

Quality Assurance Framework

January 2019

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Introduction

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 following children's services in the City of London, Children's Social Care, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance and Education and Early Years Services. This Framework covers the quality assurance work that takes place within children's services, which includes commissioned services, such as Independent Fostering Services and Youth Services.

The City of London is committed to providing the best possible service to children and families who reside within the City, highlighted via the first priority of our corporate plan i "People are safe and feel safe". Towards this aim the quality assurance framework sets out how we will ensure the services we offer to children and families are of the highest standard and has meaningful impact on children and young people's lives. This framework draws together the quality assurance activity that takes place across the Peoples Directorate, and how this is triangulated with feedback from children and families in relation to impact and outcomes.

Principles and Purpose of QA

The principles and purpose of this quality assurance framework are aligned with the journey of children and families through the services they receive, experience and the outcomes achieved. This will be attained through;

- **Child Centred Approach;** focusing on the experience of children and young people, are they safe and protected from harm, is their voice visible and heard;
- **Restorative;** quality assurance will be restorative. Instead of a top down approach, quality assurance work will be based on working with staff and managers and building relationships. As a restorative process quality assurance will be characterised by both high support and high challenge;
- **Outcomes Based;** in line with the key behaviours for children's services, the proper focus of quality assurance will be on outcomes rather than processes;
- **Positive;** our approach to quality assurance will be positive - looking at informing and encouraging improvement and supporting the development of staff and services;
- **Reflective;** our quality assurance framework is designed to be about promoting reflective practice and shared learning.

Key Sources of Information

Quantitative:

“How much?”

“How many?”

“How often?”

Performance Indicators and key metrics.

Wide range of often detailed data about service users, needs, services and intervention including timeliness and results.

Finance and resource data.

Partnership data such as health, education, housing, police, etc.

Qualitative:

“How did we do?”

“What did the frontline services think and feel about it?”

“What did children, young people and their families think and feel about it?”

Audits (single and multi-agency)

Section 11 audits.

Learning reviews.

Practice observations.

Management oversight.

Feedback from staff and other professionals.

Feedback from service users.

Complaints and compliments.

Evaluation of training (single and multi-agency)

Serious case reviews

Evaluations and Inspections.

Impact/Outcome:

“What difference have services/strategies/individuals made to the lives of children and young people?”

“Is anyone better off?”

“How can we improve?”

Outcome performance measures.

Voice of the child/practitioner.

Self-evaluations

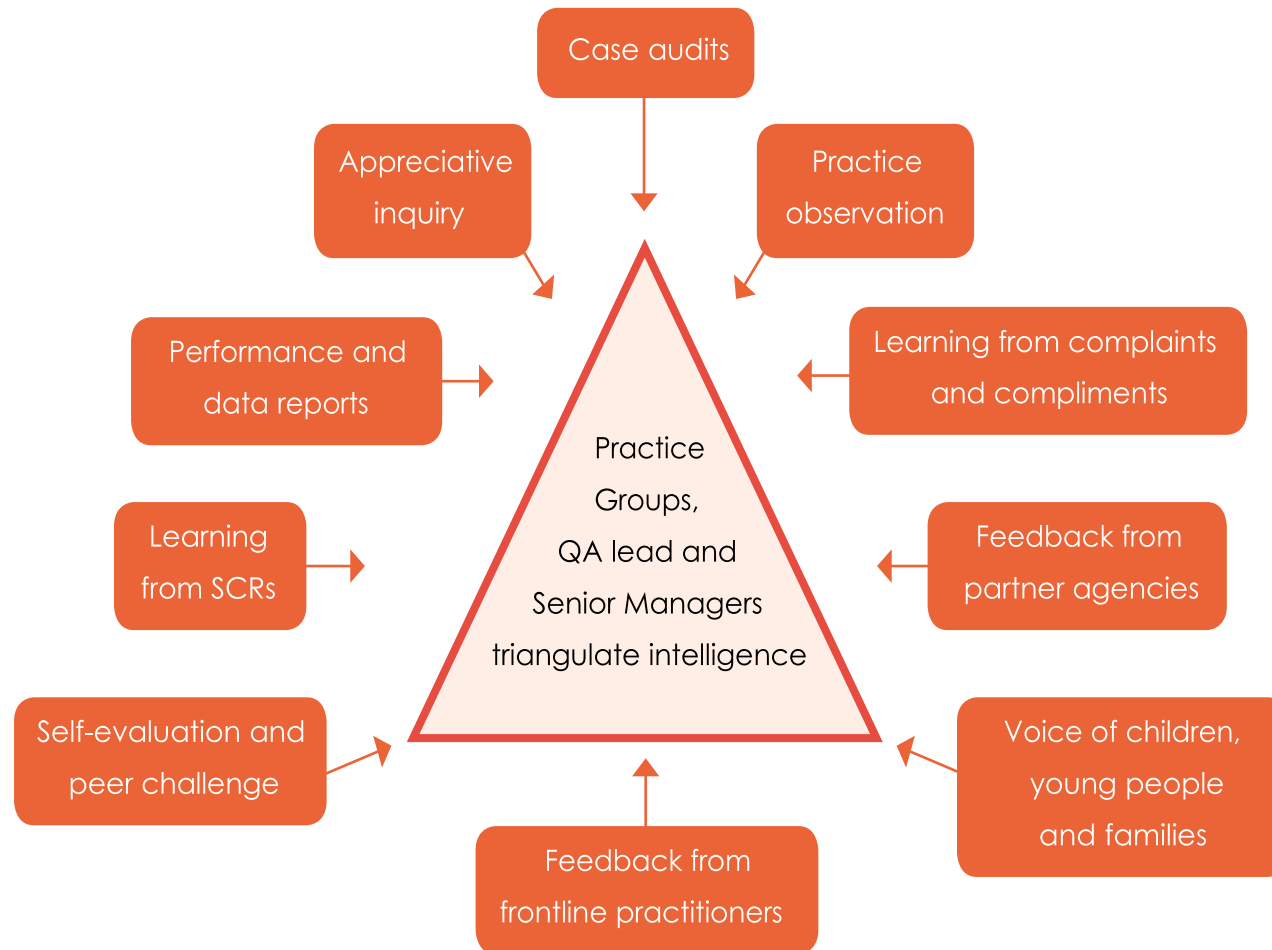
Direction of travel tools.

