

Quality Assurance Framework

Children's Safeguarding and Social Work

2022 - 23



Contents

1. Introduction

- The role of the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)

2. Summary and quick guide

- Definition of quality assurance
- Purpose of a quality assurance framework
- The fundamental elements of a quality assurance process

3. Values and guiding principles

- The Camden Model of Social Work
- Our Professional Standards
- Our Pledge and promise to children and families
- Quality Assurance is a shared responsibility

4. Our Practice Learning and Development Cycle

4.1 Practice

- Listening to Children and Families
- Audit Activity
- Management Information and Performance
- Practice Oversight and Review
- Leadership Oversight and Review
- Multi Agency Reviews

4.2 Learning

- Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board

4.3 Development

- Training and Continued Professional Development
- Service Planning and Development

5. What difference are we making to children, young people and families in Camden?

- Our testimonials

Appendices:

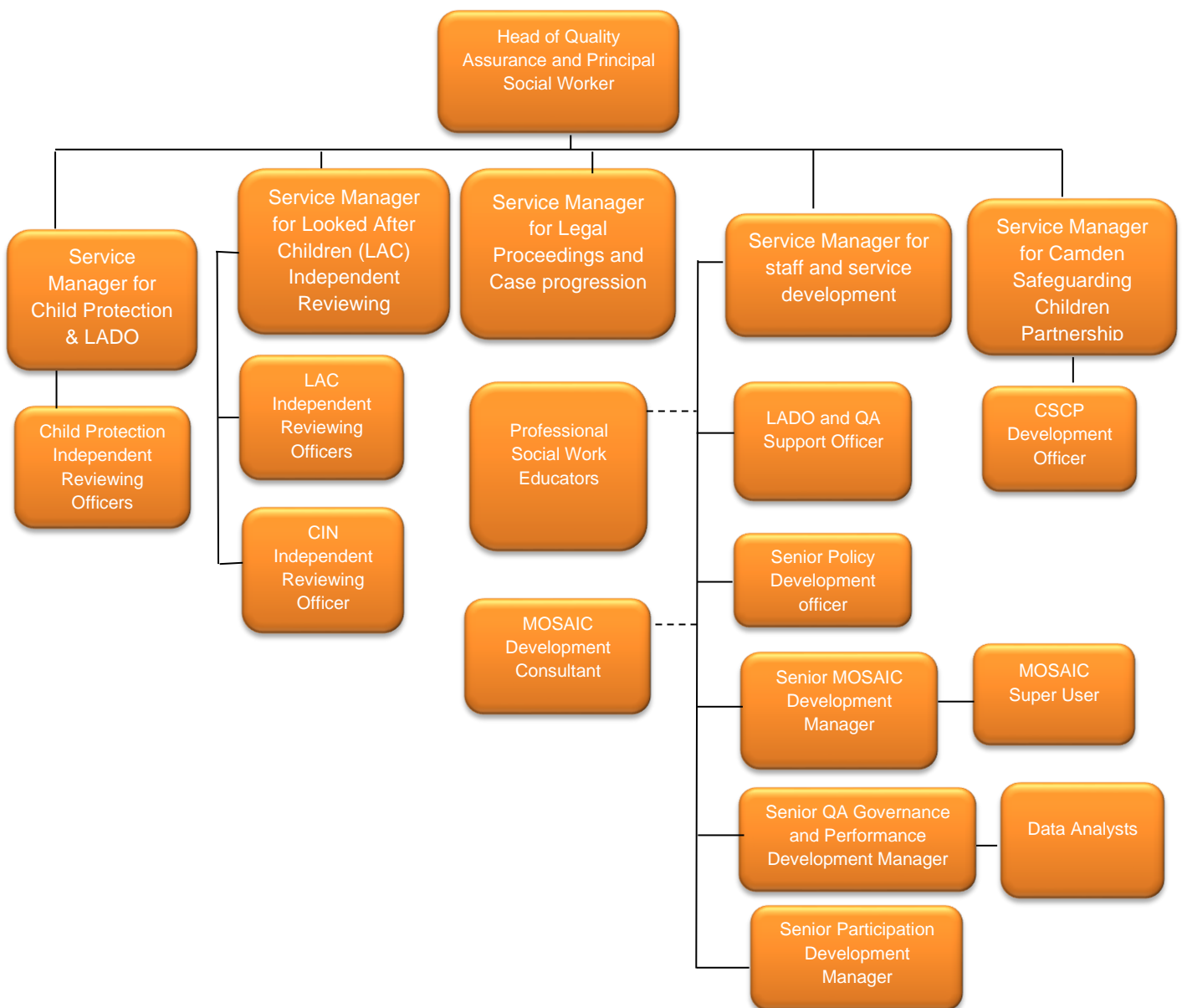
Appendices 1: Quality assurance forums, purpose and membership

Appendices 2: Schedule of routine management information cycles

1. Introduction

The role of the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)

The role of the QAU unit is to ensure a high quality of social work practice and service delivery by providing a comprehensive framework of policy and best practice. Highly specialist practitioners based within the QAU bring their area of expertise, acting as a critical friend to drive forward and support the breadth and range of quality assurance activities across Children’s Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW). Directly accountable to the Director of Children’s Services, the QAU is led by the Head of Quality Assurance, who is also the Principal Social Worker and includes:



References/Links

All policy documents that cover quality assurance work can be found on the CSSW Policy and Practice Hub: [Quality Assurance and performance and management information | Children's Policy & Practice Hub \(camden.gov.uk\)](https://www.camden.gov.uk/childrens-policy-practice-hub)

2. Summary and quick guide

Definition of quality assurance

Quality assurance is a dynamic process which sets standards, monitors achievements, and uses information from this process to make improvements across the service that can translate into better outcomes for children and families.

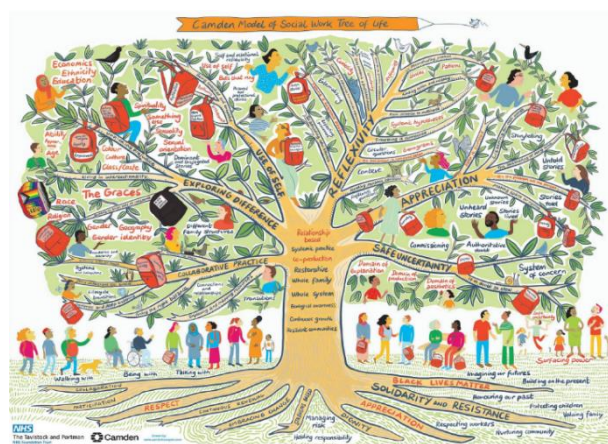
Purpose of a quality assurance framework

- Measure outcomes and consider whether the division actively “makes a difference” to children’s lives.
- Set standards through legislation, policy, and models of practice excellence.
- Monitor, critically reflect and support practice and service delivery through quality assurance activity
- Analyse and evaluate feedback from a range of sources
- Encourage and inform debate, discussion and challenge around identified areas of best practice and key areas of development, so the division can address issues, find solutions and ultimately improve services and outcomes.
- Delivery continuous improvements and positive outcomes for children and their families through an ongoing cycle of operational and strategic practice learning and development.
- Become a learning organisation where staff are aware of expectations and feel supported to work to a high standard of practice.
- Provide ownership for standards and a shared common purpose so that all staff know what is expected of them and can take responsibility.

