

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
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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

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