

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	04/06/2019
Subject: Quality Assurance Framework	Public
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Summary

This report informs Members about the new Quality Assurance (QA) Framework which has been designed to support the continued journey of improvement for children and young people's services in the City of London. The focus of the framework is aligned to the journey of children and young people who use services within the City. The structure of the framework provides a whole-system approach to QA, which is accessible to staff in relation to them seeing their contribution to the journey.

The emphasis of the framework is to move away from looking at individual processes and focus more on the outcomes that are trying to be achieved. This approach aligns closely with the learning and development of staff, ensuring that staff have the right skills to support them to achieve measurable outcomes with children and young people.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The first QA Framework was developed in May 2015, just prior to an Ofsted inspection in July 2016. This framework was updated on a regular basis to reflect the QA activity occurring across children's social care, however, it did not fully represent all the activity occurring, or demonstrate the impact on practice. The framework was descriptive in regard to the QA process but was difficult to navigate through.

2. Power, 1997, (in Munro, 2004) identified: “It remains a risk that, where organisations lack clear measures for relating inputs to outputs ‘the audit of efficiency and effectiveness is in fact a process of defining and operationalising measures of performance for the audited entity. In short, the efficiency and effectiveness of organisations is not so much verified as constructed around the audit process itself.’”
3. In January 2019, the QA Framework was reviewed with the aspiration of creating a learning organisation that focused on the outcomes for children and young people rather than just the process to achieve this. To realise this, the QA Framework needed to look beyond compliance with statutory requirements alone, by taking on a whole-system approach, encompassing the wider activity taking place across children’s services. Although compliance with statutory requirements is essential, it is far from being the end of the process in a system committed to continuous improvement.

Current Position

4. A key element of the framework is the involvement of children and young people. However, although children and young people are consulted on a regular basis and their views are sought, they are not always visible or heard. Their views can be lost within the plethora of information obtained from parents, carers and professionals. Therefore, a key element of the framework will be to ensure that children and young people’s views are differentiated on Mosaic, the electronic recording system, and that staff working with children and young people have the skills to undertake direct work that is age appropriate and outcome focused.
5. The new QA Framework was designed to be accessible for staff across services in understanding their role and responsibility in relation to QA and how this has a direct correlation to the outcomes for children, young people and their families. The framework also demonstrates how this interlinks with other QA systems and governance arrangements within the City of London Corporation and Department of Community and Children’s Services.

Conclusion

6. The principles of the QA Framework are to align it with the journey of children and their families through the services they receive, the experience they have, and the outcomes that are achieved. This will be accomplished through a collaborative approach, working with and supporting staff in having the skills and confidence to work with families. A key element of the framework is the training and development of staff – shown to be a significant element in why social workers can find it difficult to challenge behaviour in some family circumstances (see Neglect in Affluent Families research by Professor Claudia Bernard).¹

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Quality Assurance Framework

¹ Professor Claudia Bernard, *An Exploration of How Social Workers Engage Neglectful Parents from Affluent Backgrounds in the Child Protection System*, Goldsmiths, University of London, December 2017.

Background Papers

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*, July 2018.
- *Workforce Development Strategy – Peoples Directorate 2017–2022*

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