The fundamental elements of a quality assurance process

There are many ways in which we quality assure our practice. It is important that we gather evidence of best practice and learn from what is working well, whilst also identifying areas that need to improve. The quality assurance process should enable us to answer the following questions:

1. What is life like for children, young people and families who use the local authority’s services?
2. What evidence is there that the assessment, planning and help provided by the local authority make children and young people safer and promote their welfare and development?
3. What are the features of the local authority that make good practice more likely?
4. What are the features of the local authority that inhibit good practice?



3. Values and guiding principles

The Camden Model of Social Work

Camden's model of social work is based on multi-systemic practice that puts relationships with children and families at the heart of the work we do. Our approach has been designed in consultation with our social workers, children, young people and families and in partnership with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, who worked alongside Camden to produce a model of social work that is informed by systemic family therapy.



Our model of practice is based on a set of guiding principles and the core belief that the relationship between the social worker, the child and the family is the key asset. It promotes a relational, strengths-based approach and is designed to fit into the wider Resilient Families Framework (our Early Help strategy) whilst supporting statutory social work and intervening decisively to protect children where necessary.

It supports our purpose to ensure timely change for children based on continuous rigour and challenge through our quality assurance activities. Applied systemic practice in Camden includes our Camden Model of Social Work pledge and promise to children and families and our staff charter.

<https://www.camdenchildrensocialwork.info/pages/camden-model-of-social-work>

Our professional standards

The delivery of our promise to children and families is set against and guided by a range of national and local standards.

- Legislation and statutory guidance such as the Children Act (1989) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2020) that provide the legal framework for Camden's powers, duties and responsibilities relating to children and families, including important procedural processes and timescales.
- The Department for Education Safeguarding Performance Framework that provides a set of standards for children's social care and which CSSW report on annually. Specific national indicators and CSSW performance is benchmarked against other similar authorities.
- Best practice evidence and findings from research that inform social work practice, including Research in Practice (RiP)
- The Social Work England (2021) professional standards, The British Association of Social Workers (2021) Code of Ethics, and the Professional Capabilities Framework (2020) for practice standards throughout the professional life course.
- Camden's corporate standards of behaviour for council staff and service delivery
- Ofsted inspection frameworks that contain evaluation statements for children's services.



COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

How do you feel about the fact that I have been sent to work with you?
What do you think about me coming to see you?

What is your understanding of my role?
Do you know what I do?


How would you like me to be with you?
Do you like people to tell you what to do or ask you what you think?

How will you let me know if you don't like what I am saying or doing?
Can we agree how you will let me know if you don't like something?

What has worked for you in the past?
What has worked for you in the past?

Our Pledge and promise to children and families

Our 'Pledge to families' and 'Our Promise to Children' are two documents that set out our key principles that underpin the way we work with children, young people and families so that they know what to expect when we work together. This means they can hold us to account if we do not meet the high standards that we set for ourselves, and they can tell us what they think and how we can do things better. The documents were developed in partnership with the Family Advisory Board (parents with experience of the child protection system in Camden) and feedback from the children of Camden.



APPRECIATION

What do you see as your strengths?
What are you good at and what do you enjoy?

If I asked a family member or friend what they value about you, what would they say?
What would your Mum/Dad/Sister/Friend say they like about you and what makes you special?

What keeps you going in life - your relationships, faith, beliefs, values?
What is important to you?

Since working with you I have really noticed that...and I appreciate that because....
Do you know I have noticed.... and I really like that because....

We promise to:

Ensure the welfare of the child is always paramount; that their wishes and feelings will be sought appropriate to their age and understanding and will be considered whenever plans are being made for them as far as this is consistent with keeping them safe.

Work in partnership with parents to support them in caring for their child at home where this is consistent with the child's welfare, and ensure that all parents, inclusive of fathers, are fully consulted and kept informed, and that their wishes for their child are respected where this is in the child's best interests.



EXPLORING DIFFERENCE

How do the GGGRRRAACCEESSS (choose one) impact on your life and relationships?
How do you think the GGGRRRAACCEESSS (choose one) makes a difference to you?

What are the differences or similarities between us and how might this help or hinder our work together?
What do you think is the same or different about us?

What does it mean to you that I am a black/white worker working with you as a black/white person?
Is the colour of our skin the same or different, what do you think about that?

How has racism impacted on your life?
Do you feel you have ever been picked on or not been able to do something because of the colour of your skin?

How can I understand and show respect for your family culture?
How do you celebrate as a family, what celebrations do you have like festivals or special meals?

Work within legislative frameworks, best practice evidence and the most up to date research to ensure decisions made about interventions and support are timely, proportionate and informed by high quality assessments.

Ensure our professional knowledge and skills are continually developed and that we keep up to date with new research, using all available resources and taking opportunities to reflect critically on our practice so that there is a culture of continuous learning and development.



REFLEXIVITY

What can we do together that will make a difference right now?
What can we do that will make things better right now?

How will it show if things are going well and who will notice?
What will you be doing if things are better and who will notice?

How can we work together in a respectful way?
How can we work together in a way you enjoy?

How can we hold in mind your hopes and dreams for the future?
What are your dreams and how can we help you to go in the right direction?

How can I help you become the parent/family/child you hope to be?
How can I help you at the moment?

Work within the framework of anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality and diversity and ensure that children and families have equal access to services. To achieve this, all social work activity will be informed by the social GRRRAACCEESS and how families' lived experience of structural inequality, discrimination and culture and ethnicity impact on them.

Quality Assurance is a shared responsibility

To ensure we keep to and uphold the promises we make to children and their families, we each have a role to play in contributing to high standards of practice and service delivery through our Quality Assurance Framework.

As a social worker, personal advisor, family support worker, I will

- work to the standards set out in the division's performance development objectives for social workers
- quality assure my own work, seek support and guidance when needed and share good practice with my colleagues.
- use supervision sessions to reflect critically on practice
- take up all opportunities to enhance my learning and development.
- ensure that I actively encourage the child's participation through advocacy and foreground their voice in all assessment, planning and review processes.

As a team manager and senior practitioner, I will

- work to the standards set out in the division's performance development objectives for managers and senior practitioners
- continually monitor team performance through performance indicators and through case discussion.
- check the quality of case recording and assessment through audits
- monitor individual worker's performance, learning and support needs through supervision
- deal effectively with complaints and build on and celebrate compliments received.
- give consideration to team's learning and developmental objectives
- report progress and evidence of best practice as well as raise issues with the service manager on a regular basis
- act in a timely way on feedback from those in receipt of services.

As a Service manager and Head of Service, I will

- work to the standards set out in the division's performance development objectives for senior managers
- monitor my service area's performance through performance indicators
- oversee the team managers' quality assurance and support role
- check the quality of case work and case decision making through audit and case discussion
- monitor the frequency and quality of supervision
- have an overview of quality assurance in the division via the senior management team (SMT) meetings, including setting standards, ensuring adequate resources and support are in place and approving action to build on best practice and service delivery.

As an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for Children who are looked after and Child Protection Officer (CPO) for children on a Child Protection Plan I will

- work to the standards set out in the division's performance development objectives for IRO's and CPO's.
- monitor the quality of planning and work undertaken by social workers and the wider network, including managers and raise issues with workers and managers through the escalation policy when necessary as well as highlighting areas of best practice so that learning can be shared.
- advocate on behalf of the child and hold Camden to account on planning matters
- obtain feedback from children and young people via direct contact and inclusion in the review process.
- Ensure that the social worker actively encourages the child and family's participation and voice in the assessment, planning and review process.
- review care plans via the children looked after statutory review process and child protection case conferences. Wherever possible, ensure plans are child and family led and they are proportionate, focused, and achievable.
- monitor the quality of practice that children who are looked after and who are on child protection plans receive by carrying out case audits and case discussions
- provide specialist advice and deliver training for social workers working with children looked after and on child protection plans.