Annual reports.

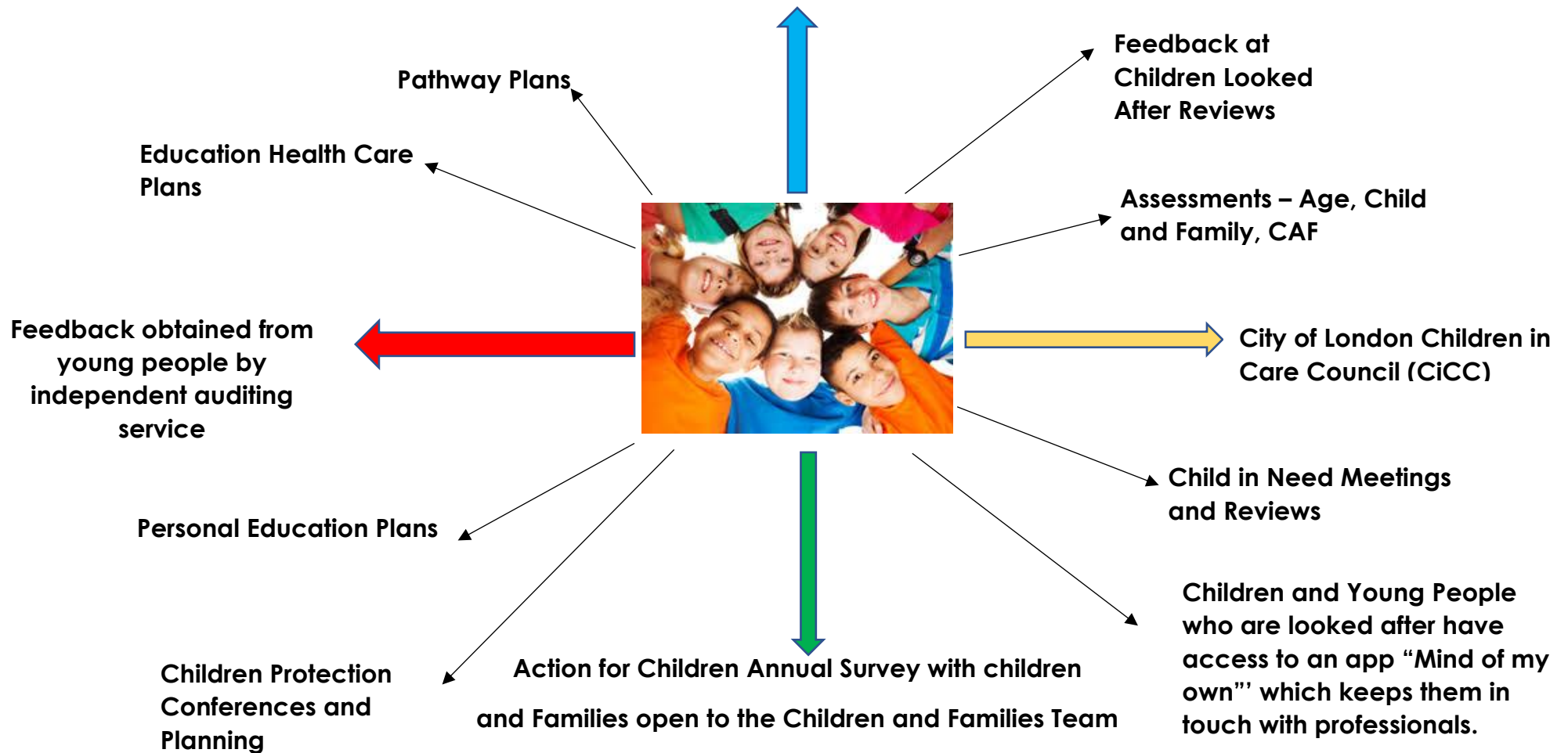
Development days, Deep Dives and Challenge events.

