavers, one of which has been accepted.
8. Adult Education is supporting the apprenticeships. It is hoped that more areas across the corporation open up apprenticeships and our young people become employees in their parent organisation.
9. The Care Leaver Offer that has been developed includes use of the Corporation's facilities, such as the Barbican Centre, the Museum of London, Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath. The ambition is that young people feel a sense of belonging and have wider access to the City to increase their idea of what is possible.

Strategic Risk Implications

10. Child safeguarding involves assessment and mitigation of risk. The service aims to protect and support the most vulnerable children in our society. The Achieving Excellence Board is in place to further scrutinise and extend our work for these children.
11. Our service development plan is in alignment with the Corporate Plan 2024–29, with the aim to improve the safety and daily lives of children and their families.

Equalities implications

12. The 'Social GRACES' (gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, employment status, education, sexual orientation, spirituality) framework is used in individual and group supervision, looking at the similarities and differences in every piece of casework. Equalities implications are central in every interaction. Systemic relationship-based practice is central to our work, and the Social GRACES offer us a framework for considering disproportionality and inequity.
13. Equity is considered throughout the Service Development Plan as a core part of our work. Staff have advocated for minoritised children to access Special Educational Needs (SEN) support and Education, Health and Care Plans to ensure that their needs are met early on.

14. 'Care leaving' now has recognition in the Corporation akin to that of a protected characteristic, and it is hoped that care leavers will be included in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion reporting for the Corporation.

Financial implications

15. Children's Social Care is a statutory service. If, for example, children arrive in the City with additional needs, and/or are at risk of or experiencing significant harm, then a service must be provided. If risks escalate, then court action might be required. These unexpected needs will have financial implications and, in some areas, this is difficult to anticipate which makes a difference in a very small service department.

Resource implications

16. Staffing is currently at the right level to meet need and demand.

Legal implications

17. Statutory social work is entirely covered by law and accompanying guidance. This work is tested and challenged in supervision, via audit, by a review of data and via our Achieving Excellence Board.

Climate implications

18. N/A

Security implications

19. N/A

Conclusion

20. The Service Development Plan 2024–25 sets out the actions for the next year, with an overall ambition of providing the right help in the right place at the right time, to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and their families. This is a live document and will grow in response to: family and staff feedback; national research; learning from the pathfinder local authorities involved in the National Care Review; and from independent audit.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Service Development Plan 2024–25.

Rachel Talmage

Head of Service

Children's Social Care and Early Help

People Department

Department of Community and Children's Services

T: 020 7332 3621

E: Rachel.Talmage@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Appendix 1: Service Development Plan 2024-5							
2	Children's Social Care & Early Help							
3	<p>Author: Rachel Talmage Date of Plan: April 2024 Date of review: quarterly Date of this review: first plan</p>							
4	<p>The Self Evaluation completed in September 2023 - the actions for 2024-5 are reflected in this plan for monitoring, update and impact review Audit findings and recommendations from February 2024 have been received, these are all contained in the QA tracker, with overall service actions for CSC/EH contained newly below</p>							
5	Why?	Who?	Does what?	By when?	How will we know it has been done?	What will be the experience of children?	RAG rated	Comments on progress
6	Identified via colleagues in the service:							
7	Deputy Team Manager recruitment HoS - team stability as current postholder is successful in applying for a senior Social worker role with us.		Advertises, interviews and recruits a new Deputy Team Manager. Retains current post holder in Deputy Role until they begin. Induction of deputy team manager.	May-24	DTM in post	Consistent good quality social work supporting them and their family. Support that makes daily life better.		New postholder starts with us on 5 July. At which time the current post holder will move to the senior social worker role, with handover.
8	Pilot group supervision as peer exercise facilitated by the Clinical Lead (newly permanent)	HOS	Creates terms of reference collectively with staff. Runs monthly sessions.	Apr-24	Group supervision summaries on children's files.	Receiving the right support at the right time by highly skilled team of workers.		monthly sessions held and TOR in place.
9	Kinship care - in line with care review - clarity on offer.	HOS	kinship care strategy updated & clear offer approved for 2024.	Oct-24	Strategy in place and information on the family information website	Children thrive in the care of their extended family. Their carer's will know about support and access this.		our offer already matches that required by the care review in terms of funding support. New will be the promotion of the offer and the involvement of th VSH.
10	Young Carer support recommissioned, need to review offer in line with the care review	hos	Review, refresh and approve young carer offer for 2024.	Oct-24	Young carer offer on website.	children have opportunity for play and to be with other children who have caring responsibilities.		current offer in place. Review not yet started.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
4	The Self Evaluation completed in September 2023 - the actions for 2024-5 are reflected in this plan for monitoring, update and impact review Audit findings and recommendations from February 2024 have been received, these are all contained in the QA tracker, with overall service actions for CSC/EH contained newly below							
5	Why?	Who?	Does what?	By when?	How will we know it has been done?	What will be the experience of children?	RAG rated progress	Comments on progress
17	Service Level Recommendation from Independent Audit Feb 2024	HoS	Training/ team meeting about the law and practicalities about how to manage a DOLS order. HoS to ensure training is on each worker's appraisal targeted.	Jun-24	Training Log on City People will evidence attendance. Half year review of appraisal will show attendance.	This group of children benefit from skilled and experienced staff to keep them safe.		Refreshed Dols training undertaken by managers so far. Learning used with current children's casework.
18	Recommendation following Audit Feb 2024. Exploration of other family finding services that might be available to support unaccompanied asylum seekers in locating their loved ones	HoS	15/04/24 - The Red Cross is used regularly, recommendations were to be sought at LASC group to see if there are any other options available to use. HOS to follow up with TM as to whether there were any other agencies recommended.	Jun-24	LASC minutes evidence it and using this development plan.	Children and young people will have a better understanding of what attempts have been made to locate their loved ones. Were an outcome is known they can then be supported to emotionally process this whether that be by trying to reestablish contact or through grief support. Young people will be supported to gain some certainty about the lives of their family members and not live with the uncertainty of not knowing what has happened to them.		Red Cross Tracing Service is the one to use. No alternative. This is widely used. We know that young people use their community networks with churches/mosques to find family globally.
19	Aidhour Audit Feb 2024. Strengthen work with young people with sexually harmful behaviours.	HoS	Reviews training offer for workers around Sexually Harmful Behaviour - checks if anything more need to be done?	Jul-24	Training has been offered to workers. Link established with experts in this field.	Understanding of risk and need in families where this is an issue and to be able to provide support whilst being cognisant of risk factors. Confident and skilled workforce to deal with families where this is an issue.		Note for a resident situation we used specialist support and the workers had extra training/supervision. Link with YJS specialist being established. Noting that we work to support and minimise risk whether there is a conviction or not.
20	Recommendation from Independent audit Feb 2024. The service to consider a multi-agency approach to their care leavers (where they consent) so that there is a formal mechanism to support the YP from all the agencies involved.	HoS	Implement a consent form for young people to give agreement to contact other agencies/workers invovled to discuss and agree a plan for all to work towards. Roxi to develop.	Jul-24	Consent form in evidence on young people's files.	A person centred approach to helping her, drawing on all resources available in the network.		Template has been designed and shared.

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4	The Self Evaluation completed in September 2023 - the actions for 2024-5 are reflected in this plan for monitoring, update and impact review Audit findings and recommendations from February 2024 have been received, these are all contained in the QA tracker, with overall service actions for CSC/EH contained newly below							
5	Why?	Who?	Does what?	By when?	How will we know it has been done?	What will be the experience of children?	RAG rated progress	Comments on progress
30	Staff have observed that white children coming to the early help children have had support services in place at school, whereas black or brown children are coming to early help with emerging need identified.	EH lead	Disproportionality session to be held at SEND Programme Board.	01-Sep-24	Minutes evidence focus.	Black and brown children will have the right help at the right time. There will be a reduction in children being perceived as difficult/with poor behaviour due to any additional needs being identified early.		EH lead and HOS presented research at SEND programme board evidencing national issue with slow identification of need and support for minoretised children.
31	Ofsted recommendations from judgment in February 2020	CSC & EH Management Team	Reviews EH step downs at weekly management meeting.	Weekly.	Management Meeting notes evidence overview. Data shows step down is timely. Data shows speed of first visit from transfer into/out of Early Help.	Children don't need to re-tell their experiences, likes and dislikes because of thorough transfer, and they don't have to wait to see their new Early Help or Social Worker. To reduce anxiety.		complete - (kept in to retain oversight)
32	Cost of living crisis - the crisis continues to impact children and families	EH lead	Ensures families can access the household support fund. Ensures families are referred to City Advice. Ensures families know about the Green Doctor Service Thinks about cost of living crisis for each family open to EH and any mitigation/support needed	01-Dec-24	The financial record held by Tenancy Support evidences spend on families open to Early Help. The number of families referred to City Advice continues to be good - data checking in place every 3 months. Audits will show evidence of cost of living work with families	They will be warm and fed.		Retained due to ongoing cost of living crisis. This is consistent practice - will need to keep focus on financial wellbeing and opportunities to expand financial security
33								
34	Children in Need							
35	Designated Social Care Officer role needs developing further. HoS has the DSCO role as part of remit.	HOS	Joins pan London DSCO network to share ideas and good practice. Joins DMO/DCO & Hackney DSCO to bring about closer working and joint service development. To create a DSCO action plan.	June and March 2025	New guidance and templates for children with disabilities.	children and carers/parents will receive clear confident support that is co ordinated. The professionals know each other and can direct families to each other with ease. Reducing stress of complex system for parents, and therefore children have the support they need in a timely way.		have joined 2 DSCO sessions so far, have collated resources and templates from other boroughs and will review with EH lead and Team Manager Social Care
36	children in care							
37	social workers recognised young people need more support understanding housing and would benefit from workshops	HOS	Facilitates housing sessions with the housing allocations manager, jointly with our new care leaver apprentice.	01-Jun-24	Session held. Notes on each young person who attends' file.	Confidence in understanding housing availability. Support and confidence in waiting, and anxiety reduced.		