As a member of the Quality Assurance Unit, I will

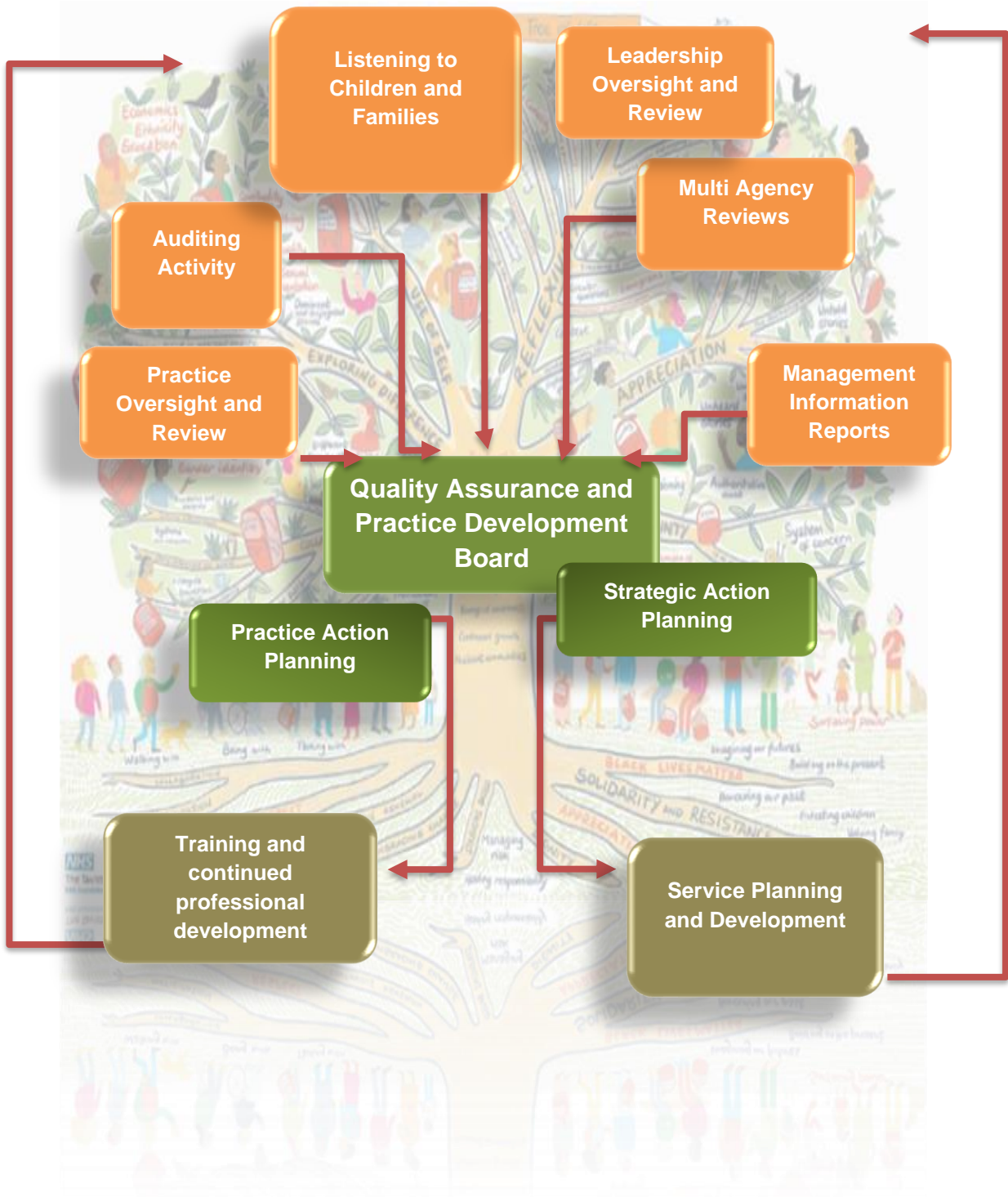
- work to the standards set out in the division's performance development objectives for their particular role
- collect, collate, analyse and report on quantitative management information data and qualitative information gathered from interviews, focus groups, reflective case discussions, observations and feedback from children and their families, workers and the wider professional and community network.
- report to the DfE on the Council's performance via performance indicator returns
- provide the policy framework and the recording framework for the division
- provide the training and development framework for the division
- carry out specialist audits and provide managerial oversight when required
- provide a first point of contact for partner agencies on safeguarding advice
- develop multi-agency protocols and working practices that deliver good outcomes for children and their families.
- ensure there are multiple forums and opportunities to listen to children and families and receive feedback on how to improve services

As the Principal Social Worker and Head of the Quality Assurance Unit, I will

- provide professional leadership for the workforce to ensure high quality practice
- provide ongoing opportunities to listen to the workforce and receive feedback on how to develop confidence and growth in practice
- assist in the development and implementation of new divisional policy
- provide leadership on evidencing and building upon best practice, learning from serious case reviews and challenge social work practice and service delivery to improve outcomes for children and families.

Our Practice Learning and Development Cycle

We quality assure through a continual cycle of *practice learning and development*. We gather information about practice from a range of sources and activities. The learning from this is considered and reviewed at our Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board. Practice level and strategic level action plans are created which focus on areas of development at an individual, team and organisational level. The impact and outcome of our development work is then reviewed through our practice activities.



4.1 Practice

Listening to Children and Families

We gather information from our practice from a range of sources. Our core approach to ensuring quality of practice is to listen and learn from children and their families. In Camden we have a wide range of opportunities, activities and forums in available in which to gather feedback that can directly impact on the development and quality of services:

In Care Council

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is open to all looked after children who wish to be part of a group that represents the interests of children in care and care leavers and ensures their voice is heard by senior managers and councillors' other council meetings. Young people also attend the Corporate Parenting Board.

Young Inspectors

Young Inspectors is an annual programme open to all children known to CSSW who are selected to carry out inspections of a wide range of CSSW and other services with the recommendations used to adapt and improve services.

Family Advisory Group

The Family Advisory Board has been set up by the Family Group Conference service and is open to all parents and kinship carers to discuss their shared experiences and develop ways in which they can contribute to service development

Compliments and complaints

We take a positive approach to complaints and value them as an important form of feedback on our services. We aim to learn from feedback and use the lessons learned as a means to continuously improve and review the services we offer and respond positively to families' needs and expectations.

Consultation forms

All children over the age of 4 should be consulted prior to meetings where their plan will be reviewed in order to obtain their views. The relevant consultation forms should be completed by the child with guidance and support from a trusted adult such as parents, social workers or foster carers.

The Reactive Forum

The Reactive Forum provides opportunities for young people aged 13 to 18 who have learning disabilities to be proactive in getting involved in decision making and have a voice about the services they receive and influence decisions about services.

Young people interview panel

Involving children and young people from across the services in CSSW to work together with Human Resources (HR) in the selection and recruitment of senior posts within the service.

Advocacy

We recognise the importance of the participation of children and parents in decision-making, and an important way of ensuring participation is by providing advocates to help them speak up and have their views taken into account. The social worker should always be the main advocate for the child and for the parents where appropriate. Advocacy can also include independent advocates, the IRO and CPO, Family Group Conference Coordinators and family and friends.

