

PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST

Quality Assurance Framework Children's Services 2019 – 2021



Thank you to the fabulous children of Lincolnshire who have provided the fantastic pictures above.

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Introduction and Purpose

The Council's internal audit function is provided by an in house team which operates as part of Assurance Lincolnshire – a partnership between Lincolnshire County Council, City of Lincoln and East Lindsey District Council. This collaborative approach enables deployment of resources where required and provides additional or specialist auditing services when needed. Assurance Lincolnshire's Quality Assurance Framework is designed to promote continuous improvement through four stages:

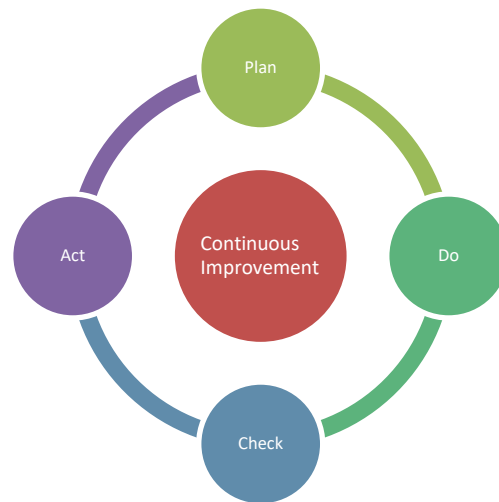


Diagram 1 – Four Stages of Improvement

In Lincolnshire we have high aspirations and a clear shared vision that puts children first. To do this we will work together with families to enhance children's present and future lives.

Children's Services Vision

**PUTTING
CHILDREN
FIRST**

Everyone Working Together for all Children, Young people & Families to be Happy, Healthy, Safe and the BEST they can be.

We want all children in every part of the county to be safe, well and thriving and to ultimately achieve their potential.

We recognise that we can only achieve our vision through effective partnership with families and across agencies, including schools, and a wide variety of voluntary and community sector partners, placing family's needs at the center of everything we do. In Lincolnshire we are proud of our strong track record of improvement and we believe that this success is because we recognise the critical importance of early intervention, delivered through integrated services which ensure that families can receive support at an early stage within their locality.

In Lincolnshire the services that we deliver with our partners are guided by a set of common principles that are informed by Signs of Safety, Lincolnshire's overarching practice model. This model is designed to help children, young people and their families participate, helping us to identify where there are strengths that we can build on. Signs of Safety looks at what's working well, what we are worried about and what needs to happen to ensure that all children, young people and families are happy, safe and well. Signs of Safety underpins all of the work we do.

Common Principles:

- Family and child centered and understood as a whole family
- Rooted in child development
- Listening to children and families and giving importance to what they say
- Building on strengths as well as identifying the difficulties
- Focused on actions and outcomes for children and families
- Focusing on building networks that families have in place, to support them to come to their solutions
- Understanding the families individuality, values, beliefs, spirituality and recognizes difference
- Open and honest communication about why we are involved, what we are worried about and what needs to happen
- The importance of Early Help – doing all we can to support families at the earliest point, to help keep children safe, happy and well
- Identifying the right support and agencies for families and working in a multi-agency forum

Further to this we have committed to four strategic outcomes for children and young people:

- Children and young people are **Healthy and Safe**
- Develop to their potential in their early years and are **Ready for School**
- **Learn and Achieve**
- Children and young people are **Ready for Adult Life**



Children's Services is committed to excellence and provides *Good* services to children, young people and their families. The Ofsted inspection in 2014 conducted under the single inspection framework acknowledged that we are a *learning authority* and as a learning authority we recognise that attaining and maintaining the quality of our services necessitates a commitment to continuous improvement.

Ultimately the purpose of the Children's Services Quality Assurance Framework is to ensure that children, young people and families are achieving their potential through excellent service and practice. To achieve this the framework will refer to Assurance Lincolnshire's four stages (diagram 1) to ensure that:

- Performance against required standards and agreed targets is measured and monitored
- Areas of both strength and improvement are identified to facilitate continuous improvement
- A whole system approach is adopted, that links individual supervision, training and planning to the findings of quality assurance activity
- Staff understand their quality assurance roles and responsibilities and that everyone has a role to play in improving quality
- A robust feedback cycle which drives a learning culture where problems are addressed openly and honestly is embedded throughout the directorate.