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4	<p>The Self Evaluation completed in September 2023 - the actions for 2024-5 are reflected in this plan for monitoring, update and impact review Audit findings and recommendations from February 2024 have been received, these are all contained in the QA tracker, with overall service actions for CSC/EH contained newly below</p>							
5	Why?	Who?	Does what?	By when?	How will we know it has been done?	What will be the experience of children?	RAG rated progress	Comments on progress
38	strengthening transition and independence preparation	HOS	Strengthens the transition offer and expanding what children are able to do independently in line with their development and capacity. Uses the child in care and care leavers professional development group (quarterly) to do this.	01-Dec-24	Minutes show the offer expanded. Children's case files show extra oversight.	Children will get practice in having age appropriate independence, can make mistakes, learn and grow.		
39								
40	care leavers							
41	Request from social workers, to strengthen messaging and understanding of our care leaver offer	HOS	runs group work monthly co facilitated by our new care leaver apprentice and head of service	Jul-24	timetable of topics shared with young people for 2024	Care leavers can access and understand the City Corporation's offer and discuss it with senior leader and peers.		
42	Our care leaver offer needed a full rewrite, in line with care leaver covenant and compact and our ambition for our children.	HOS	takes the care leaver offer created with young people and partners through governance routes, and for decision at the DCCS Grand Committee	Jun-24	care leaver offer published on family information service website	as above.		is on agenda for July DCCS Grandcommittee. Draft webpage in design. Audio translations being completed.
43								
44								
45								
46								
47								
48	The social care review made recommendations for changes within social care, after listening to children, families and those involved with services.	HOS	Ring fenced apprenticeships now in place. Increases take up and breadth of offer (with VSH and adult education and apprenticeships manager)	· Care leavers access apprenticeships thereby improving their employment and life chances.	Care leavers employed at the city.	Children will have the best possible care. More options of better homes. Care leavers/LAC will have a protected characteristic to be at the front of every queue in the City of London Corporation		2 of our care leavers offered apprenticeships - one accepted and is in role. One declined as wanted to pursue a career at an airport (note could pursue the travel and tourism apprenticeship here in the city after her college course).
49	OFSTED RECOMMENDATION from ILACS 2020 retained for oversight							
50	Ofsted recommendation 2020: The recording of management decision making at all stages of a child's journey. Retained to keep	Assistant Director & Service Manager	Build management capacity. Draft review in place, need to take forward.	complete	Revised structure chart published. Staff in place.	Children and families experience an exceptional service, with access to speak with managers.		Jan 2022: TOM complete. DTM position is now permanent and postholder in the role permanently.
51		Head of Service	Extend Deputy Team Manager Pilot, to retain capacity whilst CV-19 has put service review on hold.	complete	DTM postholder is in place throughout CV-19 and to end of service review	as above		complete

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
4	The Self Evaluation completed in September 2023 - the actions for 2024-5 are reflected in this plan for monitoring, update and impact review Audit findings and recommendations from February 2024 have been received, these are all contained in the QA tracker, with overall service actions for CSC/EH contained newly below							
5	Why?	Who?	Does what?	By when?	How will we know it has been done?	What will be the experience of children?	RAG rated progress	Comments on progress
52		CSC & EH Management Team	Has recording as a standing item on management meeting agenda. Team to remind each other on recording reasons as well as decisions on case files.	complete	Management meeting notes show discussion.	Children and families experience consistent and timely decision making.		UPDATE:Ofsted focus visit evidences good oversight in CIN/Front door. We have created our first automated CL report. Using that rather than spreadsheets has shown gaps in recording for CL. Work plan in place.
53		CSC & EH Management Team	121s with each level of managers includes a section on recording, with spot checking.	complete	121s evidence spot checking and discussion.	Children and families experience consistent and timely decision making, if staff are on leave or absent.		UPDATE: New evidence of gaps in CL work, with new automated report - we are tweaking the report and now tracking.
54		Head of Service	Facilitates action Learning Sets on supervision and recording.	April-June	Session notes available. Managers to share supervisions they are proud of monthly to build practice.	as above		1 Action learning set on recording in April. 1 coaching session for DTM on recording.
55		Head of Service	Offers further management training to DTM.	complete	Place is booked on course.	as above		course complete
56	Findings from Annual Survey August 2023 are now tracked in a QA tracker							
57								
58								
59	BLACK LIVES MATTER & Racism							
60	Child Q serious case review shows systemic racism causing harm to children. Black children need seeing as children, with safeguarding considered first. The Safeguarding Partnership has reviewed the recommendations and impact. Retained on our action plan so that we track how we are meeting the recommendations and keep grip.	Head of Service	Police data on ethnicity re stop and search and strip search to come to MACE. Data to show whether an appropriate adult or parent was present.		MACE session minutes evidence work.	Children will receive safeguarding first support. Children will not experience harm from teachers or police or harm from the absence of action by adults.		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
4	<p>The Self Evaluation completed in September 2023 - the actions for 2024-5 are reflected in this plan for monitoring, update and impact review Audit findings and recommendations from February 2024 have been received, these are all contained in the QA tracker, with overall service actions for CSC/EH contained newly below</p>							
5	Why?	Who?	Does what?	By when?	How will we know it has been done?	What will be the experience of children?	RAG rated progress	Comments on progress
61	Staff have experienced racism from clients. Need to be safe at work, and need an attuned comprehensive response and care.	Head of Service	Uses the anti racist practice standards in daily practice - evidences this in 121 and on client records along with other managers.	01-Jul-24	Health and safety re: racism made. Staff feel supported - known via 121 and staff surveys.	Minoretised children will have strong advocates in their social worker. Where children or their families are racist to workers, they will understand the impact and will know what behaviour is expected.		Group supervision and 121 used well. Need to look at reporting of racism as health and safety matter - what is the benefit for the worker/service? Noting the form is long and not designed for this kind of harm.
62	To include children and families in co producing all our strategies. To include children and parents in all our board meetings.	Head of Service	Voice of child clear in every meeting - whether that be via direct voice, or by national organisation.		Children and parents voices will be directly heard at the Achieving Excellence Board, in the Early Help Stragegy and Short Breaks strategy and a plan will go to Children's Senior Management Team.	Children will be included, and have no service for them without them.		Retained for continuity: this needs more focussed work. Strategies are using national voices, to avoid over surveying our young people. At the moment we use videos of children and national research, we can improve.
63	Staff development	HOS	Continue to be an active member of the SELTP.	· Strong working relationships with SELTP members.	Appraisals show stretching training & networking across London.	Children will benefit from having managers who are able to be authentically themselves, and black children will see people who look like them at all levels in the City		Staff attended the last SELTP conference (May) this was valued. Anti racist leadership and supporting minoretised staff discussed and what good looks like explored by facilitators.

Committee: Safeguarding Sub Committee	Dated: 02/07/2024
Subject: Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1. 2.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Rachel Talmage, Head of Service, Children’s Social Care and Early Help, People Department, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

Summary

This report outlines the work of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel over 2023/24. The panel is a strategic forum to prevent and respond to child exploitation, and is well attended by colleagues from police, health, alcohol and substance misuse and education services.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

What is MACE?

1. Tackling child exploitation is a complex task that requires a proactive, multi-agency, holistic approach. Understanding exploitation drivers, themes, risks and locations of concern will provide key prevention opportunities to stop children becoming victims of exploitation. The management, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators is a key success driver in tackling exploitation. (*The London Child Exploitation Operating Protocol 2021*).¹
2. The broad term 'child exploitation' is used as children may have warning indicators of multiple types of exploitation:
 - * Child sexual exploitation
 - * Harmful sexual behaviour
 - * County lines
 - * Organised begging
 - * Child criminal exploitation
 - * Radicalisation
 - * Online child exploitation
 - * Peer on peer exploitation
 - * Child trafficking
 - * Youth-produced sexual imagery identified in schools
3. The purpose of MACE is to provide strategic oversight of exploitation, information, intelligence and activity across the City. This includes resident children and those passing in and through the City. Data and intelligence is shared to identify victims, perpetrators/persons of concern, location and any common themes. Good practice, local and national research are shared. Areas are explored for shared learning and practice development, disruption and enforcement tactics, and support for the reduction of risk and impact of exploitation on children.
4. MACE looks at the emergence, conflicts and/or disruption of gangs/groups – taking into account our neighbouring contexts and locations of concern.
5. MACE is co-chaired by the City of London Police and Children's Social Care, who are part of the Pan-London MACE Chairs Network.
6. The report has been shared with the City of London Police.

Current Position

7. MACE has collectively considered the following areas of practice over the last year:

Pan-London adolescent safeguarding

8. Partners joined the relaunch of the *Adolescent Safeguarding London Handbook* in September 2023, and used case studies in practice.²

Child trafficking – Operation Innerste

¹ [The London Child Exploitation Operating Protocol 2021](#)

² [Adolescent Safeguarding Handbook](#)

9. Operation Innerste is the national safeguarding operation that aims to prevent onward trafficking of children by taking their fingerprints – not for criminal reasons but for welfare reasons. In the City, this operation continues: it is viable to do so; and the ink pads and training are in place. Children’s Social Care double check that every unaccompanied asylum-seeking child has had their welfare ink pad prints taken. The purpose is to make children less appealing for onward trafficking in the UK for illegal purposes, as they would be identifiable if stopped by police.
10. The forum ensured that partners are updated on the Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service, and on the updated guidance published in May 2024.³
11. The City of London Police (CoLP) are doing exploratory work around human trafficking across the City, including child exploitation. As the City is a unique landscape of one square mile, the CoLP are looking at transit and migration through the City, in the context of our neighbouring boroughs, with the main focus being labour exploitation. A profile should be ready in the next quarter.