Auditing Activity

Case auditing is a key quality assurance mechanism and is the main method for gathering direct evidence and information on the quality of social work practice, decision making and interaction with children, families and the professional network.

Our applied systemic Camden Model of Social Work is mirrored in our auditing activity which is a collaborative process of engaging with social workers, multi-agency colleagues and families. By considering the outcomes for the child and the impact our work through a systems approach, we are better able to understand their experiences within relational, and organisational processes and structures. With this knowledge we can identify what works, and where the barriers and challenges are to delivering quality professional practice.



Annual auditing programme

The annual schedule of auditing activity will routinely look at the quality of social work practice and outcomes for children and families by measuring core areas of practice which include:

- The child's Journey, including transitions through the service
- Specific risk factors
- Assessment, planning and review
- Engaging families
- Joint working
- Equalities and Social Graces
- Recording
- Management oversight and decision making
- Impact and outcomes
- Staff wellbeing and practice development
- Social work processes

Our auditing timetable includes:

Month	Audit activity
April	Dip sampling
May	Practice Week
June	Early Help and front door
July	Dip sampling
August	Summer break
September	Themed audits
October	Early Help and front door
November	Practice Week
December	Dip sampling
January	Themed Audits
February	Early Help and front door
March	Dip sampling

Our Audits:

We undertake a range of auditing activity to gain insight in to practice across CSSW.

Early Help and Front Door Audits

'Front door' audits that take place 3 times a year. Up to 30 children and young people who have been processed by the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), the Contact Service and/or the Brief Intervention Team (BIT) are purposefully selected. The audit seeks to monitor the application of thresholds and quality of decision making, including the transfer to CSSW social work teams via the Child's Journey meetings and step up and step-down processes to Early Help.

Dip Sampling Audits

Dip sampling audits follow key lines of enquiry arising from management information reports. Data is gathered from a review of the electronic case files only. Findings and auditor recommendations are presented to the Quality Assurance and Practice Development board where strategic and service level plans are agreed and reviewed.

Thematic Audits

Our Thematic Audits' focus on direct practice that has taken place within the last 12 months and is based on a specific theme/area of interest. Case work is chosen through purposeful sampling of up to 30 case records. The auditing team include team managers senior managers, IRO's and CPO's from across the service. A review of case files, reflective case discussions with the practitioner and their line manager, and feedback from the child, young person and their carers all support an understanding of practice. Findings are reported back to the

service via a Brief Overview report. Operational and strategic level action plans are developed in response to the findings to ensure a practice, learning and development loop is sustained.

Practice Week

'Practice Week' provides senior managers, partners and leaders with an opportunity to hear directly from our staff about the work they do around a specific theme. There is an opportunity to hear and see first-hand how our services ensure the best life chances for every child and young person in Camden Practice Week takes a mixed methods approach to gathering information about practice, including the reviewing of electronic case files, reflective case conversations and direct observations of practice. Information gathering also includes direct feedback from children, young people and their families.

Fostering and Adoption Audits

Fostering and adoption casework is audited separately because of the distinct nature of the work. All approved Camden foster carers are audited on an annual basis by the service manager, fostering manager and fostering senior practitioners using a specialist template. The findings from this activity will be shared at the Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board and help to share ongoing good practice and service delivery.

Peer and team auditing

To ensure practice level oversight and scrutiny, Service Managers and Team Managers regularly review practice compliance through the weekly and monthly MOSAIC case management information reports. Team managers also undertake case audit work within their own service as part of their role.

Moderation

Our moderation process seeks to support consistency in our quality assurance activities and strengthen practice. This is achieved by striking an ongoing balance between recognising relational, strengths-based practice and critical challenge and rigour as part of a learning organisation. The moderation panel is chaired by the Head of Service for Quality Assurance with members including at least one operational Head of Service and one representative who is independent of the service area. Panel members provide rigour, and critical oversight by reviewing the completed audits prior to panel. Where necessary panel members may also review the case files as part of making an informed, evidence-based decision on the outcomes and findings of the audit. Senior management and Director scrutiny of all audit outcomes, themes and findings are overseen by the Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board.

The moderation meeting:

- A minimum of 10% of cases are randomly selected including a selection of those rated 'Requires Improvement' and 'Good'. All 'Inadequate' and 'Outstanding' audits are presented.
- The allocated social worker/practitioner, their line manager and the auditor are invited to a 20 minute 'practice audit review'. This provides an opportunity to discuss the following:
 - The process and outcome of the collaborative audit
 - To identify any key strengths and opportunities for individual, team and organisational learning.
 - Review of the content and learning from child and family feedback and any follow up required
 - Review of the overall grading to ensure there is a consistency in our judgements
- A brief record of the moderation discussion and confirmation of any changes to the grading are included in the audit template.

Findings, accountability and impact:

As part of our systemic approach to quality assurance, accountability for driving forward the learning from our audits occurs at practice, service and strategic levels each of which are required to develop a SMART action plan in response to the audit findings. These plans must be regularly reviewed, and evidence impact and outcomes for children and young people. This process is overseen and monitored by the monthly Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board.

At a practice level: Findings from audit activity are discussed with the social worker and their line manager. Agreed actions at practice level prepopulate into the MOSAIC Supervision record so that they can be progressed and regularly reviewed within the supervisory relationship. There should be evidence in individual supervision that learning from the audit has been considered. This process should also support audit outcomes moving from Requires Improvement to Good and from Good to Outstanding.

At a service level: Findings from audit activity are collated into an audit overview report to inform learning and drive improvements. This is presented to the Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board where learning is linked to ongoing service

development plans. Practice themes are shared with practitioners at our monthly Practice Learning and Development meetings (prev. EMM) and across the service by the Principle Social Worker.

At a strategic level: Audit activity findings and recommendations at a strategic level are presented bi-monthly to our Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board. This is chaired by the Director of Children's Services and is attended by key service leads. Board members agree actions and regularly review the identified areas for development. Key findings and learning are also shared with our multi agency and safeguarding partners.

Celebrating best practice as part of auditing activity:



Examples of good practice are acknowledged through:

- Escalation to senior management,
- Subject to Story Boards and Appreciative Enquiry.
- Practitioners are invited to share their best practice through lunch and learn sessions.
- Included in the Director of Children's Services 'Roundup'
- Saved as best practice examples in the children's policy and practice hub.
- Shared at the monthly Practice Learning and Development meetings
- Shared at the Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board.

Addressing practice concerns during auditing activity:

During the auditing process, auditors assume the position of critical friend and advocate on behalf of the child, positively challenging practice and systems where necessary. The auditor will immediately escalate the matter to the senior management team where findings are:

- inadequate, or
- in the event of significant recording issues
- and/or immediate safeguard concerns being identified

An action plan is agreed and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure practice is aligned with our expected standards and the child is kept safe.

**Management
Information and
Performance**

Performance Indicators are a necessary measure of levels of activity and key standards but cannot stand in isolation. These are supported and complemented by the service's internal attitudes, behaviours, feedback from children, families and staff and through our auditing activity.

Management Information Reports and Performance Indicators

CSSW have an established data and performance management team based in the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU). The team produce approximately 75 separate management information reports (see appendices 2). These quantitative reports are produced on a regular basis and sent to key stake holders responsible for overseeing quality assurance in their areas of practice.

