

**Barnsley Metropolitan  
Borough Council  
Directorate for People**

**Children's Social Care and  
Safeguarding  
Quality Assurance Framework**

**2017**



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## 1 Definition

Quality assurance involves the systematic monitoring and evaluation of practice, policies, and procedures, with the aim of improving our services to achieve better outcomes for children and their families and developing an understanding of their needs.

Quality assurance is not an additional activity, but an integral part of everyday practice within Social Care. Primarily, it can help us ensure and evidence that children are being kept safe from harm and are protected. It helps improve outcomes for children and families we work with by identifying gaps and problems within practice and services offered, which can be addressed through service planning, training, and commissioning. Crucially, it also helps us identify what interventions work for children and families and highlight good practice. It also assists the service in ensuring staff are supported in carrying out their jobs both safely and effectively.

The framework supports the effective delivery of the Barnsley Continuous Service Improvement Framework and Plan. It includes:

- a monthly qualitative case audit process
- thematic practice reviews & deep dives
- briefings to senior managers, leaders and elected members
- quantitative performance management analysis and reporting process
- service user feedback initiatives.
- a supervision audit process
- direct observations of front line practice

## 2 Our approach to quality assurance will be:

- **child centred** – we will follow the journey of the child through our services and keep our ambitions for our children at the centre of everything we do.
- **outcome based** – we will continually seek to improve performance and demonstrate the impact of help for children and their families in improving their outcomes. It is not enough to carry out quality assurance activity; the findings from all activity will drive service improvement and create better outcomes for our clients and workforce.
- **fair** – we will take equality and diversity issues into account when developing and undertaking quality assurance activity. We will use the results to promote equality of access.
- **learning** – our quality assurance activity is for the purpose of organisational learning and improving our practice.
- **participative** – our quality assurance activity will be carried out in partnership with service users and professionals; from the newly qualified social workers to senior managers. Measuring quality is something done with, and by, service users and professionals, rather than an exercise done to them. Everybody has a responsibility to quality assurance and everyone's views and feedback will be incorporated into service improvement.
- **consultative** – we will use a consultative approach which will encourage an awareness of quality issues and ownership of the findings.

- **transparent** – we will deliver clear messages about the purpose of the quality assurance and how it benefits the organisation and individuals to encourage openness and willingness to participate.
- **ethical** – we will always endeavour to:
  - respect participants' privacy and confidentiality
  - extend and develop our knowledge
  - use public resources in the most effective way possible
  - use the findings to create change, which leads to improved outcomes.

### 3 National drivers

- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' HM Government 2015: 'in which a culture of audit is encouraged'.
- Guidance following the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004.
- Munro Review of Child Protection made the following recommendations for quality assurance:
  - more emphasis on the journey of the child and whether the children have been helped
  - less emphasis on performance measures
  - more value placed on the use of professional judgment and research to reach appropriate decisions – baselines should not use procedures and performance measures only
  - qualitative audits of actual practice in consultation with social workers rather than an audit of recording
  - local multi-agency systems need to be monitored – use of a whole-systems learning approach.
- Ofsted inspection of services. Audit methodology and process is derived from Ofsted frameworks. Publication of a new Ofsted framework is expected in October 2017 and audit will align where appropriate.
- Social Work England is due for launch in 2017. This body will be responsible for
  - Social work standards
  - a social work accountability framework`
  - workforce planning systems
  - support for the workforce to do their job effectively and maintain professional registration
  - systems to provide regular and appropriate supervision

The 'Social Work Health Check' will be used to measure progress against the standards.

A system of social work accreditation is currently in national development. Audit will be adapted in line with the accreditation framework and will be able to contribute to the endorsement process.

## 4 Local drivers

- Strategic plans:
  - Corporate Plan
  - Business Unit and Service Specific plans
  - Continuous Service Improvement Plan
  - Barnsley Council Practice Standards
  - Children and Young Peoples Plan
  - Barnsley LSCB Annual Report
  
- Self-evaluation and reviews:
  - Serious Case Reviews
  - Child Death Reviews
  - Multi Agency Audits
  - Independent Reviews
  - Internal Thematic and Case Specific audits

## 5 Learning, self-assessment and action planning

***Note: This should occur at each stage of the quality assurance process.***

The Children's Social Care Quality Assurance Framework and service action plan will be owned and monitored by the Service Director for Children's Social Care and Safeguarding and driven by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance and the Quality Assurance and Policy Officers.