To be effective the Quality Assurance Framework will be underpinned by:

- Clear arrangements for monitoring quality assurance activity
- An ownership and understanding of roles by all staff at all levels in relation to quality assurance across the directorate
- Effective and accurate performance information
- A clear child centered and impact focused aim at improving services and outcomes for children and families
- A restorative approach – quality assurance activity will be more focused on working with staff and managers and building relationships
- The use of appreciative inquiry and looking to build on strengths
- Regular reporting and analysis of comprehensive and reliable performance data.

Performance and Quality Assurance – The Link

Like with quality assurance, performance assurance is everyone's responsibility with all staff having a role to play. All staff across the directorate are responsible for the quality of their own work and their individual performance. Managers have an additional responsibility to monitor and address performance within their service area or team and with individual staff members where necessary. Effective use of data and performance indicators is an essential element of beginning to understand the quality of practice and services provided however in addition to this effective quality assurance systems need to be in place to determine the story behind the data. All managers will be equipped with the skills, knowledge and tools to access, understand, interpret and use performance information. Robust analysis of accurate performance information will assist with quality assurance activity.

Real-time performance reports are delivered through a self-service portal and a comprehensive monthly report is produced which is then circulated to all senior managers. These performance reports assist managers with:

- Maintaining, developing and improving services
- Understanding the direction of travel and evaluating the impact of activities
- Identifying themes, current issues and potential issues so that early action can be taken
- Holding services, teams and individuals to account for their contribution to improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

Quality Assurance – The Approach

In Lincolnshire we understand that quality services and practice first requires effective leadership and is then best achieved when all staff at all levels across the local authority and partner agencies recognise that they have a shared responsibility for quality assurance.

Individual Responsibility

Children's Services staff should strive to ensure that their practice is:

- Safe
- Effective
- Child and Family Centered
- Timely
- Efficient
- Equitable
- Responsive and Caring



To support this, staff are required to ensure that all work is undertaken in line with internal policy, procedure, standards and expectation and as a result in line with external standards, policy and legislation. In addition staff are also required to take individual responsibility for ensuring that

professional registrations and standards (for example Health Care Professions Council and Knowledge and Skills Statement) in relation to their role are met. To assist staff in feeling confident in their role a thorough and robust induction training package is available for all staff. Staff are then provided with ongoing training and development opportunities and support through regular supervision.

Quality Principles

Quality can be defined as the degree of excellence provided, or the degree of worth derived from a service by our children, young people and families. To help ensure that children, young people and families receive worthwhile intervention and services, together with an excellent experience, our approach to quality will be guided by the following 9 principles:

	Principle	We will...
1	Service users are best placed to determine what constitutes a quality outcome	As part of service improvement and development ask service users about their experiences and the quality of those experiences
2	Quality can always be improved	Continue to maintain a Children's Services Improvement Plan that tracks recommendations and actions that are the result of internal or external quality reviews
3	Everyone has a role to play in improving quality	Ensure staff are aware of how they contribute to the overall quality of services delivered
4	All staff must be flexible in meeting the changing needs and choices of Children, young People and Parents	Ensure policies and procedures are understood to enable flexibility in meeting changing needs
5	Quality outcomes and continuous improvements in services are most likely to occur when there is skilled, enthusiastic, supported and resourceful staff.	Ensure that learning and development is an integral part of the QA process ensuring areas for development are highlighted and addressed
6	Developing service standards with children, parents and staff will make our offer clear and easy to evaluate	Consult with children, parents and staff when developing service standards
7	Comprehensive policies and procedures will be in place so staff can see what they have to do in order to meet standards	Produce, implement and review policies and procedures that clearly state how standards will be achieved
8	Findings, feedback and recommendations from a wide range of approaches to quality assurance will inform our workforce development programme	Ensure that learning and development is an integral part of the Quality Assurance process ensuring areas for development are highlighted and addressed
9	We will celebrate and share our successes when we get things right	Communicate areas of good practice

Table 1 - Principles

Quality Standards

All areas across Children's Services, when auditing or undertaking any quality assurance activity, should consider the following 7 quality standards. Ensuring that these standards are constantly being considered and/or addressed (where applicable) will help to ensure that children, young people and families receive the best service and experience which in turn facilitates improved outcomes for them.