Evaluations and inspections.

Framework for a whole-system approach to Quality Assurance Management



Through Direct work with children and young people as part of the approach to quality assurance Management



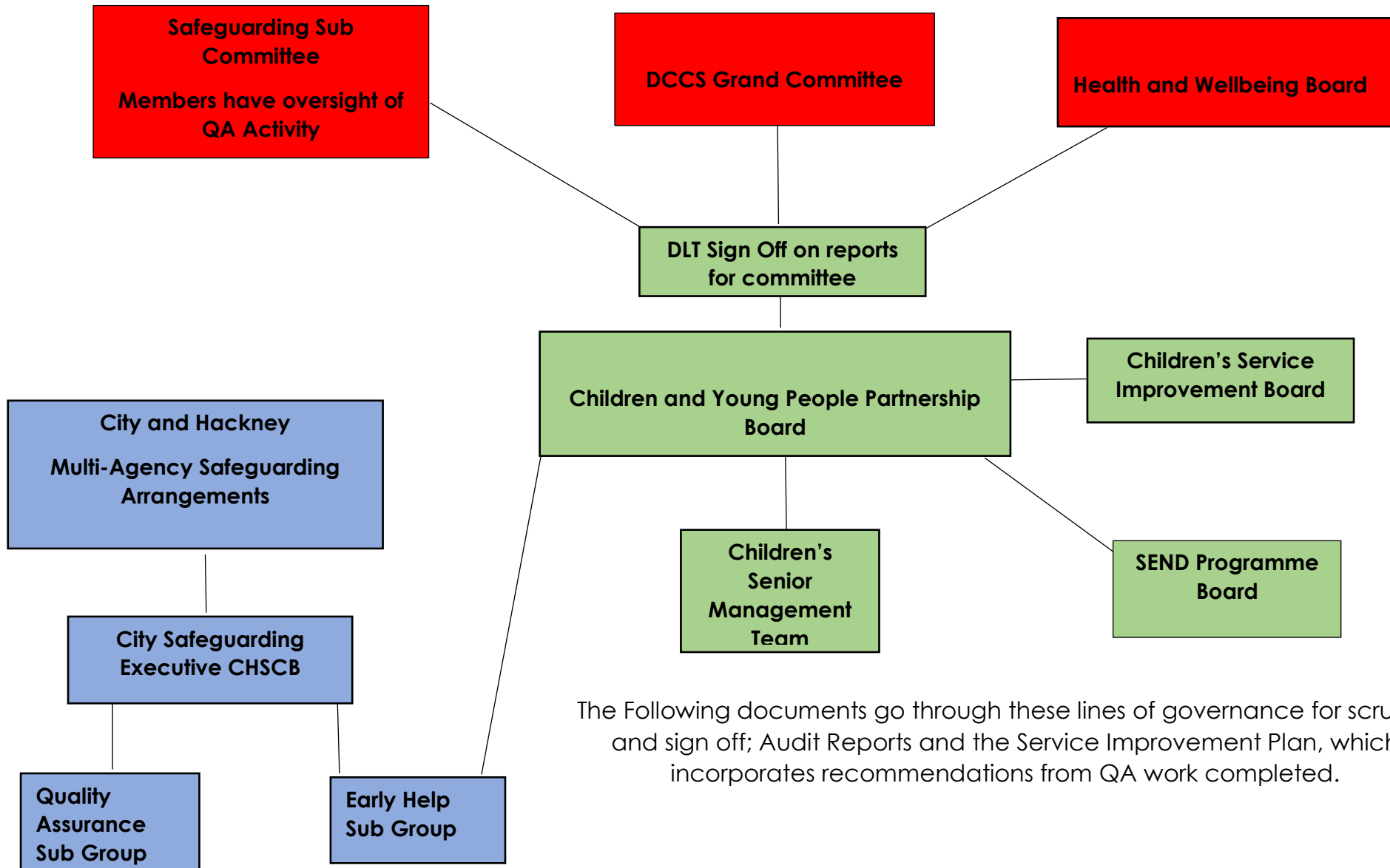
Making sure the voices of children are heard, listened to and make a difference