Phone theft – Operation Niven

12. Operation Niven is a CoLP phone snatch operation targeting hot spots and repeat suspects in the City. To date, children stopped for phone theft have been supported as children first and social care have liaised with their resident local authorities (none were resident in the City in this reporting year). Grooming and organised crime has been considered in respect of safety planning for those children.

Minoritised children – adultification & Child Q

13. MACE panel members and colleagues have undertaken adultification training provided by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Partnership.⁴ Adultification is when notions of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children. When this happens outside the home, it is always grounded in bias and discrimination. Children need to be seen as and responded to as children. MACE has kept Child Q recommendations, and its update report (June 2023) under review, and responds to children with a safeguarding first position.⁵ This includes ensuring the presence of an appropriate adult for any strip searches required.

Alcohol and substance misuse

14. A representative of Hackney Substance Misuse Service is co-located in person with Children’s Social Care and Early Help services in the City on a monthly basis. This strategy arose from discussion at MACE and health response in the Square Mile and is proportionate to the City’s size and need. This enables early identification of need, expert support and provision of locally available resources to young people. This service supports children from age 6 to 25 years, and includes children who have parents/carers who misuse alcohol or substances.

³ [Interim guidance for independent child trafficking guardians](#)

⁴ [London Borough of Hackney \(CHSCP\) - Learning Management System](#)

⁵ [Child Q Update Report: Why was it me?](#)

15. As a result of MACE discussions, this service provided information to our schools via the Safeguarding Education Forum, including advice on nitrous oxide (NOx) and vaping.

Anti-social behaviour

16. MACE reviewed low-level (non) safety concerns that had been reported to the CoLP and Children's Social Care, which took no further action due to the very low level safety concern. Children are meant to play outside: skateboarding is a core part of play and does not constitute anti-social behaviour. There are few places for children to play in the City, and it is important that they play freely outside. For wellbeing, children's play sometimes needs to be boisterous. This is not anti-social behaviour and does not meet the threshold for any intervention.
17. MACE enabled productive debate over the meaning of anti-social behaviour and what should or should not be referred to Children's Social Care. This also sits within the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to not record personal data without cause. Consequently, community safety representatives joined MACE, and six-monthly reviews between police and social care have been set up to look at best practice.

Children and sexually harmful behaviours

18. Please note that all under 18s are referred to as 'children' to ensure a welfare and safeguarding response. To ensure that the support around them is right and connected, two children have been considered at MACE in the last year for sexually harmful behaviours including sibling sexual abuse, and teen-teen sexual abuse.
19. To address the trend of boys at school filming themselves hitting and sexually harming girls, MACE ensured that the 'Don't Cross the Line' campaign was shared.⁶ MACE looked at profile raising, and members of the Community Safety team spoke to London schools at the Education Safeguarding Forum.
20. As a corporate parent, at MACE we reviewed the effectiveness of our work around consent, and capacity with our children in care and care leavers. Work is undertaken one-to-one, and the Refugee Council's guidance on consent is shared with our young people. MACE encouraged this to be supported by group work and this is included in the 2024/25 workplan.

Sex offenders residing in the City of London Corporation

21. At the MACE Chair's request, CoLP provided assurance that suitably trained police officers manage registered sex offenders. CoLP are satisfied that the registered sex offenders residing in the City are managed appropriately, with any breaches documented, and actions taken.

⁶ [Don't Cross the Line - Tackling Misogyny Campaign - City of London](#)

Children missing from care, home, and education

22. Children missing from care, home or education are at a higher risk of exploitation. There have been no resident children and no children in care missing from home from April 2023 to March 2024. One child is refusing to go to school, and this situation is managed closely by Education and Children's Social Care. Persistent absence at school is a risk factor in exploitation, and attendance under 90% is considered as a concern and is treated with a vulnerability and safeguarding response, with children reviewed at our Vulnerability Meeting (joint education/social care/virtual school).

Hotels in the City – Operation Makesafe

23. Operation Makesafe seeks to provide training to reception and hotel staff. It is an operation that runs at least yearly, and will be rolled out again shortly. It reports to MACE. The goal of the operation is to enable reception staff to stop an adult sexually harming a child. It trains them to be curious, to challenge the adult, and call the police if needed. This piece of work has led to police call-outs and safeguarding action.

Gang activity

24. The 'Easy Cash gang' and 'Cally (Caledonian) Road gang' operate in the City – and the arrests to date involve non-residents snatching phones. Operation Niven is diverting and responding to this. There was a decrease in this activity from 2022/23 and 2023/24, which suggests some success of Operation Niven. Support and expertise is available from the Rescue and Response County Lines Project.⁷

Racism and extremism

25. Last year, two children with white supremacist views and (fake) weapons in a private institution were dealt with. MACE partners have 'Prevent' training. With these incidences, support was provided to the institution throughout.

Suicide attempts

26. Children do come to the City to consider attempting suicide. The most frequent locations are London's bridges. The patterns and timings are reviewed. No child has completed suicide in 2023/24, and a welfare response is ensured linking the child to their resident local authority. Data comes to both MACE and the Suicide Prevention Group.

Key Data

27. Police data is considered at MACE – there has been a drop in phone snatches. There have been no incidences involving resident children with a knife or gun. One child is supported with the Youth Justice Service (for an inside-the-home offence). Social Care and Education data is also considered at MACE. One child is not attending school. No children have been missing from care. This provides evidence of effective early intervention and strong relationship-based practice and intervention.

⁷ [Rescue and Response County Lines Project - Year 4 Strategic Assessment 2022](#)

Corporate & Strategic Implications

28. MACE covers a broad range of child exploitation, which the Police, Social Care and Education Services are inspected on, and which represent reputational risk. The risk is managed well. Children would benefit from more outside play areas, including a skate park, and it would be good to see children of all ages able to play freely and loudly outside without fear of police being called.

Risk Implications

29. Child exploitation is wider than criminal or sexual exploitation. Children are at risk of harm in and through the City. Children do say that they come into the city as it offers a place of safety away from postcode difficulties (areas that are safe/not safe due to gang affiliation/membership) in neighbouring authorities. The night-time economy and wealth in the city attracts drug dealers for a profitable market. The welfare 'child first' response aims to mitigate risk and provide safety for children at the right time and in the right place by the right people. MACE offers a space for multi-disciplinary strategic oversight and response.

Equalities Implications

30. Children are responded to as children first, in order that a safeguarding and welfare response comes first. Child Q recommendations are being followed, and data will be requested and analysed on strip searching and appropriate adults. Adultification remains a challenge to ensure that Black and minoritised children are seen as children and a safeguarding first response to need is made.

Financial Implications

31. None

Resource Implications

32. MACE is a staff resource-intensive forum, and it meets bi-monthly to be proportionate in respect of need and risk.

Legal Implications

33. GDPR is considered to ensure that play is not treated as anti-social behaviour and that police/social care records are only made when there is the threshold to do so.

Climate Implications

34. N/A

Security Implications

35. MACE aims to improve security. One young person came to London to deal wraps of cocaine and was found holding a large amount of cash. City of London Police and Children's Social Care workers in the city connected with the resident's local authority worked with MACE to create a safety plan and ensure that the child's welfare needs were met.

Conclusion

36. MACE offers a multi-disciplinary strategic oversight forum to identify trends in respect of crime, exploitation and harm in the City. MACE offers mitigation, distraction and strengthens opportunities for children resident or travelling through the Square Mile.

Appendices

- none

Rachel Talmage

Head of Service

Children's Social Care and Early Help

People Department, Department of Community and Children's Services

T: 020 7332 3621

E: Rachel.Talmage@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Committee: Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 2 nd July 2024
Subject: Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), Annual Report for 2023–2024	Public Non-Public Appendix 1
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£ N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Ria Lane, Independent Reviewing Officer, Safeguarding team	

Summary

This report gives Members an overview of the Independent Reviewing service in the City of London covered in the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report for 2023–2024 (see non public Appendix 1). It summarises the statutory requirements of the IRO service and how the City of London has performed in this regard. There is an overview of the IRO role and their performance in ensuring that children’s key needs are met. Strengths of last year’s practice and areas of development for 2024–2025 are identified.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

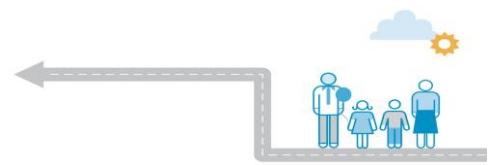
- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The IRO service follows the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, which is linked to the revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance that were introduced in April 2011. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the review process to a wider overview of the case, including regular monitoring and follow-up between reviews. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning for children in care, and for challenging milestone drift and delay. Specifically, the statutory duties of the IRO are to:





- monitor the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to the child's case
 - participate in any review of the child's case
 - ensure that any children's ascertained wishes and feelings concerning their case are given due consideration by the authority.
2. The IRO's primary task is to ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child's current needs, and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the local authority's legal responsibilities towards the child. As corporate parents, each local authority should act as a responsible and conscientious parent for the children they look after.