The performance management team also produce a 'Monthly Performance Overview' report containing key and local performance indicators across all aspects of work. The information within this report is central to our performance oversight. It helps us to measure direction of travel of performance on a monthly basis and to compare performance over the previous 4 years. The report benchmarks against national indicators (NIs) and inner London indicators from the 'Children's Safeguarding Performance Framework'. An annual report is also produced that sets out how the division has performed over the preceding year with comparisons made against national and inner London authorities to enable benchmarking and monitoring of key trends.

The 'ChAT' tool produces child-level data and benchmarking statistics as a visual report that covers all areas of children's social care. The wide scope and in-depth analysis of ChAT makes it a both a useful tool to prepare for an Ofsted inspection, as well as add value to existing performance management tools and reports.



Reviewing and analysing the data takes place at every level across the service in order to take the most appropriate action to improve services, address difficulties and challenge barriers to maintaining high standards of practice.

At team level, managers are responsible for checking the performance of their service area and discussing this in team meetings and with service managers in supervision.

At service level, service managers and Heads of Service are responsible for addressing quality assurance issues that are relevant to their centre at management meetings and discussing issues with the Director of Children's Services in supervision.

At strategic level, formal reporting involves the production of reports and plans that are presented to specific groups and forums, for example Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings, the Practice Learning and Development (PLD) meetings, councillors.

Practice Oversight and Review

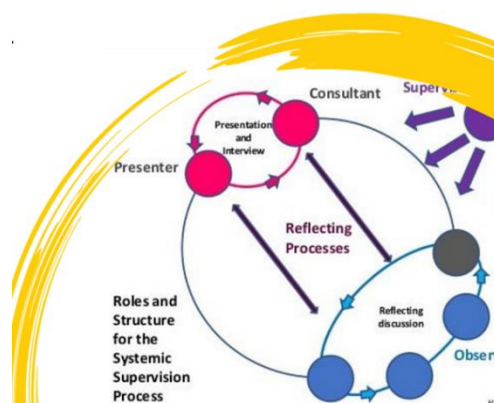
Senior leadership and team managers work collaboratively with the workforce to develop systemic and critically reflective practice, equally sharing responsibility for risk, exploring what works well and what could be improved in a balanced way. This is achieved through supervision, performance appraisal, practice observations, and listening to our staff.

Supervision

Supervision is more than a managerial and monitoring exercise. It provides opportunities for workers to critically reflect upon their practice, receive support and feedback on their performance, and help them to build emotional resilience. Applying the Camden Model of Social Work, supervision enables social workers and their supervisors to celebrate diversity and explore anti discriminatory, anti-oppressive practices and equality dilemmas.

One to one supervision. To develop individual social worker's knowledge and skills and help them meet the Professional Capabilities Framework standards, one to one supervision between the social worker and their supervisor includes reflective case discussion and quality of decision making, line management and accountability, personal learning and development and case load and workload management

The 'bells that ring' systemic model of group supervision. The bells that ring method is different from other models in that it aims to develop a specifically systemic and strengths-based stance. The approach enables Reflective Groups to share and learn from each other about what has worked well and what the dilemmas and barriers are to achieving good outcomes for children and their families.



Practice Observations

Observations of practice form a core part of our Practice Week activities. This process supports practitioners in developing and acquiring expertise through reflective discussion with colleagues and also provides extended and senior managers with a window into our practice with children and families.

Performance Appraisal

With high support, we expect high standards. Where quality assurance shows evidence of practice of service delivery falling short of these standards action under Camden's corporate procedures may be initiated. All actions taken under the quality assurance framework will be regularly reviewed to ensure any recommendations or actions are being implemented and that the desired outcomes are being achieved.

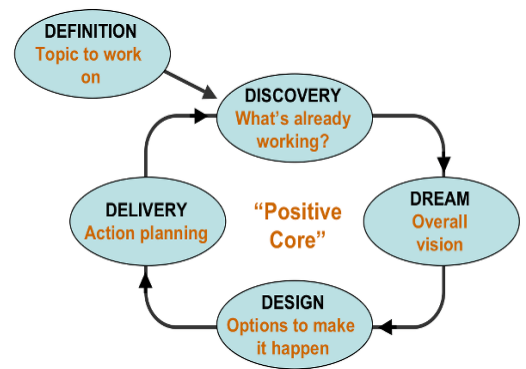
Listening to our staff

Our staff are tasked with delivering services and support that make a difference in children and families lives. It is crucial that we listen to them, learn from good practice taking place, and where challenges, barriers and dilemmas occur in meeting the standards we set. Appreciate Inquiry and Story Boards are two of our strengths-based approaches that foregrounds learning from what works well.

Appreciative Inquiry

An appreciative inquiry stands in contrast to the traditional problem-solving approach that looks to analyse what is going wrong, Appreciative Inquiry seeks to identify what works in organisations, and to construct future propositions based on the best of what we do. Through an appreciative inquiry approach we may ask staff:

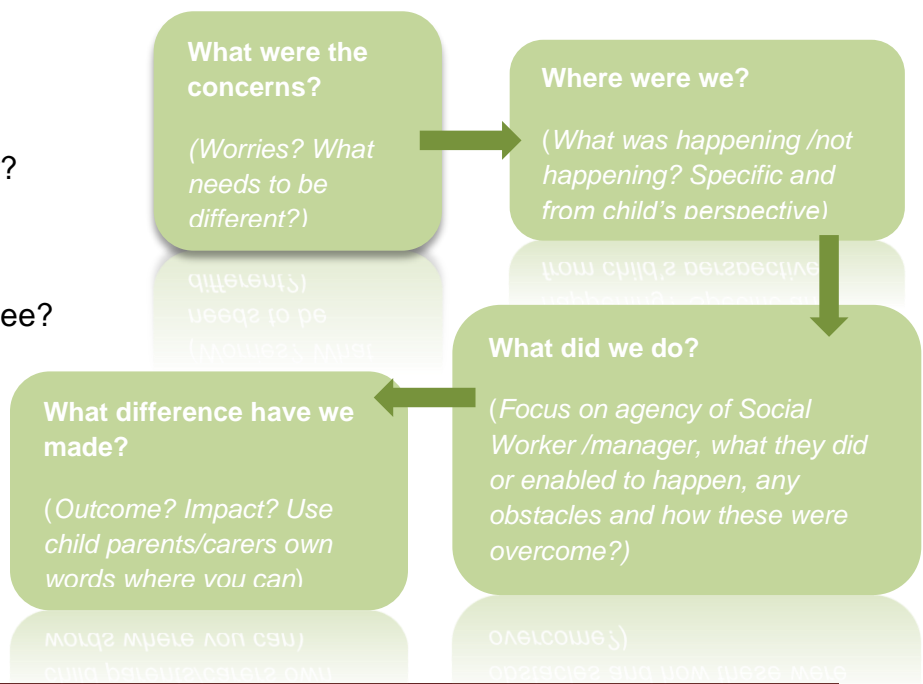
- What are you proud of achieving over the past 6 months? As individuals? A team? A service?
- What did you do?
- What did you see changing as a result?
- What were the obstacles barriers and how did you overcome them?
- What would parents/carers say worked well? Children and young people? Partner agencies?
- One thing you will take forward.



Story Boards

Story boards are used as a tool to elicit why the work is important, what we have done and more importantly what impact this has had in relation to improving outcomes for children and young people in Camden. Using the 'EARS' (Berg 1994) approach seeks to:

- Elicit:**
the organising question
- Amplify:**
what would you see/hear?
- Reflect:**
explore meaning
- Start over:**
what difference did you see?



