

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee – For Information	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: City of London, Quality Assurance of Care Providers, Annual Report 2024–25	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	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
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 is undertaken within an agreed framework involving commissioned external agencies and internal activity. The process seeks to elicit feedback from children, young people and families who directly experience our services, as well as multi-agency partners, allocated workers, and line managers.

This integrated approach enables the triangulation of information, experience, expectations, and perceptions of outcomes. It also enables service development plans to be made, and actions taken to resolve any barriers or blockages to service improvement.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. 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 our learning and development process must also be continuous.
2. This year we have established a process for robust scrutiny of our independently commissioning accommodation and care arrangements. This involves in-person visits by Senior Leaders to care providers, meeting with children and young people and hearing their views. Alongside regular Commissioning Review meetings which focus on compliance and also on quality of care, knowledge of individual young people and their needs, and responses to safeguarding concerns.

Current Position

3. During the last year, we have undertaken six in-person visits to care providers across the country. These care providers are supporting approximately 22 children and young people from the City of London, which is 39% of the children in care and care leavers who we support.
4. Recognising that children with additional needs have specific vulnerabilities and often require a high level of skilled care, we have chosen to ensure that the children in care who have an Education, Health, and Care Plan are visited as part of this work. Given the specific needs of these children, they are often living at some distance from their family homes, which could lead to them being more isolated from their families and services.
5. The Quality Assurance visits have brought senior leaders closer to the daily experience of children in care and care leavers. The process has provided opportunities to make direct improvements to the lives of children and young people as well as service-level changes which support ongoing improvement. Children and young people also have direct access to senior leaders during these visits. They are also able to share direct feedback that they otherwise might not have the opportunity to do.
6. In general, visits have reinforced the strength of the provision and the benefits this has for our children and young people, providing them with bespoke support that meets their individual needs and recognises their unique talents and interests.
7. These visits have been supported by consistent Commissioning Review Meetings with Care Providers. These meetings focus on the outcomes of the children and young people living with the care provider. The meetings give them an

opportunity to share their knowledge of the children and young people they support, any concerns they have, and also to celebrate their successes. Attendance from the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance means that feedback from practice reviews, the Children in Care Council, and quality assurance visits can inform this discussion.

Options

8. Senior Leader Quality Assurance Visits and Commissioning Review Meetings will continue, as it is felt that they have added value and provide robust scrutiny of commissioned services. While we had originally envisaged monthly visits, this was not practical or achievable in terms of coordinating diaries between senior managers and care providers. Given the number of children and young people, we do not use a large range of care providers. However, on reflection, six visits within the year has felt proportionate and reasonable.

Proposals

9. The above arrangements continue with support from the Commissioning Service and the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service.

Key Data

10. There is no data related to this report.

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. Senior Leaders have appreciated the opportunity to be more closely connected to the experiences of our children in care and care leavers. Care providers have been supportive of the visits and recommendations made.
13. The visits have fed into the Commissioning Review, and meetings have informed further visits, leading to a joined-up approach that provides a holistic overview of the care and accommodation provided to our children and young people. This is triangulated with feedback directly from children and young people and their social workers. It demonstrates to care providers that there are robust processes in place to test the services being delivered.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Quality Assurance of Care Providers Annual Report 2024-25

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