Children and young people who are known to services are consulted in many ways about their views, but these views are not always visible or heard, as they can become lost within the plethora of information collected. Children and young people can speak with a wide range of professionals who will ask them about their opinions and feelings, but these views are not always captured or shared, and after time they become lost. By ensuring that we are consistently hearing and recording the child and young person's views we can build a more in depth understanding of their needs and show themes in relation to their wellbeing. Where we do collect the views of children and young people it is important that their views are represented in their entirety, and not interpreted or given from a third person perspective.

This framework seeks to ensure that the voice of the children and young person is visible and heard by;

- Using different methods to collect children and young people's views, such as audio tapes, video's and/or Apps, which the young people can use with the support from their social workers or on their own. This will give the child or young person the opportunity to record their journey, aspirations and views, supporting life story work which is meaningful for them.
- Providing the capability on Mosaic, the electronic recording system for the views of children and young people to be more visible, by differentiating their views from other interaction taking place with professionals and other family members.
- That plans, reports and assessments evidence the child/young person's perspective, in relation to what they want to change, and how they feel, through direct work which is age appropriate and supports their learning, language and diverse needs.
- Front line practitioners have the skills and confidence to engage with children and young people. Through a range of activities and methods, they have an understanding of child development and direct work with children and young people.

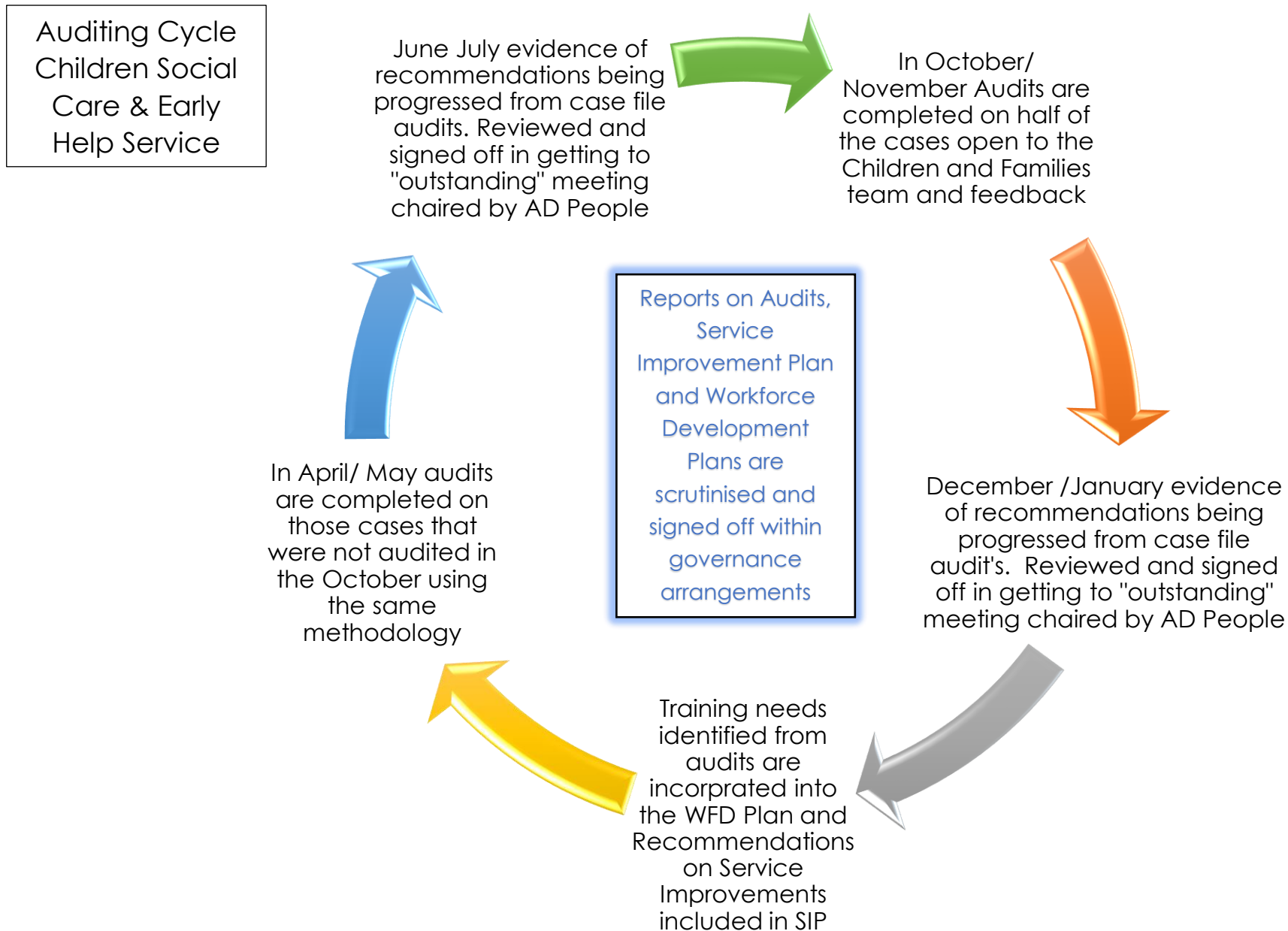
Governance Chart



Audit Cycle involving Partner agencies, City of London Corporation and Commissioned Services

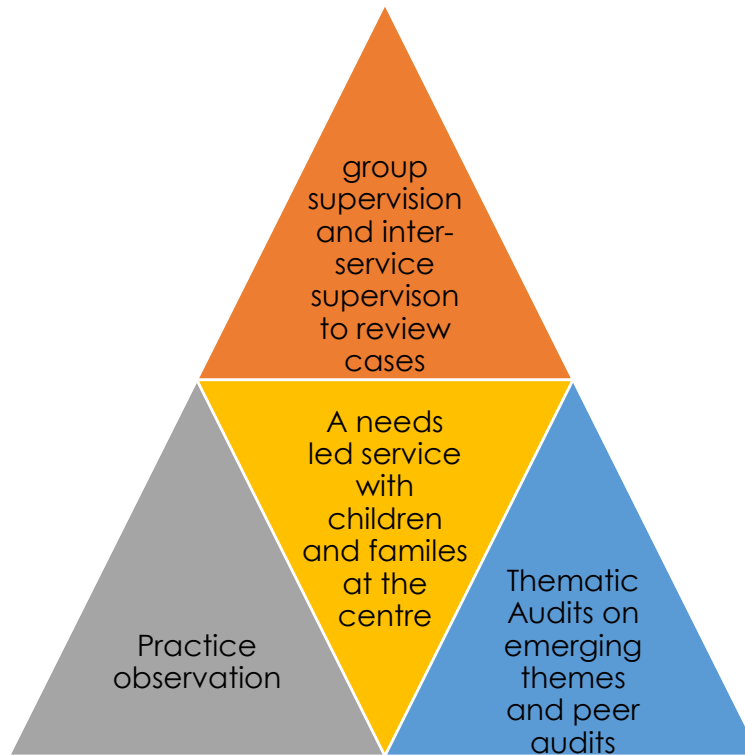