Principal Social Worker (PSW) engagement

The role of the Principal Social Worker is to develop and promote excellence in practice. This is achieved by creating a learning culture in which staff can develop their skills, knowledge, and expertise in a safe and supported environment. The post has a key role in listening to the workforce, acting as a conduit between senior management and frontline practice. Considering the voice of practitioners ensures the impact of any service development and organisational change remains purposeful and delivers on improving outcomes for children and families in Camden.

Principal Social Worker Forums

The Principal Social Worker stays connected to direct practice by facilitating a range of different forums in which practitioners are invited to share their views.

Listening Circle

Regular 'Listening Circles' led by the principal Social Worker, offers a safe and respectful space for colleagues to open up and share their thoughts, experiences, ideas, challenges and dilemmas arising from practice. Through listening to staff, practice themes, ideas, and insights are generated and shared with the senior management team.



Annual Social Work health check

Maintaining consistent, high-quality outcomes for children and families, requires a healthy, robust and committed workforce. Each year, the Principal Social Worker implements a 'social work health check' through a service wide survey. The Employer Standards for Social Workers in England (2020) sets out the key components of a whole systems approach in which to develop a working environment where social work practice can flourish. Carrying out an annual health check means that issues and trends can be identified and addressed effectively. It allows social workers to feel that they are listened to and ensures that the senior management team are pro-active in tackling the issues that affect their front-line staff.

Monthly Practice Learning and Development meetings

Monthly Practice Learning and Development meetings are an opportunity for our extended management group to come together to share best practice ideas, learning from local and national reviews, wider policy updates and research. The meetings are also the conduit for sharing findings from quality assurance activities and practice and strategic planning arising from the monthly Quality Assurance, Practice Development Board.

Leadership oversight & review

Quality assurance begins with the recruitment and retention of a high-quality workforce that feel valued, motivated, and committed to making a difference to children and young people's lives. Through continued strong practice leadership, and an ethos of high support high challenge, the quality assurance framework seeks to ensure that all members of staff within CSSW feel enabled to perform to the best of their abilities.

Induction

Every Social Worker, Family Support Worker or Personal Advisor who joins Camden will have a period of induction; this is the process that allows practitioners to "grow" into their role, providing them with space at the start of their time in Camden to:

- get to know their team and the organisation
- learn about our duties and core values and their role in delivering these
- find out about the expected standards of practice and behaviour and what they can expect from Camden.

Formal induction takes place over a 2-week period from when a new practitioner joins and may continue for some time after, depending on their needs, while they gradually take on their full responsibilities. The induction programme begins with a mandatory quality assurance induction and e-learning module. It is then tailored by the supervisor to a practitioner's individual knowledge, skills and experience, with levels of support based on the number of years they have been qualified. Agency and temporary staff can expect to receive a similar level of induction support as permanent members of staff so that they are also prepared to carry out their role.

Looked After Children Independent Reviewing

The independent reviewing of Looked After Children (LAC) is overseen by a specialist service manager based within the Quality Assurance Unit. The primary task of this role is to ensure that services and support are delivered in a timely way, to a high standard and meets the needs of children who are looked after. This involves auditing activities, monitoring and sharing weekly and monthly practice performance data, regular review of all IRO alerts, as well as findings from strategic oversight of residential units and schools through close liaison with the Virtual School. The service manager also provides quality assurance through their practice consultative role, directly engaging with the looked after and safeguarding teams, on care planning matters, chairing complex strategy, planning and disruption meetings.

Attendance at key quality assurance and multi-agency decision-making forums such as Care Pathways, PLO, permanency and legal planning meetings, the educational board, the Young Person's Pathway and the Pre-MACE and high-risk vulnerability panel, ensures strategic oversight for children at the edge of care, those entering or are in the care system, including those at risk of child sexual and criminal exploitation. Links are also maintained with external and partner agencies on best practice and service delivery through regular attendance at the IRO London Managers forum.

Through the statutory LAC review process, Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) maintain independent practice oversight in relation to all care planning tasks. This includes the quality and timeliness of permanency planning, suitability and stability of placements, health, education, family links and cultural identity needs. Where standards fall below expectations, such as delay or practice issues, quality assurance is addressed through the IRO alerts. The IRO has a central role in engaging with and representing the child's views through visits and therapeutic letters, and liaising with the child's network such as parents, carers, advocates, Independent Visitors, health, education, legal and CAFCASS Guardians.

Link IRO's are also designated to different service areas including health, education, child in need (CIN) services, children and young people with disabilities service (CYPDS) and the different Looked After Children's teams providing a specialist consultative and practice support role to social workers. Themes arising from the tracking and monitoring of children and young people, feedback from the child and their networks and reviews of the services they receive are presented to senior management and used to inform practice and service development and training needs within CSSW.

Child Protection Independent Reviewing

Independent scrutiny and quality assurance of child protection processes is overseen by a specialist service manager based within the Quality Assurance Unit. The primary task of the role is to ensure that CSSW and the wider network consistently provide a high standard of decision making, planning and review of children who are considered to be at risk of, or suffering significant harm. Regular attendance at Support and Challenge meetings also provides the service manager with the opportunity to share their expertise and offer a consultative role for those children who have been on child protection plans for over 12 months. Oversight of weekly and monthly practice performance data, CPO alerts, consultation and feedback from children, young people and their families and wider auditing activities provide strategic oversight of emerging practice themes. Findings from quality assurance activities are discussed at monthly CPO meetings chaired by the service manager and at monthly Practice Learning and Development meetings attended by extended managers.

The service manager role involves supporting Child Protection Officers (CPO) with practice dilemmas that arise from chairing child protection meetings. This includes supporting colleagues to critically reflect on thresholds for decision making, managing risk, working in complex multi-agency systems and holding safe uncertainty. This is then modelled and reflected in the relationship between CPO's and the social worker. Through the child protection process, midway reviews and attendance at team meetings, link CPO's provide practice guidance and consultation on engaging children, young people and families, preparing for child protection conferences, and managing the complexities or practice in this area.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Every local authority has a statutory responsibility under 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) to have a Local Authority Designated Offer (LADO). The Quality Assurance Unit has a designated LADO who is responsible for coordinating

the response to concerns where a professional or volunteer working with children may not be suitable to work with them or may have caused them or could cause them harm. Based within the Quality Assurance Unit, the Designated LADO fulfils their responsibilities by:

- Providing ongoing consultation, guidance and advice to employers who may be concerned about a member of staff or volunteer.
- Overseeing the coordination of any investigation that takes place, including ensuring any allegations or concerns are recorded appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way.
- Coordinating the decisions, outcomes, and next steps of any investigation.
- Ensuring the voice of the child or young person is heard and taken into account at every stage and that the member of staff or volunteer is also supported through the process.

The London Child Protection Procedures (2016) requires the employer and the Designated Officer to review the circumstances of the case and determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the organisation's procedures or practice. This learning is captured in the LADO quarterly and annual reports and incorporated into the quality assurance reporting process. The Designated LADO maintains ongoing links with internal and external partners in which to keep abreast of developments and best practice in this area. This includes:

- Monthly meetings with Camden Learning when referrals come through MASH from Ofsted
- Delivery of termly multi-agency LADO briefings to support organisations about allegations around staff via The Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)
- Liaison with Camden Fostering to track LADO consultations /referrals
- LADO attending fortnightly meetings Camden Headteachers.
- Regular attendance at the London and National LADO network meetings.

