

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	QUALITY ASSURANCE
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	26 JANUARY 2023
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	HEAD OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
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**STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

Appendix 4 attached to this report is confidential. This is based on Category 2 of paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules. It is not in the public interest to disclose this because it is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

**BRIEF SUMMARY**

Effective quality assurance assists the Council to deliver an efficient and effective service. It helps to improve our understanding of whether we are supporting the right children, in the right way, at the right time and whether we are making progress that achieves improved outcomes.

The recent Ofsted focused visit identified that the quality of audits and of how effectively they, and the wider quality assurance framework, are used to understand and improve the quality and impact of practice with children and their families was an area for improvement. This has also been raised by the Panel at previous meetings when reviewing the performance report where concerns have been expressed that learning from audit activity was not being embedded into social work practice.

Reflecting the issues above this report introduces:

- The Southampton Children and Learning Service Quality Assurance Framework
- The audit programme and findings
- An outline of how the quality of practice is being improved
- The service's annual performance analysis
- The next steps for quality assurance and practice development.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

	(i)	That the Panel note and consider the quality assurance update provided by the service.
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**REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.	To enable the Panel to have oversight of the quality assurance arrangements in place across Children and Learning Services.
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<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>	
2.	Not applicable
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>	
3.	Southampton Children and Learning has a well-established quality assurance framework, which is reviewed annually when the new year's audit schedule is drafted. Previously, the framework has been reviewed by the service's Partner in Practice and a Department for Education performance advisor. The draft audit programme is included in the Quality Assurance Framework attached as Appendix 1. This will be the basis of a focused discussion around quality assurance in practice manager workshops in February, with the intention of fully embedding audit and learning loop activity.
4.	A summary of the service's annual audit report has been shared with the Panel as Appendix 2. Although audit activity is extensive across the service it was for the most part led by the Quality Assurance Unit in 2022 and the evidence of impact for individual children and for services as a whole is not robust. This was reflected in the feedback following the Ofsted focused visit.
5.	After the inspection the updated audit framework was shared with managers in our Learning and Improvement Forum (LIF) and the presentation that was delivered is attached as Appendix 3. Management audits were launched in January 2023.
6.	The Panel has asked for examples of how practice is improving as a result of the implementation of the practice framework and how the service is responding to learning from audits. Attached as Appendix 4 is a report of the Principal Social Worker that outlines how, through the Quality Assurance Framework and the Making the Difference Practice Framework, improving outcomes can be evidenced.
7.	The Principal Social Worker and Head of Quality Assurance will be in attendance at the meeting and will deliver a brief presentation summarising the key issues referenced above and key findings from recent audits, including multi-agency audits of Section 47 enquiries and Domestic Abuse.
8.	Regarding next steps, the quality assurance activity set out in the documents shared with the Panel will inform the evidence provided to the service's Improvement Board and will be used to test out traction against the improvement plan. The service has acknowledged Ofsted's findings in November 2022 and leaders were able to show the inspectorate that they knew what needed to improve. In addition to the launch of the new audit programme and engaging with practice managers (set out above), the service's progress in embedding the practice framework will be verified by Plymouth University through a research project in Summer 2023.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Capital/Revenue</u></b>	
9.	The Workforce Academy budget is focused on improving practice and is a component of the service's overall budget.
<b><u>Property/Other</u></b>	
10.	N/A
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	

<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>	
11.	Children Act 1989
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>	
12.	N/A
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	
13.	Oversight is provided by the Improvement Board
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>	
14.	The 2022-2030 Corporate Plan includes, as one of its four goals, strong foundations for life where people are able to access and maximise opportunities to truly thrive, Southampton will focus on ensuring residents of all ages and backgrounds have strong foundations for life.  By delivering consistently good outcomes for the city's children and young people, Southampton's Children's Services and Learning Department will contribute to achieving this objective.

<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	No
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	All
<b><u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u></b>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
1.	Quality Assurance Framework
2.	Summary – Service Area Annual Audit Report
3.	Audit briefing – Managers Learning and Improvement Forum
4.	Confidential – Report of the Principal Social Worker

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

1.	None
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**Equality Impact Assessment**

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	No
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**Data Protection Impact Assessment**

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	No
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**Other Background documents available for inspection at:**

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None