It is imperative that learning from each quality assurance activity is shared with the right people and used meaningfully to change practice and improve outcomes for children, families, and employees. Learning should make evidenced links to the following areas:

- supervision
- training
- complaints and compliments
- workforce planning and development
- commissioning
- service plans and team plans
- BSCB and CYPP priorities and business plans.

There is a national expectation that the LSCB must lead and co-ordinate local learning and evidence the impact/difference learning from quality assurance has made to services provided to children and families across the partnership. Key learning points and themes from this framework will be reported to LSCB through the PAQA reporting arrangements.

The success of service delivery in Barnsley Social Care is measured by improving the outcomes for children and their families, achieving agreed targets and raising standards. It will need the commitment and support of all managers and their teams to ensure that quality assurance activity is embedded, with a clear feedback and remedial action process, and reported to the relevant bodies within specified timescales.

## **6 Reporting and communicating findings from quality assurance**

Monthly audit reports will pull together themes from audit and quality assurance activity. Findings and themes from quality assurance activity will be routinely communicated to all staff, from senior managers to frontline staff via the Social Care newsletter, performance management meetings, PAQA, email, team meetings and the social care forum. Themes from quality assurance will be incorporated within the BSCB annual report, available to the public.

Findings from consultations with service users will be communicated to service users, evidencing how the results from consultations have made an impact to services' improvement.

## **7 Governance**

Each aspect of the framework has a reporting line, ensuring that key reports are considered in a range of different contexts, such as the Children's Trust Executive Group (TED), Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Barnsley's Safeguarding Children Board and the Directorate for People Management Team meetings as appropriate.

Learning and action planning from the Quality Assurance Framework will link to the following activities.

1. Consultation and feedback from children, young people and their families
2. Learning from compliments and complaints
3. Learning from LSCB audits and Serious Case Reviews
4. Performance indicators and other management information
5. Independent Reviewing Officers' quality assurance activity
6. Independently commissioned audits
7. Continuous Service Improvement Plan

## **8 Review**

The framework will be reviewed and updated annually and signed off by the senior management team. It is proposed that the first review should be completed by the end of the given business year. It is recommended that the review process includes the following:

- Mapping of current quality assurance practice in the service, ie what is taking place and what is not against the proposed quality assurance schedule set out within this document.
- A consultation with social workers, team managers and the senior social care management team on the value of the current quality assurance processes in relation to how practice has been improved as a direct result; user-friendliness of the processes; drawbacks, barriers and limitations.

## 9 Quality assurance schedule

Quality assurance process	Description of process	Responsible officer/elected member(s)/panel	Frequency of quality assurance activity	Intended outcome	Reporting arrangements
Barnsley Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Meetings focus on various aspects of national and local activity affecting Barnsley residents. The programme does include safeguarding activity. Agendas will be determined by the committee according to the particular line of enquiry they feel should be followed.	DCS, SD  Lead Cabinet Member	Monthly meetings	Ensuring that elected members and political leaders have a comprehensive and robust knowledge about the local delivery of services and challenge accordingly	Reports to Cabinet
Barnsley Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Private Member Briefing - Children's Social Care	Regular attendance & presentation of CSC monthly performance report for scrutiny by elected members	SD	Monthly meetings	Ensuring that elected members and political leaders have a comprehensive and robust knowledge about CSC performance and challenge accordingly	Reports to Cabinet
DCS; SD, Lead Member and Support Member visits to front line services	DCS, SD and the Lead Member undertake separate visits to front line services in Children's Social Care and Safeguarding approximately every six weeks. This is particularly to teams that deliver a front line child protection service but also includes the LAC and fostering service. Visits include focus groups and shadowing visits. Each visit is written up including any actions for the service to follow up.	LM, DCS, SD	Six weekly	Ensuring that senior managers and political leaders have a comprehensive and robust knowledge about what is happening at the 'front line' and challenge accordingly	Reports outcomes to BSCB;TEG  Reports formally within the Annual Safeguarding & QA Performance Report