- Multi-Agency audits are carried out bi-annually through the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board, (which going forward will be known as the Multi-Agency safeguarding arrangements), Partner agencies from Social Care, Education, Health and Police are involved. Learning from these audits is picked up through Multi-Agency Action Plans.
- Commissioned Independent Fostering Agencies and Semi-independent provisions for care leavers are audited annually. Checks are made regarding how they meet national minimum standards in respect of IFA's and standards of care in supporting young people towards independent living in relation to care leavers. Audits are also completed on youth services provision.
- Section 11 audits and Peer Audits are co-ordinated through the Multi-Agency safeguarding arrangements in place between City and Hackney.



Practice Quality Assurance

Qualitative Information



Frontline practitioners have group supervision within their service area and with partner agencies where live cases can be discussed with constructive challenge and support.

Thematic audits carried out to explore hypotheses and emerging themes which may identify gaps in service.

Practice Observations that take place across all levels of management in children's services. Senior managers have a line of sight over frontline practice.

Operation Quality Assurance in the Children and Families Team & Early Help

Through management oversight of contacts, referrals, assessments, Early Help, CAF process, s47 investigations, Child in Need Process and Pathway Plans

Group supervision, using the "Think Family" approach, individual supervision and appraisal framework.

Monitoring through Reviews and Panels:

- Chair of Adoption and Permanency Panel.
- Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) at Child Looked After Review and Child Protection Conference.
- The IRO Service involved in the reviewing of Pathway Plans
- Clear management oversight on the review of Child in Need case
- "Top three" meeting with Senior Manager, which looks at cases where there may be block in moving plans for child and young people.
- Practice Observation which is carried out across all the tiers on management.