Standard 1 – Safeguarding

Children's Services staff will:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people who access its services.
- Ensure all children and young people are made aware of their right to be safe from harm.
- Be aware of their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding & protecting children in line with statutory guidance.
- Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) cleared in line with LCC policy and procedure.
- Have a knowledge and understanding of the Signs of Safety approach. Where applicable staff will use the approach and will be able to provide evidence of its use across all processes.

Standard 2 – Stakeholder Engagement

Children's Services staff will:

- Endeavor to ensure that all children and families views, wishes and feelings are determined, respected and remain the core of all service provision.
- Ensure the views of children and young people are considered in the design, development and delivery of services.
- Provide feedback to children and families of the outcomes and results of their views, wishes and feelings.

- Ensure the needs of children and families are identified and assessed using the agreed processes at all stages.
- Ensure children and families rights are promoted.
- Build restorative relationships with the child and family that results in effective engagement and communication.
- Involve children and families and listen to their views when reflecting on our service delivery and utilize feedback to ensure continuous improvement.

Standard 3 – Staff (Valuing our Workforce)

Children's Services Managers will:

- Ensure that all work with children and families is managed and supervised by appropriately trained and qualified staff to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Undertake supervision regularly and in line with policy and ensure that outcomes and decisions are recorded.
- Undertake an annual appraisal will staff which is reviewed at the 6 month stage.
- Maximize opportunities for shared training and workforce development policies and strategies.

Children's Services staff will:

- Take advantage of professional development opportunities.
- Take ownership of their continuous development.

Standard 4 – Partnerships

Children's Services staff will:

- Aim to work effectively with partners through; ongoing planning and evaluation events, sharing information and resources and through seeking and utilizing expertise to ensure positive and successful outcomes for children and families
- Ensure assessments, plans and reviews take account of the information and professional opinions provided by agencies that know children and families.
- Ensure services planned for children and families are holistic and use the resources of the wider network of partner agencies.
- Actively take steps (where appropriate) to resolve conflicts should they arise between agency partners.

Standard 5 – Best use of Resources (Value for Money)

Children's Services Senior Managers will:

- Aim to provide a high quality service that is efficient and cost effective in meeting identified needs of children, young people and families.
- Ensure children and families receive value for money through all aspects of the service they

receive.

- Invest in the services that matter most to service users that are proven to have the greatest impact and deliver the best outcomes.
- Work in partnership with statutory agencies and other authorities within the region to develop consistent approaches to value for money and ongoing efficiencies.
- Ensure active participation in working with service areas to identify value for money opportunities, based on good quality management information and a sufficient amount of challenge.
- Commission services that can demonstrate value for money based on a proven track record to deliver high quality outcomes.

Standard 6 – Equality & Diversity

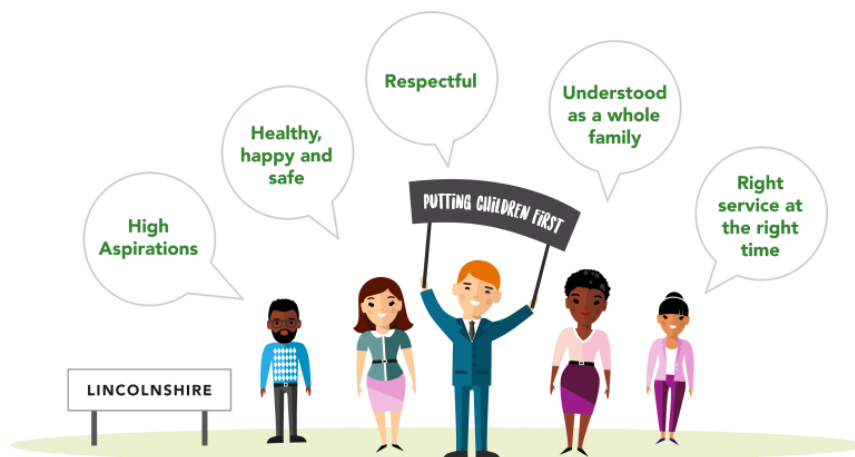
Children's Services staff will:

- Work collaboratively with all children and families to ensure they are treated with respect and dignity and that meeting their individual needs is integral to everything we do (in accordance with the Equality Act 2010).
- Challenge organisation culture and practices which contribute to discrimination and disadvantage.
- Challenge the impact of social disadvantage in neighborhoods, networks and communities.
- Ensure services and plans actively empower service users to address and overcome social exclusion.
- Ensure communication with children and families respects their language, religion, culture and identity.

Standard 7 – Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Children's Services Managers will:

- Utilise all feedback and information from children and families to ensure that concerns and complaints are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner to make improvements to services provided.
- Ensure all complaints will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Ensure information will only be shared with those parties involved in resolving the complaint. All children and families can expect that complaints made in reference to Children's Services will be treated in the strictest of confidence.
- Ensure that children and families will be informed of the outcome of their complaint.
- Celebrate compliments and ensure that they are shared to highlight things that work well and are used to inform continuous service improvements.



Quality Assurance Activity

A range of quality assurance methods are in place to assist staff in ensuring that we deliver high quality services to all children, young people and families and provide assurance to senior managers. Quality assurance activity can be broadly split into four areas of activity:

1. Quality assurance activity;
2. Additional quality assurance activity;
3. Multi-agency quality assurance;
4. Stakeholder engagement/feedback.

1. Quality assurance activity

The primary purpose of auditing is to ensure that all staff are working to the highest of standards to ensure that children, young people and their families receive the services and support required to achieve the best possible outcomes. The Children's Services Quality Audit Procedure sets out the audits that staff and teams across Children's Services are required to complete and to what frequency.

In addition to service area specific audits, quality assurance activity is also undertaken and coordinated by the Quality & Standards Team within Children's Services. The Quality & Standards Team manage two types of quality audit that supplements auditing undertaken in service areas:

- Themed Audits
 - o Themed audits will support the Practice Lead sessions to help develop practice and knowledge of the SoS model and practice.
- Collaborative Audits
 - o The collaborative audits will focus on evidence and impact for the child. It will check particularly the journey and experience of the child through services; that the rationale for decisions made on behalf of the child is evident; that the help offered is

planned and purposeful; and that improvement to the child's life has pace.
Supervision and managerial oversight will also be strengthened through this audit.

Ad hoc audits:

The theme and scope of these ad hoc audit is determined by the Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) and will be in response to specific areas of concern. These audits will be completed as a desk top exercise by the Quality and Standards Team. These audits are not completed on a regular basis and completed audit tools may not be saved to the case record on Mosaic, depending on the issue being addressed.

The Quality and Standards Team are responsible for coordinating and receiving completed ad hoc audits as well as undertaking the analysis, drawing of the conclusions and formulating recommendations for the DLT and the Quality Assurance Board to consider.

Audit Process

Selection of Cases for Audit:

Cases for audit will be selected by the Quality and Standards Team using information produced by the Performance Team. Selecting the cases in this way will ensure that cases are not subject to numerous audits which will avoid duplication. It will also enable the Quality and Standards Team to co-ordinate and manage a Children's Services audit programme effectively to ensure all staff are involved at some level.

Audit Tools:

A generic audit tool has been developed which can be used in most circumstances. If a specific tool is required the Quality and Standards Team will develop the tool and share with the specific audit. The tools all have the overall purpose of understanding the journey and experiences of the child, their voice, whether it is heard and the rationale for decisions made on behalf of the child. The auditor will be required to look at the last 6 months of involvement however auditors can look back further should they have an issue or concern that requires it.