Current Position

3. A permanent IRO has been in post since September 2017.

The achievements identified in the Annual Report 2023–2024 are:

- Consistent participation of children in their review meetings
 - Consistent IRO visits and communication with children
 - Active monitoring of children's care plans and needs between review periods – helping to prevent actions stalling, meaning that children in care continue to have their needs met and feel supported
 - Review minutes, contacts and alerts recorded on children's files in the online record system workflow
 - Consolidation of the Pathway and Care Plan process, leading to an increase in the number of plans being completed within timescale
 - Launch of The Pledge and Celebration Event.
4. In addition to direct work with children and the local authority, the IRO takes part in the London IRO Practitioner Network and serves as a practitioner representative to the London IRO Managers' Group. Engagement in these pan-London groups facilitate the IRO's access to information and the experience of colleagues from larger authorities. It also ensures that the experience and needs of the City's children in care are represented in forums that have the potential to influence practice and statutory guidance on the services and support they receive.
5. The IRO service has been alerted to safeguarding issues for children in care and aims to build safety and stability according to the needs of each child. The service will continue to monitor care plans closely to include actions that address the known risks of all forms of exploitation.

Options





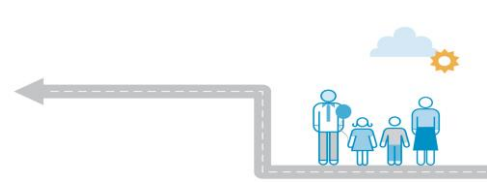
6. The IRO service should review recommendations from reporting and planning work required for continued service improvement. There are no cost commitment required.

Proposals

7. The IRO identifies the following areas for improvement. An action plan has been put in place to address them.

Objective	Actions
Modify the care plan template to ensure that it reflects all children and their needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The care plan template now needs to be amended to more fully reflect the needs of children in care
Continue to develop the review process to make it inclusive for children and ensure that anti-racism policies are embedded within the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review systemic model and how this can be developed in the review process Ensure that all children in care are aware of their rights Ensure that service providers operate a consistent anti-racist policy
Continue to monitor and flag health assessment timescales so that children's health needs are assessed in a timely way, and interventions are introduced to improve health outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly meetings to be held with Health managers to ensure that children's health assessments are completed within timescales
Consideration for new ways to communicate and share information with children as part of their review process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Champion the use of the Caring Life app once it is in place Work with the Children in Care Council to get feedback about the review process Consider feedback methods outside of the Annual Survey
Annual Survey and Annual IRO report to be aligned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correlate the reporting period so the Annual Survey of children reflects the same time period and can be reported on in the IRO Annual Report





Key Data

8. There were nine children in care on 1 April 2023, which is a 18% decrease from 1 April 2022 (11 children). After the growth of children in care numbers in 2017–2020, a large majority are now 18 years old and are being supported as care leavers.
9. The National Transfer scheme was effective last year. This means that most new unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are initially accommodated by the City of London are now moved to a local authority outside of London within a few weeks of being accommodated.
10. There were seven children looked after on 31 March 2024, which is a 22% decrease from 31 March 2023 (nine children).
11. A total of 16 children became looked after in 2023–2024.
12. In total, throughout the reporting year, there were 25 children in care. This is a 19% increase from 2022–2023 (21 children).
13. One child in care during this reporting period presented with, or was assessed as having, a disability.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.

- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

15. The IRO service has made significant contributions to quality assuring and improving services for children in care throughout 2023–2024. Initial and subsequent reviews, midway monitoring and care arrangement stability continues to be embedded and maintained at a high level.

Appendices

- Non-Public Appendix 1 – City of London Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2023–2024

Ria Lane

Independent Reviewing Officer, Safeguarding team

T: 077 1857 6035

E: ria.lane@cityoflondon.gov.uk



Committee: Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 02/07/2024
Subject: 2024 Quality Assurance Framework	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1–4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

Summary

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People’s Directorate oversees the Quality Assurance of the operational Children’s Social Care and Early Help Service. This activity takes place within an agreed framework involving commissioned external agencies and internal activity. Feedback is taken into account from children, young people and families who directly experience our services, as well as multi-agency partners, allocated workers, and line managers. To ensure that the approach taken is robust, varied, and provides evidence of current operational practice and outcomes for children, the Quality Assurance Framework is regularly updated.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Quality Assurance Framework was last updated in 2023. To continually develop and improve our services and outcomes for children, young people and families, we must be able to accurately assess where we are performing well, and where improvements could be made. The needs of our service users are continually evolving, and therefore so must our learning and development processes.

2. Our Quality Assurance Framework enables us to demonstrate how we ensure that there are checks and balances in place to support our measurement of success from an evidence-based approach. It must be accessible to all staff members to support their understanding of the purpose of Quality Assurance, their role within it, and how it supports service development to improve experiences and outcomes for children, young people, and families.

Current Position

3. The updated Quality Assurance Framework (see Appendices 1 and 2) proposes moving to a monthly cycle of practice reviews, completed by a mix of external and internal reviewers. (See Appendix 3 for more detail on the practice review cycle proposal.) The inclusion of internal reviewers will increase management involvement in quality assurance work and develop a shared responsibility, bringing quality assurance closer to practice.
4. The updated Framework places a greater emphasis on the inclusion of direct experience and feedback from those children, young people and families who use our services. It also strengthens the way we assess and provide evidence of the implementation of our Anti-Racist Practice Standards, and our responses and understanding of equity, diversity, and discrimination in decision making.
5. The Framework seeks to take a collaborative approach, ensuring the inclusion of workers and line managers consistently in the process. This is designed to promote more effective gradings of the work and purposeful recommendations that support practice improvement and better outcomes.
6. There is also greater emphasis on multi-agency quality assurance and peer review to incorporate breadth of external challenge, along with greater opportunities for learning from other partners.
7. The Framework includes moderation of quality assurance processes to ensure that the work is high-quality, consistent, purposeful, and can show evidence of impact in promoting and supporting excellence in practice.
8. It is recognised that quality assurance is not a static process, and we continue to hone, refresh, and update our approach. We aim to make sure that staff, partners and – most importantly – children, young people and families, are included in this process.

Options

9. The updated Quality Assurance Framework takes into account the impact and outcomes evidenced in the 2023-24 Quality Assurance Annual Report and seeks to build on the strengths of the current approach. Ongoing reviews and updates are undertaken as necessary to ensure the highest of standards and that the best possible services are provided.

Proposal

10. The above points continue to sit within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance service as part of the core functions and responsibilities.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.

- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

12. A comprehensive and varied programme of quality assurance work is undertaken in conjunction with the operational service, managers, partners and – most importantly – the children, young people, and families who use our services. The value of the quality assurance activity is also scrutinised more effectively to ensure that it supports the development of excellent service delivery and outcomes.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 2024 Quality Assurance Framework
- Appendix 2 – 2024 Quality Assurance Framework Overview
- Appendix 3 – 2024 Practice Review Cycle Proposal

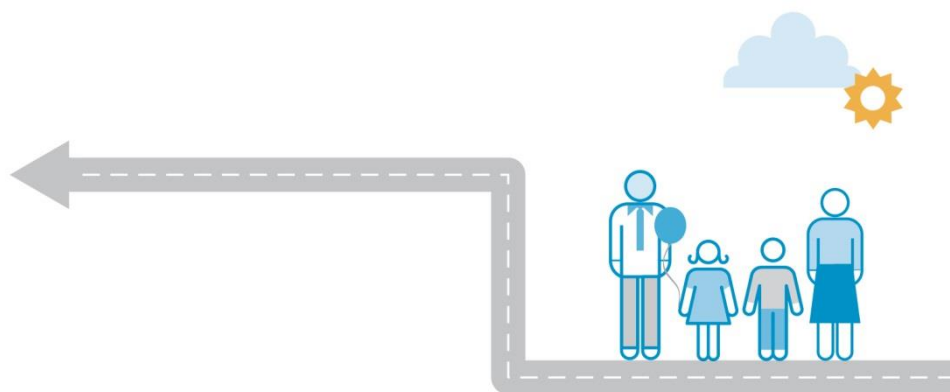
Laura Demetriades

Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Department of Community and Children's Services

T: 020 7332 1215

E: laura.demetriades@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Quality Assurance Framework Promoting and supporting excellence in practice

April 2024

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Overview

The Peoples Directorate in the City of London is situated within the Department of Community and Children's Services and is responsible for delivering the whole range of children's services in the City of London including Children's Social Care and Early Help, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, and the work of the Virtual School. This Framework covers the quality assurance work that takes place within children's services, including commissioned services, such as care and accommodation providers and youth services.

The City of London is committed to providing services that support the best possible outcomes for children, families and young people. This quality assurance framework sets out the ways in which we test and understand the impact of our services, maintain, and build upon good practice and seek to improve any areas of development.

Principles and Purpose

This framework is focussed on the added value of planned and specific practice evaluation activity across the whole system to identify development needs at a system wide level, changes that may need to be made or good work showcased so others can learn from it. This is in addition to the quality assurance activity that the deputy team manager, team managers and Heads of Service and the relevant accountable Director performs as part of their general management sign off and oversight.

The principles of this framework are underpinned by our core professional values that guide our Children's Social Work and Early Help Services.

- **Focused on experience:** the daily lived experience of children and young people is clear in the work, making sure that they are safe and protected from harm, and supported to meet their full potential. That their voice is heard clearly and informs their Plan. Their voice is central to the quality assurance process and informs any recommendations made.
- **Systemic:** practice focuses on the key relationships around children, young people, and their families, to build on strengths and resources and create lasting change. Families and individuals are worked with and not 'done to', each conversation being a vehicle by which change can be achieved. Quality assurance processes seek to highlight these relationships and the impact this is having on the lives and outcomes of children and families. The relationship between the reviewer and the worker/team is also a relationship which can create change and build upon strengths.
- **Collaborative:** there is an engaged and purposeful professional network around children, young people, and families, who are clear on their roles and responsibilities, and provide timely support which progress positive outcomes. The quality assurance process is able to evidence collaborative working and the impact of this, identify any barriers to this and make targeted recommendations to address this where required.
- **Reflective:** interventions, support and approaches are considered within reflective discussions and supervision, creating, and maintaining curiosity, and continuous re-evaluation of dynamics and potential. Families and contexts are responded to dynamically, workers and services can demonstrate flexibility to meet changing needs. Quality assurance processes are also reflective and flexible in their approach, acknowledging the wider systems and taking time to discuss with workers, managers and children and families.
- **Creative:** the work is flexible and creative, not rigid or stuck in procedural processes. Children and young people's needs are at the heart of decision making and innovative approaches are taken to ensure that they receive the services and support that will help them thrive. Quality assurance processes reflect this creativity in terms of offering imaginative recommendations to address any barriers to achieving excellent outcomes.