Virtual School Head

- Through oversight of Personal Education Plans and education section of pathway plans.
- By quality assuring PEP meetings with social workers, giving constructive feedback.
- Offering support and advice on what information should be contained on PEPs and pathway plans, and desired outcomes.
- To offer challenge around education plans for children and young people.

Operation Quality Assurance in the Education and Early Years' Service

SEND Panel; Reviews and Monitors SEND process including the quality of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans, annual reviews of EHC Plans, and the transition of children and young people 14 years to adult services.

Monthly reports to the Children's Senior Management Team on children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE) and at risk of missing education and weekly case updates to the Assistant Director of People.

SENCO network, which reviews and promotes good practice through peer support.

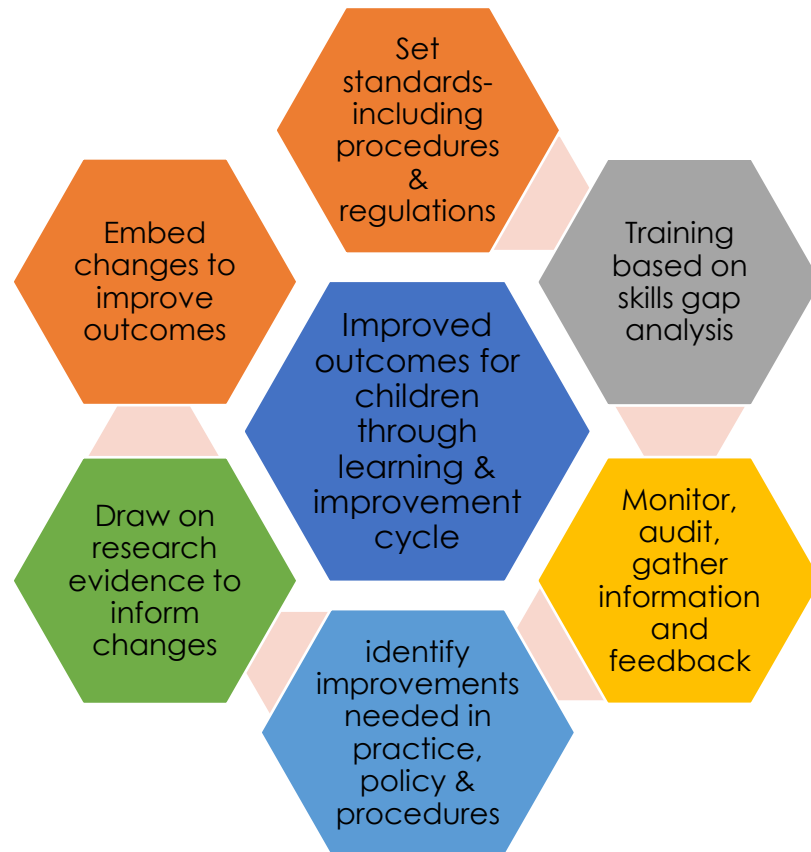
Annual audits of Early Years Settings, reviewing Leadership, Management and Safeguarding, this is usually completed in the summer term.

Education Health Care Plans.

SEND Programme Board; Strategic Oversight of the SEND joint strategy, self-evaluation form (SEF) Implementation of the SEND Service Improvement Action Plan, which is reported into Members Safeguarding Sub Group and Health & Wellbeing Board.