Scaling and Escalation:

It is a requirement that all auditors scale the case they are auditing in line with the Ofsted grading as detailed within the audit tool itself. It is also expected that any auditor identifying a serious safeguarding issue or significant concern escalates the finding to the relevant Team Manager immediately.

Moderation:

Each month sample of the previous month's audits are moderated. The moderation group examines quality, analysis, themes, observations and any contributions to improved impact for

children. Moderation also supports learning, discussion and actions from the audit action plan. The Senior Leadership Team will also be involved in moderation.

NB. All open cases require at least one audit to be completed in a 12 month period (calendar year). Where a case has not been selected for audit under one of the audits above within the 12 month period Team Managers must ensure that the case receives an audit.

Further information can be found in the Quality Audit Procedure.

Action Plans

Actions will be formulated based on agreed (by Quality Assurance Board) recommendations and will be monitored, tracked and updated through the audit action plan.

2. Additional Audit Activity

In addition to the audit activity set out above further quality assurance activity is conducted.

Learning Days:

Learning Day's will provide the opportunity for staff engagement between teams and senior managers. These days will provide a platform for both issues and ideas to be explored with a view to advance and improve practice. Learning Days will be undertaken in a restorative manner and will provide an opportunity for reflective learning.

The Quality and Standards Team will develop a 12 month schedule for the Learning days and they will be undertaken on a regular basis with the main objective of each day to provide a dedicated reflective learning opportunity for the team.

Service Area Specific Quality Assurance Activity:

The Framework acknowledges that individual service areas will also undertake additional quality assurance and audit activity to that within this framework. This activity remains vitally important and to guarantee that it contributes to Children's Services continuous improvement journey it is important that findings are fed back into the Quality and Standards Team. A template has been developed for this reason, which Service Managers will complete on a quarterly basis and return to the Quality and Standards Team. The information submitted will then be collated and presented to the Quality Assurance Board.

Practice Observations:

In addition, the supervision policy requires all frontline staff to be observed twice a year by their line manager. Co-ordination of practice observation will be at team level, with notifications sent to the Q&S Team to ensure that by the end of the 12 month period all workers have completed two. Managers will provide the Q&S Team with highlights of learning needs identified through their practice observations each quarter which will feed into the on-going learning and development programme, either delivered by the Learning and Development Team or the Practice Advisors.

Commissioned Services:

A number of services for children, young people and families are commissioned by LCC. All commissioned services will have in place a contract to which they are required to adhere to. Part of this contract will be focused on performance and quality assurance and issues in relation to these elements should be identified and addressed through standard contract monitoring processes. Where there is a concern over the quality of a commissioned service the Quality and Standards Team can work with the service (with their agreement) to develop a bespoke piece of quality assurance activity to investigate the concerns further. The Quality and Standards Team will work with the service and the contract manager throughout this process. Once the activity has ended the team will produce a report which will be presented to the Quality Assurance Board who will then determine the next steps.

Children's Health:

It is acknowledged that Children's Health staff currently only have read only access to Mosaic and record case information onto a separate system, SystemOne. Due to the use of an alternative system, audit tools used to audit Children's Health cases differ as the generic Mosaic audit tool is not compatible. Despite the need to use an alternative tool, teams within Children's Health are still required to undertake the audits mentioned above. Audits should be completed using the appropriate Children's Health audit tool which will then be shared as detailed in the table above. The Quality and Standards Team will then dip sample a number of the audited Children's Health cases, that are also open on Mosaic, and complete the generic Mosaic audit tool. Findings from this piece of work will be reviewed by the Children's Health Clinical Quality Group who will hold the responsibility for identifying lessons learned and monitoring action plans. Summary and progress reports will be presented to the Quality Assurance Board. Information will also be shared with the Clinical Governance Board where appropriate. Additional annual record keeping audits will also be undertaken to demonstrate compliance with the professional standards of practice required by the registrant body, The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) using a suitable tool. <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/>

Youth Offending Service (YOS) / Futures4Me (F4M) :