				To capture everyday issues, barriers and best practice in frontline social work practice by Senior Social Care Managers.	
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Lead Member Briefing	Lead Member attends the BSCB and TEG where they are presented with safeguarding and performance data. Additionally LMB and SD hold an additional monthly 1-1 meeting for clarification or challenge.	LM, DCS, SD	Monthly	Ensuring that senior managers and political leaders have a comprehensive and robust knowledge about what is happening at the 'front line' and challenge accordingly	Leader of the Council receive minutes of the meetings.  ED receives minutes of the 1-1 meetings.
DCS and SD visits to the children's homes	The DCS and SD each undertake separate visits to the Barnsley's children's homes throughout the year. In addition elected members volunteer to accompany twice yearly IROs twice yearly when they undertake the reg 33 inspection.	DCS; SD	Programme of visits planned throughout the year	Ensuring that senior managers meet regularly with children and young people who are looked after by the LA.  To observe the quality of care and relationships.  To capture everyday issues, barriers and best practice in frontline residential care.	Reports formally within the Annual Safeguarding & QA Performance Report.
Care4Us - Children in Care Council	The Children in Care Council has a key role in monitoring the progress Barnsley makes against the promises outlined for looked after children in the Pledge, and holds senior officers and elected members to account for delivery against the pledge.  The CiC Council is developed to ensure that it	LM, DCS and SD	Aspects of the Pledge are reviewed at each CiCC and Corporate Parenting Forum, in addition to an Annual Review of	To work in partnership with CIC in developing our services. Give children in care a voice and opportunity to shape the services they receive.  To contribute to ensuring the	Reports formally to: Corporate Parenting Group, Scrutiny and Full Council

	represents the wider CiC population including disabled children and children and young people placed out of authority.		entire Pledge  Quarterly Meetings	child's voice and experience are reflected in learning and improved practice	
Quality Assurance and Performance Meetings	Quality Assurance and Performance Meetings take place on a monthly basis. The aim is to interrogate the findings from the full spectrum of quantitative and qualitative quality assurance activity carried out across the division, with a particular focus on what difference quality assurance activity has made to improving outcomes and agreeing the focus of future quality assurance activity. Meetings are monthly for both Group A - CIN/CP/LAC and Group B - CIC/Fostering/Adoption and Residential.	HOS with SMs and TMs	Monthly Performance Meetings	Monitor outputs and discuss / analyse the story behind the data. Monitor and disseminate learning from quality assurance activity.	Reports to: SD/HOS/SM Management Team
Managers monthly case file audit and themed audits	Managers complete monthly qualitative audits in discussion with case holders, and where possible, children and young people and their families. Auditors include the HOS, SM and TM's. The total number that can be completed range between 18 and 25 cases. Monthly audits will focus on a theme, area or cohort in which all cases are randomly selected.  The auditing process utilises a standardised template for recording and is shared directly with the social worker/manager involved.  The audits are compiled into a report with an associated action plan. The report is discussed at the monthly auditor meeting where the plan is finalised. Progress against previous action plans is reported at the	Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance; HOS	Monthly	Evaluation of the outcomes for children and the impact of our practice and its effectiveness. Identify possible trends, gaps, and issues that warrant further analysis and action. Improve practice through experienced (non-line) management input into cases.	Reports formally to: Reports to: SD/HOS/SM Management Team Meeting; Monthly Performance Meetings; Reports formally within the Annual Safeguarding & QA Performance Report