Continuous Improvements Through Learning

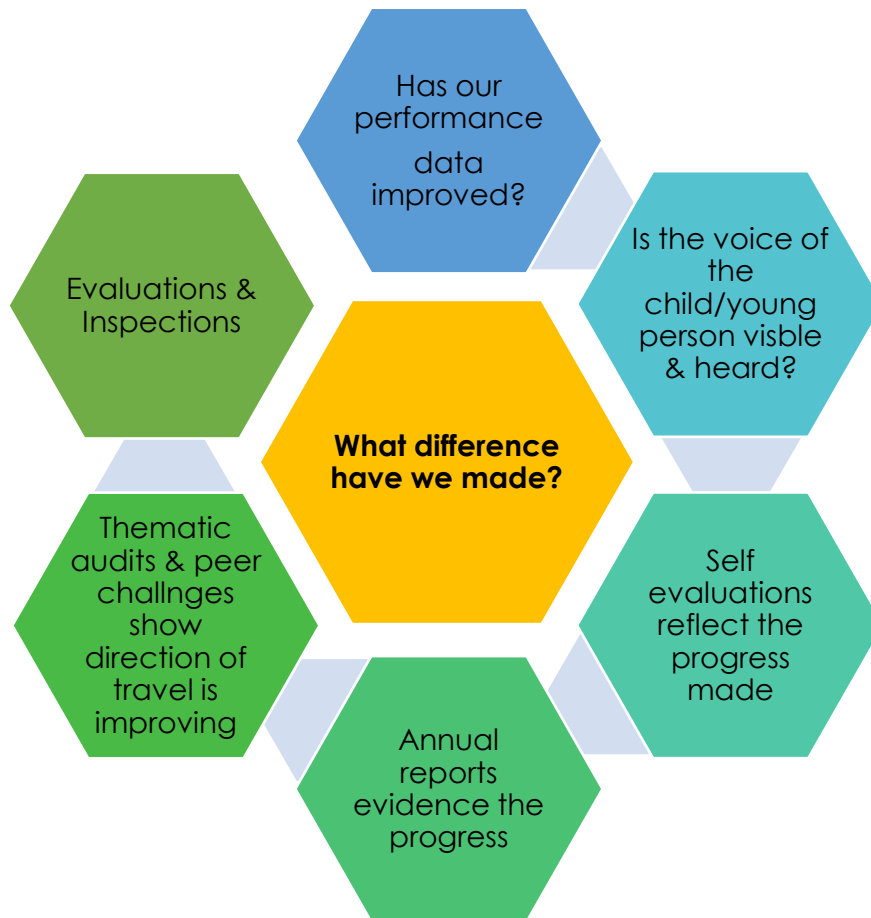
Quality assurance is a continuous improvement cycle using a range of interdependent methods to measure prevalence, monitor practice, listen to people's experiences, identify areas of improvement and enact change as a result. An effective model will identify both "what is working well and why" and "what 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.



- Front line staff are supported by online procedures provided by Tri-x, guidance on regulations through policies and practice standards.
- Children's social care have access to a learning and developments programme that is compliant with the KSS.
- Training and support in systemic practice.
- Group supervision within children's social care and between services.
- Practice observation taking place across all tiers, from DLT, SMT, Line Managers and frontline staff.
- Learning from serious case reviews.
- Research based reports and assessments that help to inform practice and performance information.
- Measuring integration of learning into Practice within appraisal and supervision.

Measuring Impact and Outcomes

Yvette Stanley, National Director for Social Care in May 2018 described how LA's could reach outstanding in child protections services by acknowledging that even the best performing LA's will have areas where they will need to make improvements in learning. This is achieved by learning from serious incidents and feedback from children and families, creating a learning environment that uses constructive management oversight and reflective practice to develop practitioners and manager. Advising that;

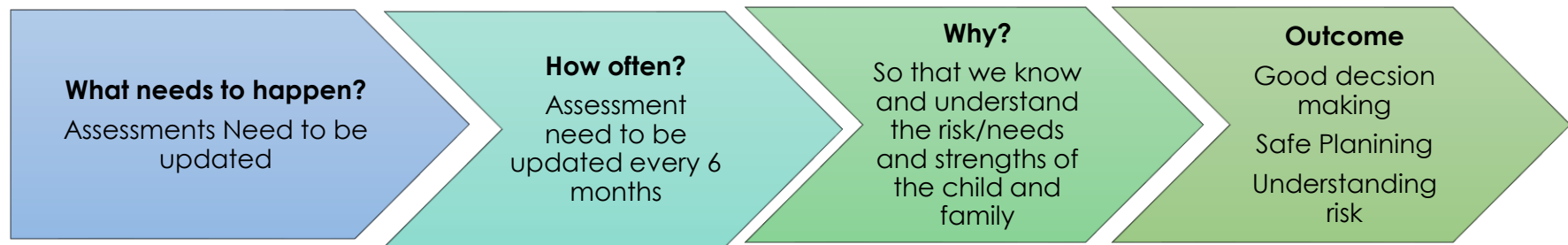


“Outstanding child protection requires that senior leaders of the organisation have a clear line of sight on casework, so they can challenge and support the judgements of managers in a way that ensures the culture of the service is not risk averse but one which supports learning in a complex and challenging environment. LA's also need;

A focus in getting basic social work practice right.
A child-centred system with robust arrangements and processes.
Consistent understanding and application of thresholds.
Quality Assurance arrangements that support managers.
Manageable caseloads.
A strong learning culture.
Effective working with other agencies.
A focus on achieving sustained improvements in the lives of children and their families.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the results or effects of services or interventions. A focus on outcomes for children and young people help frontline staff understand the direct correlation between their actions in making a difference to the lives of children and families who receive services. Often the focus is on the process rather than the outcome, the diagram below shows the outcome of assessments being updated on a regular basis, an outcome's approach puts children and families at the centre rather than the process.