Collaborative Practice Evaluation

Collaborative practice evaluation is completed alongside practitioners to support their professional development, providing the opportunity to engage practitioners, and enabling them to understand the importance of the process and how it can help improve practice and children's outcomes. The practice evaluation is a participative learning process giving an opportunity to reflect and receive feedback between the reviewer, the practitioner, and managers. With the aim of enabling and supporting helpful conversations about practice, considering practical tips to improve outcomes and develop excellent services. This supports recommendations to be specific, achievable, and purposeful in supporting the development of excellent practice.

The quality assurance process also works to engage with different levels of leadership and multi-agency partners and ensure a system wide collaborative practice evaluation.

1. Multi-agency audits are carried out bi-annually through the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP). Partner agencies from Social Care, Education, Health, Police, and community and voluntary services are involved. Learning from these audits is picked up through multi-agency action plans and tracked through the monthly Quality Assurance Recommendation Tracking meeting process internally as required, and the CHSCP Quality Assurance Sub Group which meets monthly.
2. Scrutiny sessions between Children's Social Care and City of London Police are held on a 6 monthly basis, to ensure that the procedures in place are working, being implemented effectively, and to create a culture of shared learning. This is in addition to any internal audit and review procedures which take place in each agency. A mixed sample of contacts from the City of London Police to Children's Social Care and Early Help made in the past 6 months will be reviewed. These are critically analysed by the group considering; the quality of information initially provided, communication between agencies, the appropriateness of the decision making, feedback from Children's Social Care and Early Help around decisions made and next steps, and any lessons learned.
3. Additional Quality Assurance of commissioned care arrangements will commence from April 2024. These are already monitored through commissioning processes, social work visits, feedback from children and young people, and the oversight of the Independent Reviewing Officer. An additional level of supervision and scrutiny to these commissioning arrangements will be added via a yearly plan of visits to the most frequently used care providers by Senior Leaders. The purpose of the visits are to enable Senior Leaders to engage with the daily lived experience of our children in care and care leavers, to assess the quality of the care being provided, ensure contractual obligations are being met, evidence how we are fulfilling our responsibilities as Corporate Parents, and enable us to respond honestly to the questions 'as a Corporate Parent would this be good enough for my own child?'

Hearing Living Experience

Whilst quality assurance needs to evidence and measure adherence to statutory and local practice guidance expectations in relation to policy and procedure, the fundamental purpose is to ensure the children, families and young people feel they are receiving the services they need in a timely manner, in a way which positively impacts their day to day lives and improves their future life outcomes. Therefore, it is essential that their voices and experiences are at the heart of the quality assurance framework. However, it should be noted that some children and families can struggle to share their views and

feelings through the usual mechanisms or can experience ‘feedback fatigue’ when they are asked to repeatedly share their views, and subsequently feel little is done to act on this and change the systems which they are experiencing.

As such all plans and interventions should be coproduced with children, subject to their age and understanding, and their parents/care givers. It is a challenge to quantitatively measure how/if this is done but there is ongoing work in relation to Mosaic reporting to develop this. Further work also needs to be done to collate feedback at specific points where this can/is gathered such as post Looked After Review/Child Protection Conference, case closure or transfer etc.

The Annual Survey provides a rich and substantial source of feedback from children, families and care leavers at a specific point in time, which is used to inform service development plans. This will continue alongside other efforts to ascertain feedback at various points of individuals journeys through our services. The fact that this is undertaken by an independent service increases the number of contributions received as does having someone reach out and contact people directly via a phone call to talk through their experiences.

Evidencing Anti-Racist Practice, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Anti-Racist practice is a priority area for the City of London with a clear position statement and Anti Racist Practice Standards in place;

“City of London People Directorate is committed to eradicating systemic racism, discrimination, injustice, making anti-racism a foundation of our practice. We will be a voice and force for change, for every child and family, adult and older person that we work for and with, to recognise and address the impact of racism on them within our practice, to apply our anti-racist principles in all of our interactions with and decision-making about them and to determinedly and actively, demand the same from our partners. We will be committed to calling out racism, discrimination, microaggressions and will ensure that this is addressed at all levels in the council to ensure that children and their families, adults and older people and the workforce are supported and valued.

Within City of London People Directorate, we acknowledge the harm and impact of racism and that the experience of our Black staff and those from other global majority ethnic groups, is not the same as that of our white staff and we are committed to ensuring that all voices are represented and heard at every level providing support to staff who experience work-based racism and microaggressions. To that end, making sure that our workforce reflects the community we serve, especially at a leadership level”.

[Anti-Racism-Practice-Standards-FINAL](#)

Quality assurance activity needs to ensure that; direct work, interactions with children and families, engagement with partners, supervision, case management and decision making, are operating in a way which openly acknowledges the impact of racism and discrimination and takes proactive action to address this.

Templates (see Appendix 1) and prompts ask direct questions about racism and discrimination, [Social GRACES](#) and inclusion. Encouraging reflection on issues of racism, discrimination, equality and diversity, which may be impacting decision making or access to resource or services for children and families. Specifically asking reviewers to reflect on the quality of supervision in supporting staff to consider implications of the above and supporting reflective thought in this area. To enable individuals to take different and creative approaches to working with children and their families, or partners and other professionals.

All quality assurance process should be able to clearly ascertain the ethnic and religious backgrounds of children and their families and any specific additional needs, where this is not the case the reasons for this are clearly evidenced on the record or are raised as a recommendation.

Quality Assurance activity needs to demonstrate if there is evidence of challenge as appropriate both internally and externally when issues of racism, discrimination or equality arise, and decision making is clearly based on the needs of the child and family considering their ethnic, cultural, or religious origins and requirements. Specific services and allocation of workers are considered, where available, which best meet the needs of the child and/or family and will promote engagement.

Collaborative Practice Evaluation with workers seeks to evidence workers understanding of the Anti-Racist Practice Standards, and how they are utilising this in their work with children and families. Where this is not well evidenced, clear recommendations should be made as to how to address this. Should a reviewer find evidence of racism or discrimination that has not been addressed either internally or externally, this should be raised without delay with the Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance so immediate action can be taken.

Knowing Ourselves

In order to know ourselves and our performance we must consider a range of information, covering both quantitative performance indicators and qualitative feedback and review. Quality assurance is a continuous process and therefore activity needs to take place across the year to monitor progress and respond to any emerging practice needs or trends.

We hold a monthly Children's Performance Meeting where the monthly performance dashboard is scrutinised to ensure that data is accurate, makes sense, and a narrative is added to any outlying data to demonstrate the reasons why an action may have taken longer than expected, or is not in line with practice standards [Children's Social Care Practice Handbook 2022.docx](#).

Once we understand what our operational practice is telling us about;

- How much?
- How many?
- How often?
- How quickly?
- How does this compare with last month, last quarter, last year?

We can then think about the impact of this;

- What did children, young people and their families think and feel about it?
- How has this improved outcomes and for who?
- What do team members think and feel about what they do and why they do it?
- How are partner agencies involved and contributing to the work?
- How can we improve?

Evidence gathering and measuring of the above takes place through a range of methods. The below outlines the activity undertaken outside of the usual management supervision, oversight, and guidance mechanisms in place to test and understand the impact of the work on the daily lived experiences of children, families, and care leavers. .



Within the planned activity there are also opportunities for bespoke pieces of quality assurance work such as;

- Participation in the East London Peer Audit Group whereby neighbouring Local Authorities Quality Assurance Services come together to offer independent review, scrutiny and advice about chosen pieces of quality assurance work or process.
- Undertaking Peer Reviews with support from the London Councils Network focusing on specific areas of practice, with a lense on Inspection readiness.
- Ad hoc opportunities as they arise.
- Or specific activity identified in relation to an emerging need or trend.

Moderation and Monitoring

To make certain that the way in which quality assurance activity is undertaken and the findings drawn from it are accurate, relevant, and achievable, clear systems of moderation and monitoring need to be in place. Moderation methods are being trialled to see which would best fit the needs and structures of the City Quality Assurance process. It is proposed that all Case Reviews will be moderated by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance to ensure that evidence cited in the review is accurate when compared to the Mosaic record. This moderation would support; all elements of the review template to be completed, ensure that any issues identified are addressed in a recommendation, and that recommendations are clear and linked to impact for children and young people.

It is then proposed that a Senior Leadership Moderation Panel is implemented comprising of the Independent Chair of the Achieving Excellence Board, Executive Director, Assistant Director of People's Services, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, and the Head of Children's Social Care and Early

Help. The Independent Chair of the Achieving Excellence Board will Chair the Panel. If a Practice and Impact Review has been completed by one of the Panel members and is being moderated, they will be exempt from the Panel. Each Moderation Panel member will individually read each Practice and Impact Review to be moderated within the meeting. The Panel will then meet for a period of 90 minutes, in person, to discuss their reflections together with the reviewer, to agree on a final grading and set of recommendations for each moderated Practice and Impact Review. One Moderation Template (See Appendix 2) will be completed for each Practice and Impact Review discussed within the Panel.