	<p>monthly auditor meeting.</p> <p>Activity is independent of but aligned with the LSCB/PAQA, which the SD chairs. LSCB/PAQA are given the audit schedule, methodology and any multiagency actions are developed with PAQA. Full reports can be shared with PAQA with agreement. This is a reciprocal relationship with PAQA and has led to QA developing multiagency tools, assisting with case selection, helping with report writing etc for PAQA.</p>				
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CSC Social Work Forum	<p>An all service by-monthly forum where best practice is championed and cascaded. The forum brings the full range of CSC staff together presenting emerging national and local issues</p>	Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	6-8 weekly	Development for all staff in CSC	Reports formally within the Annual Safeguarding & QA Performance Report
Regulation 44 Inspections	<p>The Local Authority is required to ensure that children's homes are subject to regular visits by officers independent of the residential service in order to undertake inspections regarding the quality of care provided to children living in children's homes. This includes speaking to staff, young people and scrutinising records held in the home.</p> <p>Officers support The Children in Care Forum, Care for Us may also undertake some of these visits with a particular focus on the views of young people in residential care.</p>	IRO's plus countersigned by Service Managers, Head of Service, SD and responsible individual	Monthly	Monitor the quality of children's homes.	Reports formally to: the SD/HOS Management Team; Corporate Parenting Panel; Annual Safeguarding & QA report
Regulation 44 Inspections	<p>It is the responsibility of the Residential Children's Home Manager as the registered manager to monitor the performance of the home. To assist in the operation of this the</p>	Registered Children's Home Managers and Service Manager -	Minimum monthly	Monitor the quality of children's homes.	Reports formally to: the SD/HOS Management Team;

	Service Manager Barnsley Children in Care Provider Services makes unannounced visits regularly throughout the year, the purpose of which is to ensure that national minimum standards are met and exceeded, and to identify and implement necessary actions when standards are not evidenced. These visits are in addition to the registered manager's own monitoring tasks.	Children in Care			Corporate Parenting Panel; Annual Safeguarding & QA report
Supervision of front line staff & managers at all levels of the Division	Individual social work practice improvement through professional wellbeing supervision and annual P&DR process.  Supervision is regulated via the Supervision Policy. The frequency of supervisions and PDRs are monitored by senior managers  The service will carry out a supervision audit twice a year.	HOS	Twice a year	Monitor the quality of supervision and effectiveness of the supervision policy.	Feedback is given to practitioners and a record of supervision is made.  The quality of supervision is addressed in every case file audit and reported on.
Team meetings	Team time to reflect and evaluate practice developments and initiatives at team and case level	SMs;TMs	Monthly	Team development, reflection, action planning	SM;HOS
Audits of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service carried out by the Head of Safeguarding and Welfare	The Safeguarding Unit has a quality assurance programme scrutinising the work, performance and outcomes from the IRO service. This includes auditing: Use of consultation documents for LAC completed for LAC Reviews; analysis of performance indicators such as timeliness of reviews and how children in care participate in their review; audits of LAC Review minutes and Personal Education Plans	Head of Service Safeguarding & QA	Programme of audit throughout the year  Quarterly		Reports formally to: the SD/HOS Management Team; Corporate Parenting Panel; Annual Safeguarding & QA report to Children's Scrutiny Commission & Executive
Audits of the Child Protection Conference	The Safeguarding Unit has a quality assurance programme scrutinising the work,	Head of Service - Safeguarding & QA	Programme of audit throughout	Learning from allegations	Reports formally to: the SD/HOS

Service/Management of LADO	performance and outcomes from the Child Protection Conference and LADO Service. This includes auditing monitoring of all key CP performance indicators and CP processes; collating and auditing service user feedback (including young people) on their views of the CP Conferences and process; and ensuring the management of allegations process is managed robustly, including integrating the learning from audits/Serious Case Reviews.		the year  Quarterly		Management Team; BSCB ; Annual Safeguarding & QA report to Children's Scrutiny Commission & Executive
Complaints and Compliments monitoring	The Children's Complaints Manager reports quarterly to senior management team. Stage 1 complaints have an action plan associated which records learning points which result. These action plans are sent to the Complaints Officer at the same time as the written response is sent.  The DCS and SD track all elected member enquiries on behalf of their constituents. These enquiries allow for a deep dive of cases	Complaints Manager  SD	Monthly	Learning from complaints and compliments.  Learning from elected member enquiries and escalation.	DMT provide quarterly input into directorate wide Complaints monitoring report and action plans
Escalation of concerns	BMBC have agreed an Escalation Policy to promote escalation of any concerns regarding a child where there is a professional disagreement.	BSCM Manager	Reported to the BSCB	Concerns about children are resolved in live time	BSCB Annual Report and S11