

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Safeguarding Sub Committee	07/06/2017
<b>Subject:</b> Quality Assurance on Child in Need (CIN) Cases	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
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### Summary

In April 2017, thematic audits were completed on all Children in Need (CIN) cases open to the Children and Families Team. In total, 24 cases were audited. The key focuses of the audits were whether the "Thresholds of Needs" were being appropriately applied to new referrals and cases either stepping up or stepping down into CIN. Other areas covered included care planning for children and the timeliness of plans and meetings.

The audits identified that thresholds were being applied appropriately and that there was evidence on the Children's Services electronic recording system, Frameworki, as to why the cases met the threshold for CIN. Statutory timescales were being met for CIN visits and CIN review meetings, and those cases deemed as being CIN had a plan in place. In some cases, the child and family's desired outcome was not clear, which was seen as an area for further development. Overall, the casework was to a good standard and, in some instances, outstanding.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

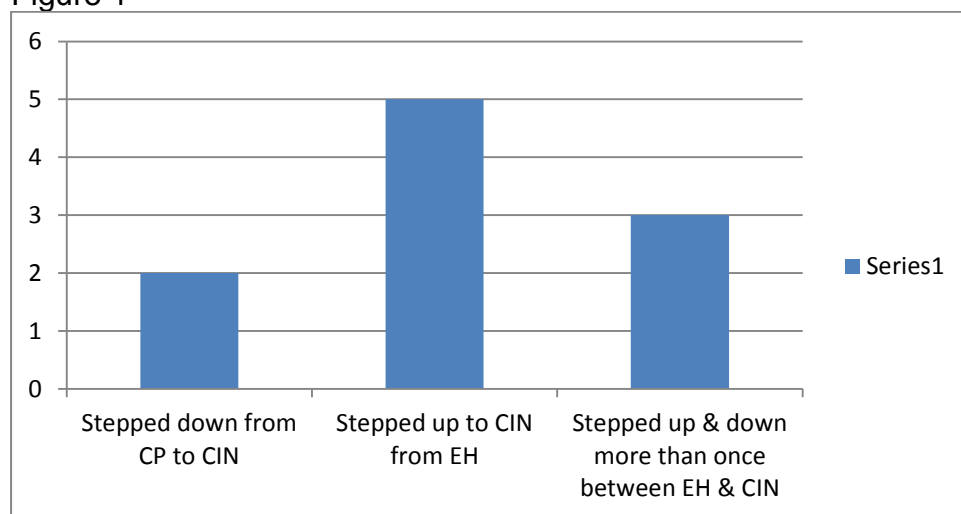
### Background

1. Thematic audits are completed as part of the Quality Assurance Framework. Children in Need (CIN) audits were carried out in April 2017 to ascertain the following information:
  - Thresholds into services are being applied appropriately when a child is referred to the Children and Families team.
  - When cases step down from being child protection or step up from Early Help, thresholds for services correspond with the “Thresholds of Need” Document.
  - Children who are CIN have a plan that is outcome focused, timely and achievable.
  - CIN plans are reviewed within the recommended timescales given in the “Practice Standards”.
  - A review of the progress made with the families within CIN plans was analysed to establish whether there are potential areas of drift.
  - All CIN cases have a Child and Family Assessment that identifies the needs of the child.
  - Children are being seen in accordance with requirements set out in the “Practice Standards”.

### Current Position

2. Of the 24 cases audited, 10 were stepped up or down between Early Help, CIN and Child Protection. Figure 1 shows the movement of the cases. Those cases that were stepped up or down evidenced that thresholds had been appropriately applied.