Should there be any significant disagreement between Moderation Panel Members and/or the reviewer, the Independent Chair of the Achieving Excellence Board will have the deciding say. The Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance will be responsible for collating any themes arising from the moderation process and either taking action to address these with the reviewer and/or their agency, amending or adapting any quality assurance tools to support the Practice and Impact Reviewing process, or working with the Head of Children’s Social Care and Early Help to develop and improve operational procedure or practice as required.

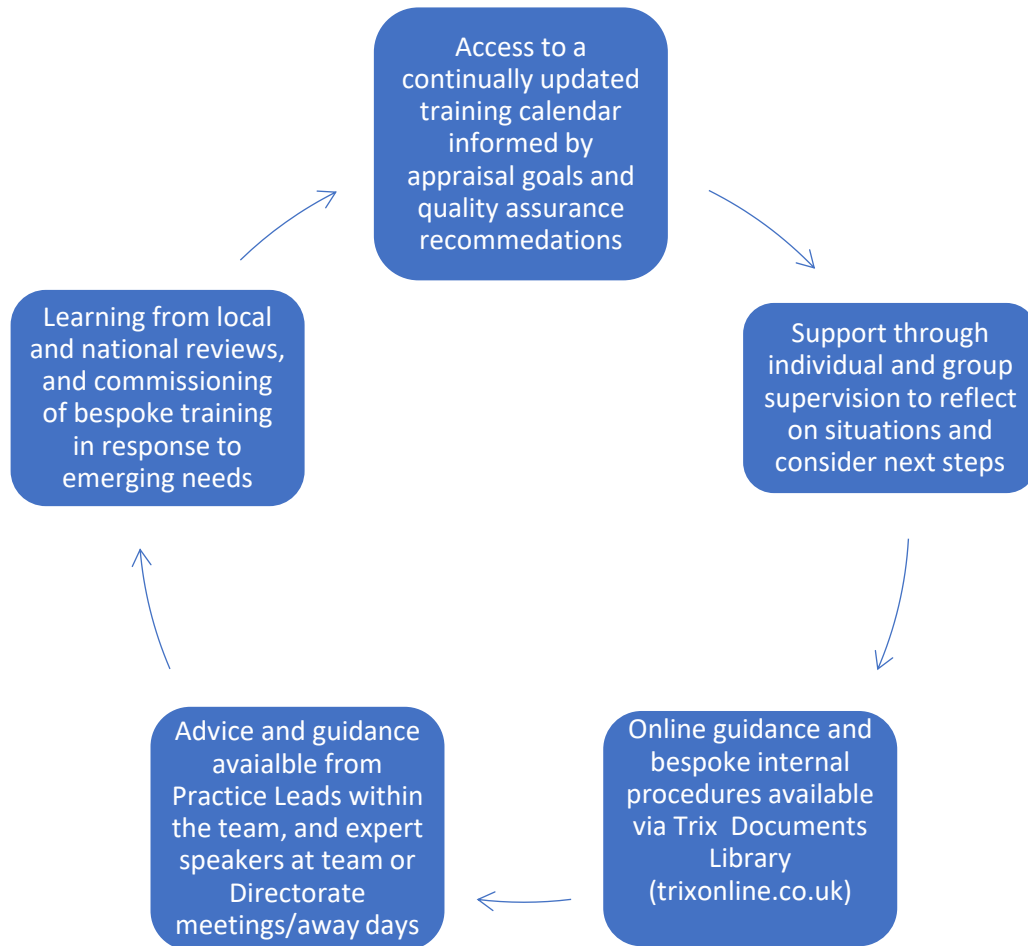
Monitoring of recommendations made through any quality assurance process will be tracked through the QA Recommendation and Impact Tracker, this is split into Child Level Recommendations and Service Level Recommendations. Monthly meetings are held with operational managers to receive updates on progress of recommendations and to clarify the impact this has had for the child(ren) involved. Service Level Recommendations are tracked through the same method, recognising that some recommendations may move into other Plans to be progressed and monitored such as the Service Development Plan, or Workforce Development Planning. Through this process we can ensure all recommendations are acted upon.

Learning Culture

Quality assurance is a continuous improvement cycle using a range of interdependent methods to measure prevalence, monitor practice, listen to people’s experiences, identify areas of improvement, and enact change as a result. An effective model will identify both “what is working well and why” and “what we need to do better”. A key aspect in sustaining continuous improvements in practice is a learning and development programme that is responsive to the skills analysis of the workforce in meeting the needs of the service.



The Workforce Development Lead role sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service, so any training needs arising from quality assurance work is fed directly into the lead. However, it is important that recommendations do not focus only on staff members attending training, there needs to be creativity around how learning needs and development of practice can be supported and improved. Given the make-up of City Services and the small number of workers means that enacting mandatory training can mean taking a whole service out of action for the duration of that training session. Therefore, a range of learning and development methods are used to support staff development, and access to information and guidance as and when needed.



Governance

Effective governance provides an extra layer of scrutiny to guarantee that quality assurance processes are robust, evidence based, and efficient. The governance hierarchy for the Corporation is set out

below.



This enables there to be effective and robust scrutiny of the quality assurance work, to ensure that it is demonstrating effectiveness and impact in supporting excellent practice and outcomes for children and families.

Appendix 1

Practice Review Template

The City of London is committed to providing excellent services to children and their families. Everything we do should have a positive impact and improve the day-to-day experiences of children and their families. This practice and impact review form is designed to focus not only on compliance and provision of services, but the impact of services on the lived experience of the child.

Reviewers should focus on the last 6 months of practice when reviewing files and speaking with workers and service users. However, there may be wider findings from interactions predating the last 6 months which are relevant to comment upon in relation to current service delivery and service user experience.

Grading indicators are taken directly from the Ofsted framework and evaluation criteria for the inspections of local authority children’s services (ILACS).

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Status:	Choose an item.	Mosaic ID:	
Name:		DOB & Age:	
Gender:	Choose an item.	Ethnicity:	
Religion:		Any Additional Needs:	
Name of allocated worker:		Name of Line Manager:	Choose an item.

The Practice Review theme/focus is:
Deadline for submission of Practice and Impact Review:
Date of submission:
Name of Reviewer:

Practice Standards	Outcome	Any action required
Basic Details are up to date on the system	Choose an item.	
Visits are undertaken in expected/statutory timescales	Choose an item.	
Child(ren) are seen alone where required	Choose an item.	
Is the recording updated on the file in line with Practice Standards	Choose an item.	
Supervision is provided in line with expected frequency	Choose an item.	
There is evidence of management oversight and supervision driving positive	Choose an item.	

outcomes for children		
There is an up to date (within the last 3 months) Chronology on file	Choose an item.	

1. Journey of the Child

<p>Is it clear how the child, young person or family came to be supported by the service? Does the assessment and plan provide a clear history for the child, young person or family and an understanding of the current risks and strengths? Does the recording and interactions describe the ongoing assessment of the child/young person's needs? Where allocated, does the Independent Chair ensure that plans address children's needs appropriately and are progressed in a timely manner? In the recording is the practitioner and wider network observing the child(ren)'s physical and emotional presentation and interaction with others? Is this analysed/acted on? Is the worker able to describe the child(ren)'s views and understanding of their situation? Is there evidence of age appropriate direct work to engage the child/young person and to provide an intervention as required? Is there evidence that children and young people are listened to. Practice focuses on their needs and experiences and is influenced by their wishes and feelings. Children, young people and families have timely access to, and use the services of, an advocate. Feedback from children and their families about the effectiveness of the help care or support they receive informs practice and service development.</p>
Grading: Choose an item.

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2. Identification of needs, provision of support, and outcomes

<p>Are assessments and plans dynamic and updated in the light of emerging issues and risks? Do they balance positive strengths alongside development / challenge areas? Are the details set out on the MARF proportionately and accurately reflected within the assessment? Are Assessments (including early help assessments) timely and proportionate to risk. Are they informed by research and by the historical context and significant events for each child/young person. Do they result in direct help for families where needed and are focused on achieving sustainable progress for children? Is the help given to families is proportionate to the level of need. Is information-sharing between agencies and professionals is timely, specific, effective, lawful and fully evidenced in assessments and plans? Are allegations of abuse, mistreatment or poor practice by parents, professionals and carers are taken seriously. Are steps taken to protect children and young people and the management of allegations against staff is robust and effective?</p>

Are the holistic needs of children considered including their education/learning, physical and emotional health, ability to participate in their wider community and achieve and enjoy?
Grading: Choose an item.

3. Management oversight, influence, and direction

Are decisions are made by suitably qualified and experienced social workers and managers? Are actions clearly recorded and acted upon in a timely manner? Is there evidence of systematic and high-quality management oversight that drives child-centred planning and actions within the timescales appropriate for the child? Is there effective and timely planning, support and decision-making taking place which supports appropriate case closure or escalation as required? Where requires is the local authority acting as an active, strong and committed corporate parent – in line with the corporate parenting principles? Where an Independent Chair is allocated, are they ensuring that there is timely progression of actions, a suitable permanency plan in place, and they undertake appropriate escalation internally and externally as needed?
Grading: Choose an item.

4. Understanding of Identity and impact on practice

There is a clear sense of the child, young person, or families' individual characteristics and identity throughout the work, which leads to tailored and specific interventions which meet their individual needs? Do workers recognise the factors that can make children more vulnerable and tailor their interventions appropriately? Is anti-racist practice evident in the file and in intervention - is identity and culture explored as a strength/protective factor? Are there consideration ad exploration of the Social GRACES through the assessment and work? Does the work embed the aspirations of the Anti-Racism-Practice-Standards-FINAL

Grading: Choose an item.

5. Impact and quality of multi-agency work, involvement of partners and community services

Is there evidence that children and young people are protected through effective multi-agency arrangements? That key partners attend multi-agency meetings, which are effective forums for timely information-sharing, planning, decision-making and monitoring and actions happen within agreed timescales to reduce risk and meet need.