It is also acknowledged that YOS and F4M will have dual recording case management systems (Mosaic and ChildsView) with additional auditing schedules and responsibilities under the HMIP framework. As such a separate Quality Assurance Framework has been developed for 2019/20 and can be accessed by contacting the F4M Management Team on:

Future4MeManagement@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Team Around the Child (TAC)

The TAC Quality Assurance process is collaborative in nature in order to best establish outcomes being achieved for the child, young person and family. The Early Help Consultant will meet with the Lead Professional and ask best questions regarding identification of need, quality of assessment and planning, and success achieved. They will consider evidence provided and scale effectiveness within each area of the framework. This is a learning process, and the LP will complete an improvement plan following guidance given during the QA process. The TAC Quality Assurance Framework can be accessed by contacting TAC Admin on:

TACAdmin@lincolnshire.gov.uk

3. Multi Agency Audit – Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership



The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCP) has an annual audit programme which is agreed by the partnership and undertaken on a multi-agency basis. Children's Services are part of this partnership and participate in multi-agency audits co-ordinated by the LSCP. Children's Services involvement in multi-agency audits will be managed by the Quality and Standards Team. The team will also liaise with the LSCP when scheduling themed audits for the next 12 month period.

The findings of each audit are collated by the LSCP and presented to the audit's task and finish group for quality assurance purposes. Quality assured audit reports, which will include recommendations, will then be presented to the LSCP's Strategic Management Group (SMG).

Audit reports will include a set of concise and appropriate recommendations that focus on those that will really make a difference to single or inter-agency practice. All final and approved audit reports will be published on the LSCP website.

Multi-agency audit reports once published will be presented to the Children's Service Quality Assurance Board for information and learning purposes. Any recommendations for Children's Services will be discussed at the meeting and tracked through the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

The Quality and Standards Team will also liaise with the Lincolnshire Adults Safeguarding Board when determining the audit programme for the coming year.

4. Stakeholder Feedback

Gaining feedback from children, young people, families and carers is an essential part of the quality assurance process as it is central to understanding the subjective experiences of those accessing services. It is equally important that those working for Children's Services have the opportunity to feedback on how we deliver services to individuals, working conditions and policy and processes that we expect staff to adhere to, to help us improve the quality of what we deliver in the future.

Feedback can be obtained in a number of ways and does not always have to be formally requested. Feedback can be found in:

- Assessments
- Plans
- Visit records
- Supervision records
- Case notes
- Complaints, comments & compliment logs

There is an expectation that every child, young person, family and carer who comes into contact with Children's Services is provided with the opportunity to express their views.

In addition to the feedback opportunities listed above. Specific pieces of work are also conducted to gain feedback from stakeholders, this includes:

- Quadrant events for staff
- Team meetings
- Development days
- Tell Us Survey for LAC

As with additional quality assurance and audit work carried out in service areas it is important that the key themes from any feedback are shared with the Quality and Standards Team so that these can be shared and addressed where appropriate. To ensure that this feedback is captured, the template that has been developed for capturing additional quality assurance activity by each service area and also includes a section for reporting on stakeholder feedback.

Participation Team:

It's easy to make assumptions about what children, young people and families think and feel, but we need to listen carefully and take their views seriously. Participation is about ensuring that children, young people and families are given opportunities to be involved in decision making processes on issues which affect them. It is not simply about seeking the views of children, young people and families, but acting on them as part of developing and improving services.



The Participation Team focuses its work in the following six areas, all of which will feed into service improvement:

Strategic oversight - work across Children's Services to develop a common approach to participation.

Develop engagement of Looked After Children - work with other teams to increase the number of Looked After Children actively sharing their views through:

- involvement in V4C
- contributing to their Review
- completing the Tell Us survey
- meetings with their Social Worker



Analysis of CYPF feedback to identify themes and trends - too often feedback is not looked at in depth. Children, young people and families feedback will be analysed to identify themes and trends in different service areas and across localities.

Training and support on developing participation practice - deliver a standard participation training package to all front-line staff to ensure a common understanding and approach.