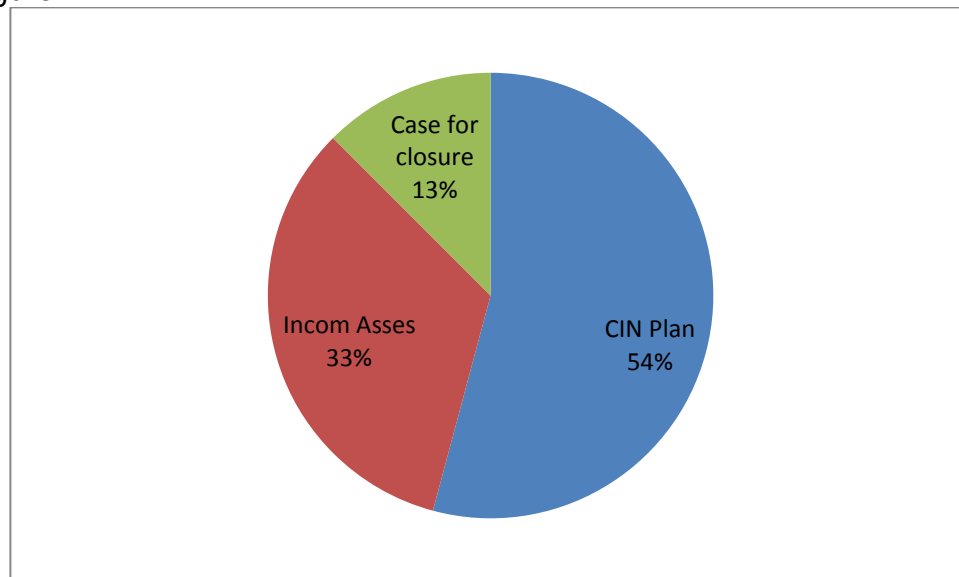
Figure 1



3. The rationale for the decision to step up or down the case was clearly outlined on the contact and referral form on Frameworki. Cases that were stepped up to CIN did not have a review of the plan until the Child and Family Assessment was completed. In some instances, this led to a delay in the CIN plan being implemented.

### Child in Need Plans

Figure 2



4. Of the 24 CIN cases reviewed, 11 cases had no CIN plan in place; Figure 2 shows the reasons for a plan not being in place. In total, 13 cases had a CIN plan, and the remaining 11 had no plan. Of those cases, three were due for closure following the assessment, and the other eight still had the assessment in progress.
5. The audits identified the following strengths and areas for development:

### Strengths

- Thresholds to services are being met.
- There is an appropriate use of thresholds when stepping down cases from Child Protection or up from Early Help.
- There is evidence as to the rationale for the decision on the threshold on contact and referrals and Child and Family Assessments.
- Once commenced, CIN plans are being reviewed within timescales.
- The majority of CIN visits are taking place within timescales.
- There is evidence of management oversight on casework, which is reflective and detailed regarding risks and needs.
- Most cases show good evidence of multi-agency working within the CIN plans.
- Recently completed Child and Family Assessments show clear evidence that the children are CIN or require Early Help services.

## **Areas for Development**

6. When cases are stepped up to CIN, there can be a delay in a plan being progressed while the assessment is being completed. It has been agreed that while the assessment is ongoing, professionals will continue with the plan that was previously in place, and if professionals have any concerns they will alert the child's social worker.
7. A further issue is that some plans are not outcome focused, which in part is not enabled through the format of the plans. It has been agreed that the format will be reviewed and work will be undertaken with the team on outcome-focused planning.

## **Conclusion**

8. The CIN audits showed that the "Thresholds of Need" document was being used appropriately and cases were being supported at the right level. Plans were being reviewed within the recommended timescales and children and young people were being seen and spoken to about their views. Overall, the work being undertaken was to a good standard, and in some instances was outstanding.
9. The theme identified around plans not always being outcome focused was not improved by the forms being used on Frameworki, the electronic recording system. This was due to the amount of commentary required on the plans, which often detracted from the purpose of the plan. In conjunction with training the Children and Families team to develop outcome-focused plans, the plan format will be reviewed.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – City of London Corporation, "Thresholds of Need Document"

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