Using an outcomes-based approach reinforces for frontline practitioners their role and responsibility, enabling them to see the direct link between their actions onto children, young people and families. If an assessment does not look beyond the superficial presentation of that child or family's life, then all you are dealing with is the behaviours resulting from the underlying issue, and change will be limited and unsustainable. This leads to poor outcomes, as plans become task focused with limited evidence of change or impact. An outcomes-based approach combined with a strong ethos around learning and development supports improved outcomes for children, young people and their families, in making meaningful and sustainable change.

References;

Susannah Bower, Carole Brooks and Jane Shuttleworth (April 2018) Research in Practice, Strategic Briefing, Building a Quality Culture in Child and Family Services.

Yvette Stanley, National Director for Social Care (May 2018) <https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2018/05/how-do-we-achieve-outstanding-help-and-protection>.

HM Government (July 2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children, A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Workforce Development Strategy – Peoples Directorate 2017 – 2022

Timeline of QA activity

January

- Update Service Improvement Plan. (quarterly basis)
- All PEP's are updated within term time and overseen by Virtual Head.
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- SEND Panel.
- CHSCB Multi-Agency Audits (Completed bi-annually).
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team. (monthly)
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.
- Strategic Placement Group, to review quality and value of placements attended by Commissioning, Children's Social Care and Early Help Service Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Manager and Finance. Group is chaired by AD Peoples Service.

February

- Practice Standards updated (although urgent updates will be completed on an ad hoc basis).
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- SEND Panel.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.
- Annual Tendering Process, QA of Safeguarding requirements.

March

- Virtual School Head attends Children and Families Team Meeting to update staff on Education matters and discuss quality of PEP's and Pathway Plans.
- Monthly reflective supervision.

- End of Year Appraisals.
- SEND Panel.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Moving to Excellence Board.
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.

April

- Update Service Improvement Plan (quarterly basis).
- All PEP's are updated within term time and overseen by Virtual Head.
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- Appraisal and objectives for coming year.
- SEND Panel.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Action for Children Survey completed with all young people open to the Children and Families Team.
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.
- Strategic Placement Group, to review quality and value of placements attended by Commissioning, Children's Social Care and Early Help Service Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Manager and Finance. Group is chaired by AD Peoples Service.

May

- Independent Audits completed on half of cases open to Children and Families Team.
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- SEND Panel.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team. (monthly)
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.

June

- Group Supervision for Children and Families Team.
- All PEP's are updated within term time and overseen by Virtual Head.
- Virtual Head produces and annual and interim report on the work that has been covered.
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- SEND Panel.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Audits completed in Early Years settings.
- Moving to Excellence Board.
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.
- Annual audit on Independent Fostering Agencies and Semi-Independent accommodation.
- Getting to Outstanding Meetings; reviewing progress made on recommendations from independent audits

July

- Group Supervision for Children and Families Team.
- Update Service Improvement Plan (quarterly basis).
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- SEND Panel.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.
- Strategic Placement Group, to review quality and value of placements attended by Commissioning, Children's Social Care and Early Help Service Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Manager and Finance. Group is chaired by AD Peoples Service.

August

- Group Supervision for Children and Families Team.
- The Independent Reviewing Officer produces an annual report on Children Looked After in the City of London, which covers performance and QA of the work carried out with young people.
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- SEND Panel.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.

September

- Practice Standards updated (although urgent updates will be completed on an ad hoc basis).
- Group Supervision for Children and Families Team.
- All PEP's are updated within term time and overseen by Virtual Head.
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- Appraisal mid- way review.
- SEND Panel.
- CHSCB Multi-Agency Audits. (Completed bi-annually.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Moving to Excellence Board.
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.

October

- Group Supervision for Children and Families Team.
- Update Service Improvement Plan (quarterly basis.

- Monthly reflective supervision.
- SEND Panel.
- Strategic Placement Group, to review quality and value of placements attended by Commissioning, Children's Social Care and Early Help Service Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Manager and Finance. Group is chaired by AD Peoples Service.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Annual Ofsted Meeting and Self-Assessment update.
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.

November

- Independent Audits completed on half of cases open to Children and Families Team.
- Group Supervision for Children and Families Team.
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- SEND Panel.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.

December

- Group Supervision for Children and Families Team.
- Monthly reflective supervision.
- SEND Panel.
- Monthly reports on Electively Home Educated Children to Children's Senior Management Team (monthly).
- Moving to Excellence Board.
- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.
- Getting to Outstanding Meetings; reviewing progress made on recommendations from independent audits.

- Practice Observation carried out across all the tiers from social workers through to senior managers and directors.

Direct Observation of Staff across all levels is carried out throughout the year, the data from these observations will be on each individual's supervision record and support their learning and development record.