Legal Proceedings and Case Progression

Practice leadership of legal proceedings and case progression is overseen by a specialist service manager within the Quality Assurance Unit. The primary task of this role is to ensure CSSW are not only compliant with the public law reforms, but also deliver practice excellence in this area. By adopting both a practice and strategic position, the service manager supports social workers directly through the coordination and can quality assure of documents presented to Care Pathways, legal planning meetings and Court statements within public and private proceedings. Through overseeing and attending key legal meetings, the service manager provides expert advice and consultation. The provision of weekly drop-in clinics for anything legal related, the arrangement of court training through external providers and e-learning for staff as part of the induction process ensures that staff are supported to develop their confidence and skills in practice. The development of 'Practice Activists' also ensures that best practice already evident in legal matters is disseminated throughout the service.

Strategic oversight of legal proceedings and case management involve the regular review of Camden's policy and procedures in law matters as well as the monitoring

and tracking of all children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO), families within the Court arena, and post proceedings. Quarterly and annual reports are presented to senior management providing an analysis of the effectiveness and impact of legal activity for children and young people in Camden. The reports identify areas of excellence to be built upon as well as areas for development, including the learning needs of staff and the organisation. Ongoing consultation and partnership working with the senior participation development manager seeks to ensure that children and young people's participation remains central to the decision-making process. Links are also maintained with external and partner agencies, including the Courts, CAFCASS and the London case progression forum on best practice and service delivery matters.

Learning from safeguarding practice reviews and serious safeguarding incidents:

The purpose of a Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review (LSCPR) is for agencies and individuals to learn lessons to improve the way in which they work both individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It is not an inquiry into how a child died or was seriously harmed, or into who is culpable.

Learning from both serious safeguarding incidents and safeguarding practice reviews (formally known as serious case reviews), both local and national, are overseen by CSCP partners. Cases are reviewed alongside an independent reviewer to identify areas of good practice and areas of learning which shapes the work programme of the CSCP and social work practice.



The CSCP maintains dialogue with the National Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on progress made against recommendations and will share learning through briefings and learning events with social work colleagues.

Learning from Ofsted

Each year we critique our work over the preceding 12 months through a process of self-evaluation. The process of knowing ourselves enables senior managers to implement service plans that are focused on continually improving outcomes for children and families. Findings from the self-evaluation are shared by the Director of Children's Services during annual engagement meetings with our link Ofsted Officer. Key learning and recommendations arising from an ongoing programme of inspection, which include focused visits and short inspections are embedded into the Quality Assurance Framework process and regularly discussed at the Quality Assurance Practice and Development Board. Keeping abreast of and reviewing outcomes of Ofsted inspections nationally also enables us to consider regional and national themes in which to quality assure practice and service delivery.



Quality Assurance Forums

Quality assurance forums provide ongoing leadership, oversight, and review of practice in specialist areas of need. Chaired by senior managers, these include:

Name of group/meeting	CSSW membership	Purpose
Fostering and Permanence Panel	Fostering manager Permanence manager Panel adviser	Independent scrutiny of standards of fostering and making recommendations on approval and registration of foster carers and long-term foster placements
Senior Management Team meetings	Director Heads of Service Service managers	Oversight of standards of practice and service provision and delivery; main decision-making forum for CSSW
Care Pathways Panel	Director LAC Head of service/service manager LAC team managers IRO manager Resource team manager CAMHS	Oversight of decisions on accommodation, looked after status and decision making around care proceedings
Complexity Forum	Multi-agency group from the children's workforce led by the Head of Quality Assurance	Forum for case discussion and finding solutions to cases presenting difficulties.
Young Parent's panel	LACCL Head of Service/Service manager Pathways Commissioner Managers of high support and visiting parenting service Specialist Health Visitor for homeless families	Forum for discussing new referrals for the young parents' services and reviewing progress to enable coordinated decision making for all young parents who require accommodation
Young People's Pathway Panel	LACCL Head of Service LACCL service manager LACCL team managers Pathways commissioner	Forum for discussing young people who are about to be discharged from care but who present with complex needs
NEET Panel	LACCL Head of Service LACCL service manager LACCL team managers Virtual school head	Forum for discussing LAC and care leavers aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training
Participation and Engagement Group	Participation Officer Fostering manager LACCL/CIN team reps CAMHS/FWD FCG service IRO	Oversight of the development of participation and user engagement in CSSW.
Corporate Parenting Board	Director LACCL Head of Service IRO manager Participation Officer Virtual School head Reps from CIC council CAFC rep	Scrutiny of services for Camden LAC and decisions on resources.
Support and Challenge Panel	Multi-agency senior managers including the Head of Quality Assurance and attended by social workers and professional network for individual cases	Scrutiny of child protection plans where there are concerns

Multi Agency Reviews

CSSW works in partnership with a number of agencies in line with statutory expectations set out in the Children Act 2004 to carry out key safeguarding and child protection duties. This work is co-ordinated by the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The Partnership has a Learning and Improvement Framework that regularly assesses the health of the multi-agency safeguarding system in Camden through agency and service user feedback, practice reviews and audits. The Quality Assurance sub-group of the Partnership co-ordinates a programme of themed case file audits where all agencies involved with a family audit their own case files and then collectively moderate. The findings are reported to the Partnership and shared with partner agencies.



Any action plan agreed by the Partnership to improve multi-agency working is passed to the sub-group to implement and individual agencies also take their own action at agency level. In CSSW, findings are shared with social workers and managers involved in the case and where appropriate, with a wider audience if it is thought the findings relate to general social work practice. The findings of safeguarding practice reviews are also reported to the Partnership and an action plan agreed for individual agencies and its implementation monitored by the Quality Assurance sub-group.

The purpose of this process is to ensure that all the agencies involved in safeguarding children are learning organisations that are able to share information on best practice and make changes to improve outcomes for children. CSSW also has a number of joint protocols in place with other services such as Mental Health Services, Youth Offending and Substance Misuse Services. All these protocols provide a framework of interagency joint working that ensures high quality practice and provision for dealing with professional disputes available here: [Resources - Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership — CSCP](#).

Section 11 audit tools

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 is accompanied by statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, for local authorities and organisations providing direct services to children. DCSF has encouraged Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs) to develop Section 11 audit tools to ascertain compliance with these duties. The findings from these audits are scrutinised by a multi-agency panel and direct feedback on areas of good practice and learning is shared with the individual organisation. Overview reports sharing key themes from the audit is shared with partners and an action plan developed as a result to changes to frontline service delivery to improve the safety and welfare of children. The purpose of this process is to ensure that all the agencies involved in safeguarding children are learning organisations that are able to share information on best practice and make changes to improve outcomes for children.

