

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee – For Information	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: City of London, Children’s Services Practice and Impact Review Summary, Aidhour Scrutiny September 2024 – February 2025	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?	N/A
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. We continue to use the services of independent practice reviewers to ensure that there is robust challenge and an independent lens on the quality of internal practice and the outcomes for our children and young people.
3. This year we have moved from a model of undertaking a batch of practice reviews every six months to a couple of reviews each month. This ensures that work being reviewed is current and recommendations can be made in real time.

Current Position

4. During the six months from September 2024 to February 2025, Aidhour conducted eight Practice and Impact Reviews, and two have been completed by City of London staff – an Independent Reviewing Officer and the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance respectively.
5. Social Work Practice was judged to be Good (20%) or Outstanding (80%) in all 10 reviews. This led to outcomes for children and young people being rated as Outstanding in two-thirds (6/10) and good for 20% (2/10); while 20% (2/10) were graded as Requires Improvement, despite the best efforts of the social work team.
6. No alerts or areas of significant concern were identified in the 10 reviews.
7. A revised template has been developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the social work practice and how this impacts on outcomes for the child, young person and their family. In keeping with Ofsted criteria and best practice, attention is also paid to the contribution from partner agencies and how well the network collaborated to improve outcomes for children. Emphasis is also placed on anti-racist practice and the need to assess the impact of issues arising from identity, diversity, and intersectionality in the Social GRACES (gender, race, age, class, culture, employment status, education, sexual orientation, spirituality).
8. Practitioners and managers welcomed and constructively engaged in reflection and the evaluation of their practice and the outcomes they had achieved. An emphasis is made on a transparent audit process including direct conversations with practitioners, their managers, and users of the services about their experience of service delivery.

9. A moderation process has been embedded which involves the practice reviews initially being commented on by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. A moderation meeting is then held with the Independent Reviewer, Assistant Director for People, Head of Children's Social Care and Early Help and the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. This meeting is to agree gradings and evidence provided, and the recommendations made.

Options

10. The Quality Assurance Framework and model of independently completed practice reviews, alongside some internal reviews will continue. The process feels well embedded and is supporting the continuation of strong social work practice and positive outcomes for children and young people. It enables us to accurately assess our operational practice and makes changes to strengthen this where needed.

Proposals

11. The above arrangements continue with support from the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service and Commissioned Services.

Key Data

12. There is no data related to this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. 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

14. Social workers, managers, and children, young people and families have welcomed being more involved in the practice review process. The triangulation of their feedback alongside the independent scrutiny of the work has provided rich and valuable feedback about service delivery, which translates into action as required (see Appendix 1 for more detail).
15. The practice reviews provide strong quality assurance of the services being delivered and the impact and outcomes for children and young people, which are generally of a high standard.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Aidhour Scrutiny Report September 2024 – February 2025

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