

## **Children's Residential Care Quality Assurance Framework**

### **The principles**

Gateshead Children's Residential Care understand the importance of good and clear communication, the opportunity to learn and reflect and the importance of ensuring robust measures are in place to review progress. It is essential that we know our collective and individual strengths and weaknesses and that we can provide clear evidence of improvements which are made over a sustained period.

We understand that to create a learning culture our high aspirations for the achievements made by the young people in our care, come true when we have high expectations of ourselves, our teams, and our partners.

Our Quality Assurance framework has been built on this vision.

### **Planning days**

It is our intention to hold a minimum of three planning days a year. This will enable all registered children's home managers, deputy homes managers, senior leaders, colleagues from our training department and the homes physiologists to come together in a planned and focused session.

The planning day will focus on the following:

- The national picture across residential care,
- Learning from local events,
- Review of our values and principles. Is our vision ambitious, our standards high enough and individualised to care for our young people now and in the future?
- Review of the supportive and training offer for staff.
- Work stream leads updates.
- Key service priorities and work streams.

Actions from the planning days will form part of the overall service plan for Children's Residential Care and the individual homes workforce strategies / plans.

The planning days will be recorded as part of people continuous professional development (CPD) and evidenced on everyone's training records. These sessions allow for creative thinking, problem solving, establishing a common set of principles and values across the residential estate and joint understanding of the 'bigger picture'.

### **Residential Children's Home Business Meetings**

These are short, sharp regular (at least monthly) business meetings which are clearly focused on the direct daily management and oversight of the homes. Linking the wider information from across the service to that of the homes and focusing on business matters relating to the homes. They will be chaired by the practice lead for the service and a rolling vice chair from the registered managers group and minute taker will be in place for each meeting. In attendance will be the registered managers and in any of their absence they will have nominated a deputy to attend in their place.

The business meeting will focus on the following:

- Communications and need to know information,
- System and processes across the homes,
- Staffing and recruitment,
- Young People and safeguarding,
- Partnerships / Community relations and assets,
- Actions and decisions,
- Learning from inspection / reg 44 and QA visits,
- Issue resolution items,

Actions from the business meeting will be recorded on an action log and will form the individual responsibility of the identified person to complete in the time scale given.

Agenda items for the business meeting must be shared 48 hours prior to the meeting being held and whilst there is always the opportunity for AOB items to be discussed these should be kept to a minimum.

### **Work Streams**

Work streams are time limited task and finish groups which will be created when specific work is identified across the residential estate as being needed and beneficial to all the homes. Using a workstream

approach will ensure we are, wherever practicable, that we are reducing duplication of work. Workstreams will be led by a registered manager on behalf of the whole management team. They will be supported, when needed by deputies from across the homes and others dependent upon what the work stream is. The workstream will report on progress either at the planning session or the business meeting dependent upon what the work stream is. Examples of a work stream might be 'implementation of mosaic' or 'review of children's homes policies'. Each workstream will have a named led, membership agreed, a set term of reference established, key milestones and timescales. The principle of the workstream is to keep it simple and achieve the completed task with the least amount of duplication.

### **Quality Assurance visits to the home**

This is a new approach for Gateshead which strengthens current regulatory activities such as the Reg 44 and 45 processes which are in place. It is our intention to undertake three full day QA visits to each home over a twelve-month period. The QA visit is multipurpose and used to support the manager as well as providing additional learning opportunities and time for reflection and development across the homes. Each QA visit will be announced and follow a similar schedule. The visit will be undertaken by the practice lead and a peer registered manager alongside the registered manager for that home and their deputies.

The format for the QA visit will include:

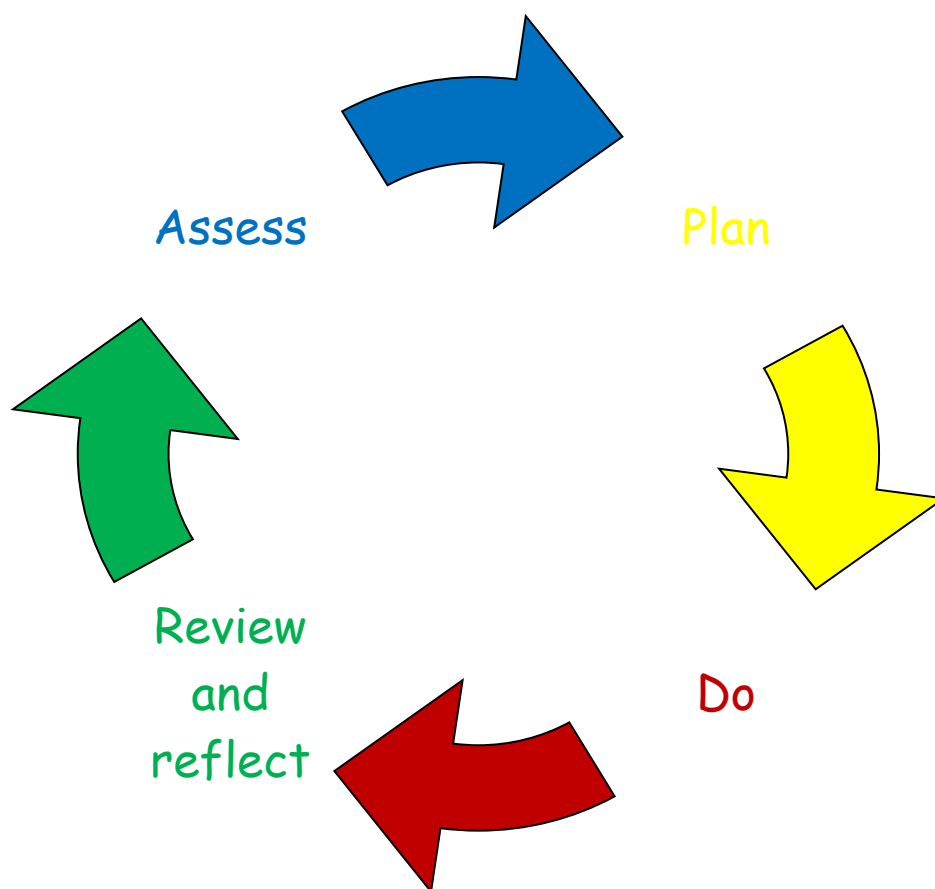
- Observation of the daily handover – which can be used to support staff feedback and the supervision / appraisal process,
- Review of the Annex A and supporting documentation,
- Review of the home's workforce plan, any response to recommendations from inspection or visits and training plan,
- Deep dive on at least two key lines of enquiry,
- Feedback from the staff team, the young people and their wider care team or parents / carers.

The QA visit is about providing high support and challenge through by using a reflective approach. This will support the manager to escalate issues, show case excellence and the things they are most proud of, provide peer learning opportunities, strengthen auditing skills and demonstrate progress made in relation to the plans for the children, the impact that living at the home has had on individual children and life chances.

There will be a report produced for each visit which will support the registered manager and their team in demonstrating progress but also in their analysis of the homes progress and next steps.

## Our overall approach to learning and quality assurance

Our approach is a simple one. We use a Assess, plan, do and review and reflect approach.



We **Assess** where we are, this is achieved using a range of tools, such as:

- Young people, their families, their carers, and the staff team views,
- Our views and analysis,
- Reg 44, 45, inspections and the SCIFF
- What's written down,
- What we observe,
- The conversations we have
- And anything else that helps us assess along the way

We **Plan** what we are going to do next based on our findings from our assessment. This plan is in the form of an updated workforce strategy / plan for the home and at times wider residential service using the overall quality assurance framework i.e. workstream, planning session, business meeting.

We **Do** what we said we would do in our plan. We decide what's urgent, what's important, what needs done in time and how we will know when we have achieved it. We also make sure we work in a SMART way so that everyone's collective knowledge, commitment and energy is focused on the right things at the right time. And if we get it wrong, we change and we learn, re-prioritising and re-focusing on what we need to do and by when.

We **Review and reflect**. As part of learning culture accountability, reflection and learning without blame go hand in hand, after all no one comes into this profession to do a bad job so high support and high challenge is key to us all achieving the very best outcomes for our young people and the next generation of young people. We use the review and reflection stage to look at our assessment: –

- did we assess the right things,
- did we do it in the best way,
- what would we do better next time

we review the planning stage:-

- did we carry out the right actions at the right time,
- was there anything we need to do so that people had the right conditions in place to deliver the plan,

we review the doing stage:

- did we seek the support and contributions of the right people to deliver the plan,
- did we get the balance right between focus on improvement and learning as we go,
- did we need to change anything and if so what have we learnt by doing this – what worked what did not work,

we review and reflect:

- did we get the governance and push factors right,
- did we achieve what we set out to achieve,
- what did we learn about ourselves along the way and what did we learn about others or the systems.

This quality assurance framework has been designed by the Gateshead Registered Managers and uses their collective knowledge and skills. We will adapt, change and develop our model to meet our needs but our commitment to being the very best version of ourselves will drive our aspirations for the very best for our young people all of the time and we hope this culture is felt and practiced across all of our teams.