Help with design of feedback systems - help teams to develop systems which help to ensure that they are asking both the questions they need answers to, and the questions children, young people and families want to answer. Feedback will be standardised where possible to allow useful analysis of feedback across teams, localities and Children's Services.

Collating and sharing good practice - work in partnership with the Stakeholder Engagement Group to collate and share good practice. This will help to ensure the ongoing development of participation practice across Children's Services.



The Young Inspectors Programme:

At the heart of Children's Services are children, young people and families. The young inspectors programme aims to support young people from hard to reach and underrepresented groups to participate in volunteer opportunities increasing their self-esteem and self-confidence leading to improved life chances and is a well-established part of the Quality Assurance Framework.

Lincolnshire Young Inspectors has a very clear remit to quality assure services which are accessed by other children and young people. Making recommendations for improvement and change and providing positive feedback where a service or project delivers a quality provision. Young people are uniquely placed to take on this role, providing an independent perspective which could not be gained through an adult evaluation.

- Involving Young Inspectors can:
- Lead to improvement in standards in service design and delivery
- Identify previously unknown barriers to participation
- Increase uptake and participation in services by those children and young people who have previously not engaged

Moving forwards the programme for the Young Inspectors should be drawn up in conjunction with the plan for audits across Children's Services so that where possible and with the correct planning, the Young Inspectors could undertake an inspection on the same theme as the monthly audits. This would provide a more holistic review of the service

[Link to External Quality Assurance](#)



Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)

As a regulatory requirement, Lincolnshire County Council hosts a series of announced and unannounced inspections led by Ofsted. Children's Services can be subjected to an inspection against a number of different Ofsted frameworks. Whilst some of these frameworks are specific to particular services area for example Children's Homes, some have a wider scope. The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) Framework can incorporate all elements of children's services. The aim of this particular framework is to ensure a culture of continuous improvement and high quality of service for children, young people and families. Inspection outcomes have a multi-purpose; informing parliament of national performance and quality standards, delivery of guidance for improvement to local authorities and to act as a review document for Ofsted in ensuring that all previous recommendations have been addressed.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)



From October 2015 commissioning for 0-5 health services transferred from NHS England to Local Authorities, joining up the whole 0-19 commissioning. Local Authorities (LA) are expected to ensure that the appropriate clinical governance arrangements are in place to support safe delivery of health services. Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) became both the commissioners and providers of Children's Health Services 0-19 in October 2017. In addition to this it is a requirement of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (regulated activities) and The Care Act 2014 that all care providers are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). As the regulator of health and social care in England, the CQC provides assurance that the care people receive meets the fundamental standards of quality and safety.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP)



HMIP are an independent inspectorate, funded by the Ministry of Justice and reporting directly to the Secretary of State for Justice. HMIP report on the effectiveness of work with adults and children and young people who have offended by inspecting the quality of services provided and the organisations who deliver them. Recommendations are then made to assist providers with the continuing improvement and effectiveness of services. All youth inspections consist of three domains. Domain one covers aspects of organisational delivery. Domains two and three look at the quality of post-court supervision and the quality of out-of-court disposals respectively.

In all cases of external inspection Children's Services are required to meet or evidence a set of specific standards or regulations. This Framework and the audit and quality assurance activity that sits within it will help ensure that the services provided by Children's Services meet a level of 'inspection readiness'.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

Comments, compliments and complaints are vital in helping to determine the quality of the services and practice provided to children, young people and families which when used in conjunction with other quality assurance methods. Comments and compliments direct to teams should be logged and fed back through the quarterly Quality Assurance update.

Formal and informal complaints can help identify recurring or underlying problems and potential improvements. Learning from complaints involves a four stage process.

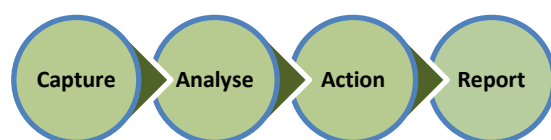


Diagram 3 – Four Stage Complaint Process

Capture – information about the complaint is recorded accurately

Analyse – the root cause of the complaint and any associated learning is identified

Action – action taken to resolve complaint and prevent future complaints

Report – promote the learning and improvements made

Complaints in relation to Children's Service, either its workforce or services, are collated and analysed quarterly. The information collated is presented to the Quality Assurance Group so that any outcomes, development work and learning can be shared and further disseminated where appropriate.