Looked after children and care leavers make good educational progress at school or other provision and are able to access health and emotional wellbeing services. They receive the same support from their carers and Corporate Parent as they would from a good parent.

Children, young people and their families are supported to access local community services, develop support networks and connections, including Independent Visitors as appropriate.

Children, young people, and their families are supported to have access to a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities, to increase their social and emotional wellbeing.

Grading: Choose an item.

6. Feedback

Experience shared by child (dependent on age and understanding), young person, family, or carer

Date:
Method: Choose an item.

Discussion with the allocated worker

Date:
Method: Choose an item.

Feedback from the line manager

Date:
 Method: Choose an item.

7. Summary of findings and grading

When considering your overall grading, reviewers should consider the grades for each individual area, and should be determining the extent to which:

- the help provided has improved outcomes.
- other agencies have contributed to improving outcomes.
- the voice of the child has been gained and used to good effect (e.g. through direct work, in planning and through their feedback.)
- good practice is evidenced.
- professional curiosity is evidenced.
- areas for improvement impact upon the child, young person and/or family.
- systemic thinking and practice has been applied.
- management grip is demonstrated.

Grading: Choose an item.

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8. Child Specific Recommendations

Please ensure that these link to the findings outlined above and demonstrate how they would improve the outcomes for the child, and the overall grading of the work where appropriate.

Action	Impact on the child	By whom	Date for completion

9. Service Specific Recommendations

Action	Anticipated Impact on children/families	By whom	Date for completion

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To be completed by Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance

Date sent to the allocated worker and line manager:	
Date uploaded to Mosaic:	
Date Recommendation Review Tracker Meeting to be held:	
Was this audit reviewed by the Moderation Panel?	Choose an item.

Appendix

[Ofsted Evaluation Criteria & Grading Descriptors](#)

**Appendix 2
 Moderation Template**

Child's Name	
Mosaic ID	
Name of Reviewer	
Date of Practice and Impact Review	
Overall Grading	Choose an item.
Date of Moderation Panel	
Do you agree with the overall grading given?	Choose an item.
Based on the evidence and analysis provide in the Practice and Impact Review, and recommendations made, what grade would you rate the practice	Choose an item.

10. Journey of the Child

Do you agree with the grading of this section?	Comments:
Choose an item.	

11. Identification of needs, provision of support, and outcomes

Do you agree with the grading of this section?	Comments:
Choose an item.	

12. Management oversight, influence, and direction

Do you agree with the grading of this section?	Comments:
Choose an item.	

13. Understanding of Identity and impact on practice

Do you agree with the grading of this section?	Comments:
Choose an item.	

14. Impact and quality of multi-agency work, involvement of partners and community services

Do you agree with the grading of this section?	Comments:
Choose an item.	

15. Feedback

Were appropriate attempts made to elicit feedback and to discuss the child, young person or family with the worker and manager?	Comments:
Choose an item.	

16. Summary of findings and grading

Do you agree with the grading of this section?	Comments:
Choose an item.	

17. Child Specific Recommendations

Do you agree with the recommendations made?	Comments:
Choose an item.	

18. Service Specific Recommendations

Do you agree with the recommendations made?	Comments:
Choose an item.	

19. Any Actions Arising from Moderation

Action	By Who	Timescale

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2024 Quality Assurance Framework Overview Summary

This framework is focussed on the added value of planned and specific practice evaluation activity across the whole system to identify development needs at a system wide level, changes that may need to be made, and to showcase good work so others can learn from it.

This is done through collaborative practice evaluation completed alongside practitioners to support their professional development, providing the opportunity to engage, and enabling understanding of the importance of the process and how it can help improve practice and children's outcomes. Aimed at enabling and supporting helpful conversations about practice, considering practical tips to improve outcomes and develop excellent services.

The fundamental purpose is to ensure the children, families and young people feel they are receiving the services they need in a timely manner, in a way which positively impacts their day to day lives and improves their future life outcomes. Therefore, it is essential that their voices and experiences are at the heart of the quality assurance framework.

Quality assurance activity needs to ensure that; direct work, interactions with children and families, engagement with partners, supervision, case management and decision making, are operating in a way which openly acknowledges the impact of racism and discrimination and takes proactive action to address this.



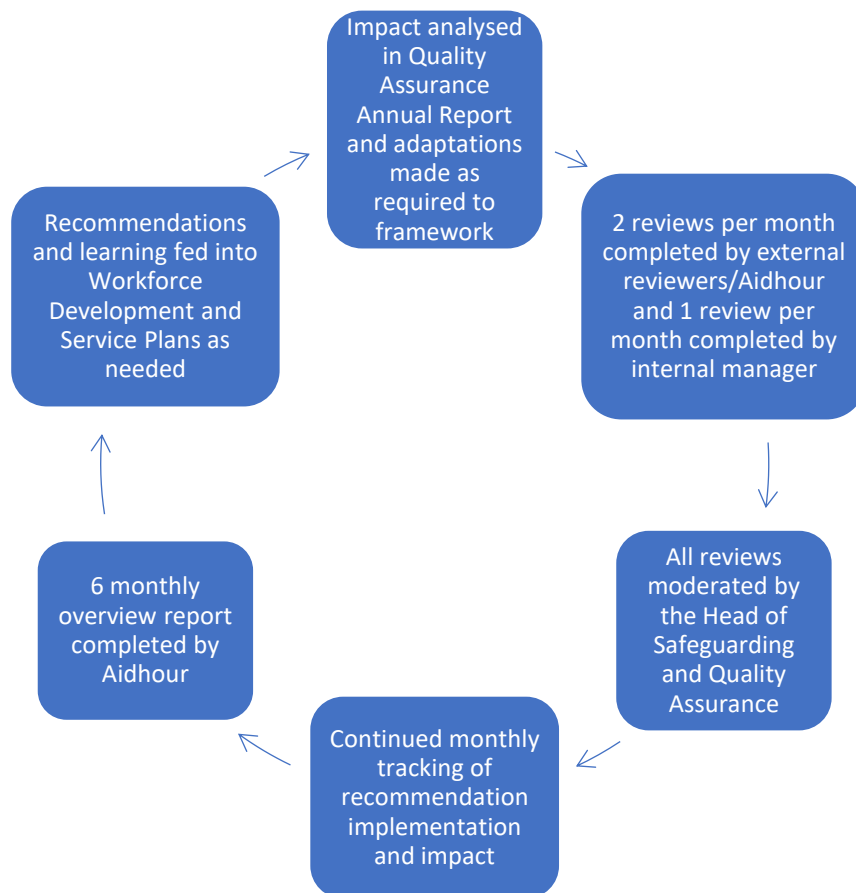
[one-minute-guide-quality-assurance-framework-col.pdf \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://trixonline.co.uk/one-minute-guide-quality-assurance-framework-col.pdf)

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**Practice Review Cycle Proposal
April 2024**

At present practice reviews are completed every 6 months by external reviewers from Aidhour. Last year 26 practice reviews were completed by Aidhour and 2 by internal reviewers. This is on average 2.3 reviews per month per completed. It is suggested that we move to a monthly cycle of practice reviews for the reasons outlined below.

Proposed Model



	Strengths and Opportunities	Weaknesses and Limitations
1	Reduce stress on the operational service. As 2-3 workers would be having their work reviewed at a time, rather than every worker in the service. Therefore, colleagues would have more capacity to support each other.	Identification of themes and trends. Completing a smaller number of reviews may impact on the ability to identify wider themes and trends across the service.
2	Recommendations would be less onerous to track. At present once reviews are completed there can be 50 plus recommendations for managers to follow up with all workers across the service. A monthly cycle would mean reducing this to approximately 12 recommendations a month to follow up with 2-3 workers.	Thematic Reviews. If there are a smaller number of reviews being completed each month, this may make it more challenging to undertake meaningful thematic reviews, or mean that these would need to be completed over a longer period of time.

3	<p>Increase internal review involvement. Currently if we want internal managers to be involved in the reviews this means all managers completing reviews at the same time. Moving to a monthly cycle would mean 1 internal manager a month could complete a review, spreading the load across the system in a manageable way.</p>	<p>Resilience. If for some reason e.g. sickness, leave reviewers were not able to complete their reviews in the month scheduled. There may not be cover available and this could risk noncompliance with the schedule and too few reviews being completed over the year. Or increased number of reviews being completed in the following months negating the move to the monthly cycle.</p>
4	<p>Identify immediate needs/action. At present the reviews can identify action that should/could have been taken within the last 6 months but there is no way to necessarily address this. Reviews being undertaken more regularly could potentially identify more immediate and timely responses to challenges, different approaches, or escalation that could be tried.</p>	
5	<p>Great visibility and incorporation of Quality Assurance in day-to-day work. At present QA activity can feel like an add on rather than a part of daily work, due to the 6 monthly emphasis. Having QA recommendations and discussion woven more regularly into the work and supervision would hopefully support greater understanding of the function and impact of QA upon day-to-day activity.</p>	

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub-Committee	02/07/2024
Subject: Children and Families Service Performance – Month 12 2023/24 (March 2024)	Public Appendix 1 (Non-public) Appendix 2 (Public)
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2 and 3
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Ellie Ward, Head of Strategy and Performance	

Summary

This report updates Members on service performance across the Children and Families Service. It demonstrates where performance meets our statutory obligations and targets and identifies where action was taken for improvement in specific areas.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Children and Families Service at the City of London Corporation provides a range of services including Early Help, Child Protection, and Supporting Care Leavers.
2. The service collects and monitors a range of performance information to ensure that statutory duties are being met, and that services are delivering the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families.

3. Appendix 1 presents the performance dashboard from 1st April to 31st March (month 12) 2023/24. It provides an overall summary of performance in each of the service areas and more detailed information in each area.
4. Appendix 2 provides a glossary of some of the terms used in the performance dashboard.

