

Committee: Safeguarding Sub Committee	Dated: 10/02/2020
Subject: Aidhour Quality Assurance Report on Audits Completed December 2019	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

In December 2019, a team of four auditors completed a total of 19 audits on cases open to the Children's Social Care and Early Help services. There were two external auditors and two from the City of London Corporation. The audits were completed from the information that was held on the electronic recording system called Mosaic. The completed audits were reviewed by the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Manager and the Assistant Director for People Services. The overall finding from these audits showed that there had been significant progress made regarding improved outcomes for children and families.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The auditing cycle on Children's Social Care and Early Help cases has recently been changed from bi-annual to a quarterly basis. When audits were completed bi-annually, all the cases open to the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service were audited within the year, half in May/June, and the others in October/November.
2. The auditing cycle has now moved to being conducted on a quarterly basis, with three audits being identified from three social workers within the team each quarter. In total, nine audits are completed each quarter. This means that, within a two-year period, all cases open to the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service would have been audited. There will also be more thematic audits being completed, which will support a more targeted approach to identifying specific areas of practice.

Current Position

3. The audits completed show that there has been evidence of improvements in practice that can be directly linked to the positive impact of the City of London Corporation's investment in the systemic approach within children's services, particularly in the quality of social work assessment and supervision. Case files that were audited demonstrated positive, child-focused, reflective practice and the testing of hypotheses, with good quality interaction and intervention across most cases. Supervision takes account of the recommendations of Looked After Child reviews, previous audits and individual plans helping to keep things on track. The audits also identified that processes are followed, and interventions are compliant with statutory and practice requirements.
4. Areas for improvement included a focus on developing skills in the planning of visits to ensure that they were always purposeful in gaining an understanding of children's and family's lives. It was also acknowledged that the Social Work team were still learning and implementing the skills they had learned from the systemic practice. However, it was also identified that it was good to see that practitioners had the opportunity to consult with advanced systemic practitioners.
5. Assessments were being completed within timescales and were appropriately shortened or extended depending on the child's circumstances. There was evidence that some assessments would have benefited from more consistent engagement from fathers. In regard to Early Help service, the report identified that Early Help practitioners provided an excellent level of service.

Conclusion

6. There is clear evidence of the positive impact of the City of London Corporation's investment in the systemic approach within children's services, particularly in the quality of social work assessment and supervision. Audited case files demonstrated a positive, child-focused, reflective practice and the testing of hypotheses in good quality interaction and intervention across most cases. Supervision takes account of the recommendations of Looked After Children reviews, previous audits and individual plans, which is helping to keep intervention and planning on track.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City of London Corporation, Children's Service Case File Audits – Summary of Findings, December 2019

Background Papers

Quality Assurance Framework December 2020.

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