Learning and Development

To ensure that auditors have the right knowledge and skills to undertake audit and quality assurance work the Quality and Standards Team will initially undergo external training to maximise skills and knowledge in this area. The team will then provide training and guidance to staff that are required to undertake audits.

The Quality and Standards Team will also regularly attend training to maintain and develop their auditing knowledge and skills and will also attend other relevant training which will help enhance the audits that they complete i.e. Signs of Safety training.



Learning from Quality Assurance Activity

As a learning organisation that is committed to continuous learning we understand that it is imperative that learning from all quality assurance activity is captured, addressed, implemented and monitored. It is important that this learning is shared with the right people and used in a meaningful way which will contribute to improvements in service and practice leading to improved outcomes for children, young people and families.

Once final reports from quality assurance activity have been ratified by DLT the Learning and Development Officers within the Quality and Standards Team will work to explore potential arrangements for addressing the learning highlighted and supporting improvement.

In addition to learning captured form specific QA activity it is vitally important that other sources of information are considered when developing ways in which to improve practice. A whole system approach to QA and performance management is required to fully understand the learning and development needs of the service.



Diagram 4 – Whole System Approach

Once considered, improvement can be supported via a number of routes including:

- Increasing the volume of already existing face to face training opportunities
- Commissioning new and bespoke learning and development to meet needs or gaps highlighted
- Providing coaching and mentoring to individuals
- Development of new e-learning support packages
- Dissemination of information i.e through one minute briefings

Learning and development actions identified through quality assurance activity (including complaints) will be tracked and monitored through the Children's Services improvement plan.

Children's Services Improvement Plan

The Improvement plan, referred to throughout the framework, is the process in place to ensure that the learning from all quality assurance activity is logged, implemented as appropriate and monitored. The plan will be maintained by the Quality and Standards Team, updated on a quarterly basis and presented to DLT. The improvement plan will be discussed at the Quality Assurance Board to ensure that Service Managers are aware of actions and themes contained within the plan allowing them to share information with their teams.

Impact of Quality Assurance

Evidencing the impact of learning from audits is central to ensuring audits make a difference to children, young people and families. An annual survey will also be developed for Children's Services staff, to help evidence the effectiveness of the audit programme; dissemination and embedding of learning and improvement to practice across teams. To make sure the Framework is truly child and family centered and follows the journey of the child, the impact of the Framework will be judged on the following factors;

- Is quality assurance activity being carried out in partnership with service users and professionals?
- Are we continually seeking to improve performance and demonstrate the impact of help for children and their families in improving their outcomes?
- Are the findings from all quality assurance activity driving service improvement and creating better outcomes for our children and our workforce?

Quality Assurance Governance

The quality assurance reporting and governance structure has been established to ensure clear sign off of recommendations and actions that are a result of QA activity to promote continued learning across the directorate. The Quality Assurance Board will meet on a monthly basis and will be responsible for not only endorsing findings, recommendations and future development work but also for ensuring that information is disseminated effectively to teams and all staff within Children's Services. To ensure information is shared across Children's and Adults Services a representative from Adults will attend the Board and vice versa. In addition there will be a two way flow of information between the Quality Assurance Board and the Clinical Governance Board to help ensure that information is shared appropriately. The Clinical Governance Board is set up to ensure that appropriate and effective governance mechanisms, systems and processes are in place across the service for all aspects of quality and risk in relation to services that are commissioned or provided by Lincolnshire County Council that are CQC registered. The Children's and Adults Boards alongside the Clinical Governance Board will together provide assurance to the Corporate Management Board (CMB) in relation to; the quality assurance processes that are in place, their effectiveness, the impact on services and improvement and ultimately ensuring that people of Lincolnshire are receiving high quality services and good experiences when working with Lincolnshire County Council.