Current Position

5. Overall, performance across the service is good, meeting a range of statutory requirements and local targets, and comparing well with regional or national benchmarks.
6. It should be noted that, due to small numbers in children's services cohorts in the City of London Corporation, there can sometimes be significant variance in out-turns. These are noted where this is an issue.

Headlines

7. Demand continues to be high. Overall, in the Year 2023/24, there were 807 contacts. This is higher to last year when there were 707 contacts and in 2021/22, when there were 551 contacts.
8. Overall, the number of Children in Need has reduced over the year from 19 in April 2023 to 15 at the end of March 2024.
9. The number of children looked after (CLA) by the City of London Corporation decreased over the year from 12 in April 2023 to 7 in March 2024. This follows a trend in recent years of decreasing numbers of CLA.
10. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) recorded 21 contacts in the Year 2023/24 (3% of referrals). MASH contacts exceeded the number in 2022/23 which was 17.
11. There were 16 Early Help referrals in the year 2023/24. The total number of referrals is lower than the previous two years which saw a particularly high number of referrals reflecting the support provided to families as part of the Afghan Resettlement Programme.
12. Overall, during the year 2023/24, an average 83% of assessments were completed within 45 days. This is lower than the 90% average of 2022/23 but is an area that is being monitored.
13. There were 55 care leavers being supported at the end of March 2024. This has been increasing overall over time (42 at the end of 2020/21) but is a slight decrease on the end of March 2023 when the number was 59.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. Strategic implications – This report represents a picture of the Children and Families Service which includes both statutory requirements and early intervention and prevention work (known as Early Help). The work of the service helps meet Corporate Plan Priorities 1, 2 and 3 for families, children and young people.
15. Financial implications – N/A
16. Resource implications – N/A
17. Legal implications – N/A
18. Risk implications – N/A
19. Equalities implications – Monitoring intelligence on all of our social care processes and associated demographics allows us to assess and then investigate if there are any unintended impacts of any processes or practices.
20. Climate implications – N/A
21. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

22. This report provides a summary of performance data from the Children and Families Service from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, comparing it to performance from the previous month, quarter or year, and other benchmarks where appropriate.
23. It demonstrates strong performance across the service, with some specific areas where some action was taken for improvement. These areas are all now back on a positive trajectory.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Children and Families Service Performance Dashboard 2023/24 (Non-Public)
- Appendix 2 – Glossary for Performance Dashboard (Public)

Ellie Ward

Head of Strategy and Performance
Department of Community and Children's Services

T: 020 7332 1535

E: Ellie.ward@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Glossary

Children Social Care

CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

C&FA	Child and Family Assessment – single assessment undertaken by Children Social Care
CAF	Common Assessment Framework (part of Early Help)
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CHSCP	City and Hackney Children's Safeguarding Partnership
CIC	Child/ren in Care
CICC	Children in Care Council
CIN	Child In Need
CL	Care Leaver
CLA	Children Looked After
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CYP	Child and/or Young Person (up to 18 th birthday)
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DV	Domestic Violence
EDT	Emergency Duty Team (out of hours duty provided by Hackney)
EET	Education, Employment and Training
EH	Early Help
FE	Further Education

HMO	House of Multiple Occupancy
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
IFA	Independent Fostering Agency
IHA	Initial Health Assessment
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
LA Services	Local Authority Services
LAC	Looked after child / ren
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LASC	London Asylum Seekers Consortium
MACP	Multi-Agency Child Protection
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MARF	Multi Agency Referral Form
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NFA	No Further Action
QSW	Qualified Social Worker
RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
RHI	Return Home Interview
S47	Section 47 Enquiry, part of Child Protection investigation (the outcome may be that the subject is escalated to an ICPC)
SCR	Serious Case Review
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
TAC	Team Around the Child meeting (Early Help measure)

TAF Team Around the Family (Early Help measure)

UASC Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (up to 18th birthday)

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub-Committee	02/07/2024
Subject: Adult Social Care Safeguarding Performance Report Q4 2023/24	Public Appendix 1 (Non-public)
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Providing excellent services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Ellie Ward, Head of Strategy and Performance	

Summary

This report updates Members on safeguarding performance across the Adult Social Care Service during the Year 2023/24.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Adult Social Care Service at the City of London Corporation provides a range of services, including safeguarding.
2. The service collects and monitors a range of performance information to ensure that statutory duties are being met, and that services are delivering the best possible outcomes for people.
3. Appendix 1 presents the safeguarding performance dashboard for 2023/24. It provides a range of detailed information in different areas of safeguarding.

Current Position

4. Overall, performance across the service is good, meeting a range of statutory requirements and local targets.
5. It should be noted that, due to small numbers in cohorts in the City of London Corporation, there can sometimes be significant variance in out-turns. These are noted where this is an issue.
6. Appendix 1 includes a summary and some of the headlines from the data.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

7. Strategic Implications – The Adult Social Care Service provides a range of statutory services and also a range of early intervention and prevention services. These all contribute to meeting outcomes 1, 2 and 3 of the Corporate Plan.
8. Financial implications – N/A
9. Resource implications – N/A
10. Legal implications – N/A
11. Risk implications – N/A
12. Equalities implications – Monitoring intelligence on all of our social care processes and associated demographics allows us to assess and then investigate if there are any unintended impacts of any processes or practices.
13. Climate implications – N/A
14. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

15. This report provides a summary of performance data from the Adult Social Care Service in relation to safeguarding for 2023/24, comparing it to performance from the previous quarter or year, and other benchmarks, where appropriate.
16. It demonstrates strong performance across this area of the service.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Adult Social Care Safeguarding Performance Dashboard Q4 2023/24 (Non-public)

Ellie Ward

Head of Strategy and Performance
Department of Community and Children's Services

T: 020 7332 1535

E: Ellie.ward@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Committee: Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 02/07/2024
Subject: City of London Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, 2023–2024 LADO Annual Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1–4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

Summary

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role sits under the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People’s Directorate. It is a statutory expectation that all local authorities must have a LADO. If allegations are made against staff (including volunteers) that call into question their suitability to work with or be in a position of trust with children – whether made about events in their private or professional life – they need to be formally reported to the LADO. The LADO has the responsibility to manage and have oversight of allegations. The Annual Report outlines the activity of the LADO from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the impact on safety for children, and effect on learning for individuals and organisations.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The responsibility of the LADO is set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (updated 2024), and the London Safeguarding Children Procedures 7th edition (updated April 2024), Chapter 7.¹

¹ https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/alleg_staff.html

2. In the City of London, the LADO's work is carried out by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance who reports directly to the Assistant Director of People's Services. In this reporting year there has been a change of personnel in the role, and therefore there are some differences in recording of contacts to the service.
3. Alongside the set criteria for reporting to the LADO, the role also provides wider safeguarding advice on low-level concerns, professional conduct issues, safer recruitment processes, or policy and procedure.

Current Position

4. During the last year, 74 contacts were made to the LADO Service. The vast majority of these, in line with London and national trends, do not meet the LADO threshold, but are queries that require guidance and advice. Those instances where a consultation took place often result in further action by the employer, such as an internal investigation with oversight from the LADO, rather than requiring an Allegation against Staff and Volunteers Meeting.
5. During the year, there were five contacts that met the LADO threshold:
 - One was an individual who worked in multiple locations across London, and so the case was transferred to another LADO in the local authority where their head office was based.
 - Two cases went to Allegation against Staff and Volunteer (ASV) Meetings, where the concerns were substantiated. Both individuals were suspended while investigations were ongoing. One has subsequently been charged with an offence, and their professional registration has been revoked. In the other case, there are remaining HR actions being taken to review their employment, and a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) referral was made.
 - In one case, the Police investigation and bail conditions prohibited the individual from continuing their employment.
 - In the final case, the individual did not work substantively with children, or in a position of trust. Therefore an employment-based risk assessment was completed to analyse and mitigate any risk to those under the age of 18 years who may be present in the workplace.
6. Given the size of the City, there is often crossover with other local authorities in terms of where responsibility may fall. Often the City is involved because employment head offices are based here, rather than the risk to children necessarily being within the City boundaries, or in relation to City children.
7. Given the change in personnel, there have been proactive efforts to build relationships with key partners in the City, with in-person visits taking place to all primary, secondary and higher education providers, a number of Early Years providers, and City of London Police. There is also a consistent LADO training programme in place through the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP), with sessions taking place every quarter. Bespoke training sessions have also been offered and taken up with individual organisations.

Options

8. The LADO role is a statutory function and will continue to operate as part of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service. Awareness-raising will continue through the delivery of training sessions and bespoke support. Service development will include the creation of a LADO information leaflet, LADO referral form, and feedback form, to ensure that there is clear recording of contacts and advice given. This work is supporting a healthy children's workforce across the City to safeguard children and promote positive outcomes.

Proposals

9. The above arrangements continue through the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance within the People's Directorate.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.
 - Financial implications – N/A
 - Resource implications – N/A
 - Legal implications – N/A
 - Risk implications – N/A
 - Equalities implications – N/A
 - Climate implications – N/A
 - Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

11. The LADO Service has been well used this year by a wide range of agencies. This is a positive demonstration that the process and role is known and understood across a broad range of partners. Strong working relationships with the CHSCP and Hackney LADO have enabled consistent and regular training opportunities for partners, as well as the creation of standardised resources and support tools. Internal recording processes are being strengthened and developed. These processes support reporting to ensure accountability for decision-making processes and the advice and oversight offered. They provide evidence that children are safer as a result of action taken by the LADO and partners.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 2023-24 LADO Annual Report

Laura Demetriades

Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Department of Community and Children's Services

T: 020 7332 1215

E: laura.demetriades@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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