4.2 Learning

Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board

The Quality Assurance and Practice Development Board is the centralised mechanism for overseeing our quality assurance activities. Chaired by the Director of Children’s Services, and attended by key stake holders from across Camden Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW), the core purpose of the board is to:

- Drawing on a range of information in which to quality assure our practice, service delivery and measure impact through a continual cycle of practice learning and development activities.
- To ensure a continual feedback loop exists to and from each service and this Board.
- To ensure practice is aligned to the Camden Model of Social Work.
- To explore practice themes arising from auditing activity in which to inform and guide practice at an individual, team and organisational level.
- Using data & organisation “self-knowledge” including an understanding of our exceptions to drive positive change and embed a learning-culture rather than compliance.
- Establish a high standard of evidence-based practice that manages risk, focusses on meaningful and sustainable change within the child’s timescales, and achieves good outcomes for children and families
- To identify gaps and areas for scrutiny and plan programme going forward to measure impact through the development and review of practice and strategic level action plans.
- To ensure user feedback informs service design and delivery
- Ensure learning and practice development is disseminated to extended managers via the monthly Practice Learning and Development meetings.
- Complaint and compliments to be considered quarterly

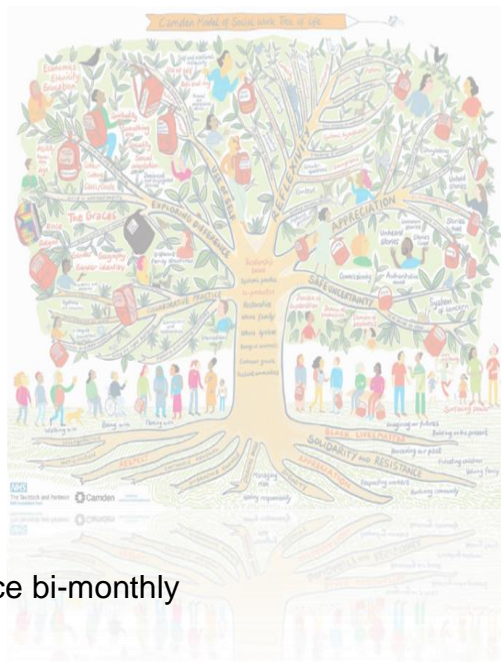
Agenda:

Part 1

1. Notes and updates from last meeting
2. CHaT and Key Practice Trends
3. Individual case reviews/AIs
4. Early Help service feedback
5. CIN service feedback
6. CLA and Leaving Care service feedback,
7. permanency, fostering update
8. Fostering and Adoption service feedback
9. IRO/CPO alerts and overview
10. Child and Family feedback
11. Audits undertaken and feedback.

Part 2

Themed discussion about practice – will take place bi-monthly



4.3 Development



Training and
Continued
Professional
Development

The Council recognises that social workers are among its most valuable assets and that the quality of social work services provided will only ever be as good as the social workers involved in its delivery. Camden expects its social workers to demonstrate a high level of competence, knowledge and professionalism and will invest heavily in the training and development of social workers so that they are better able to meet the needs of service users and make a difference to people's lives.

The CSSW Academy

The children's workforce development strategy sets out 8 priorities for the recruitment, retention and professional development of the children's workforce in Camden and provides an overarching framework for how these priorities will be met over the next two years (2000 – 2022). Camden is committed to creating the conditions for social work to thrive in Camden which supports improved outcomes for children and families. To realise our vision and strategic workforce priorities, we have created a Camden Children's Safeguarding and Social Work Academy that provides a framework to deliver workforce development activity and our learning and development programme from newly qualified social workers to senior leaders. As a learning organisation, the Academy aims to raise standards and drive improvement through continued development of social work practice in order to deliver high quality services. Enabling staff to continue their professional development through learning opportunities is crucial to this process.

Our aim is that social workers in Camden receive the right kind of training at each stage of their professional development and career pathway so that they have the necessary skills and competence to deliver a high standard of service and progress their own personal and career development. The strategy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- ensure social work staff have the necessary skills, tools and experience to deliver a high standard of service
- enable individual social workers to learn and develop along a defined career pathway
- help staff and teams to deliver high quality social services that improve outcomes for service users and fully discharges the council's legal duties
- implement the requirements of the Social Work Taskforce recommendations for the training, development, and professional standards for social workers
- contribute to the development of Camden's social work workforce
- promote a culture of learning and continuous development and improvement in Camden
- provide a system of managerial oversight and quality assurance for social work training that continually scrutinises and measures the impact of training and allows improvement of provision.

Standards and Frameworks

To take account of the complexities facing social care providers and to support the frontline social work workforce in delivering these strategies, Camden has adopted the following standards and frameworks.

Post qualifying standards: (AKA Knowledge and skills statements) and Professional Capabilities Framework

An overarching framework of professional standards that sets out the required skills, aptitudes and knowledge social workers must attain at various points during their training and post-qualification experience and against which their career pathways will progress. All Camden's social work training will be designed to complement both frameworks.

The Standards for Employers of Social workers in England (2020)

A framework of expectations regarding the management and support of social workers. The standards set out what team leaders and senior managers need to do to provide a working environment where social workers can practice safely and effectively. This includes a supervision framework that promotes learning and development opportunities, provides space for reflective practice, and encourages evidence-based practice through access to high quality research resources.

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

Designed to help newly qualified social workers (NQSW) develop their skills, knowledge and capability and strengthen their professional confidence. With the support of their employers, NQSW will need to show that they have met the capabilities statements at ASYE level as set out in the PCF and PQS. Evidence will be built up and reviewed over the year to show sufficient achievement in a range of essential skills, knowledge and values that cover these standards.

Continued Professional Development Framework (CPD)

Continuing professional development is regulated by Social Work England, which sets the standards of continuing professional development needed for continued registration. All social workers are expected to continue to develop their skills and improve their practice through training and learning activities. The CPD framework recognises that learning can and does take place in a variety of ways and different circumstances. Camden's core training programme for Children's social work aims to provide a framework of continued professional development based on the needs of the work force so that they can develop and progress within the capabilities framework.

<https://camden.learningpool.com/>

Multi-agency training

The CSCP's multi-agency safeguarding training programme is available to all staff and volunteers working in Camden. A varied safeguarding training programme is developed in response to the training needs analysis, responding to emerging trends and areas of need. It is encouraged that CSSW colleagues participate in CSCP

training at the appropriate level (group 3) as the sessions provide an opportunity to collectively discuss challenges with partners and enables an understanding of one another's roles in safeguarding vulnerable families. The CSCP training programme is also supported by case learning events and workshops. CSCP training programme available here: [Upcoming Training Courses - Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership — CSCP](#)

Access to research

Camden aims to ensure that social work practice is evidence-based, using the most up to date research, and that all social workers have access to research resources including:

- Research in Practice (RIP); social workers can access this using their Camden email address in order to register. The website also gives access to Adult Social Care research www.researchinpractice.org.uk
- Making Research Count (MRC): the quarterly bulletin is sent out by the Professional Social Work Educator and social workers can register to access training etc. using their Camden email address.

Learning from engaging in research

Research into all aspects of children's services is an important part of the professional landscape and as such research that is firmly evidence led is valuable in continuing to improve services and service delivery. As a result, we frequently take part in research projects and surveys.

Communities of Practice

A community of practice is a group of people who share a commitment, passion or concern for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly together. Delivering high standards of practice is therefore enhanced through the process of leading from within:

Peer mentoring is used as a means of ensuring established social workers and Advanced practitioners are able to share their knowledge and experience with junior colleagues so that information about good practice and what works is made available to all social workers.

Shadowing of experienced colleagues is also used as a method of training during induction periods, to introduce new workers to different teams and services and to enable observation of practice.

Practice workshops are provided by specialist social workers with in-depth knowledge of specific practice areas, such as Child Protection Officers, to share good practice with social workers and provide an opportunity to discuss cases.

Teaching Partnerships. Camden is a member of the North London Social Work Teaching Partnership (NLSWTP) and the North Central London Social Work Education Network (NCL-SWEN). These partnerships enable increased creativity and the attainment of excellence in social work education and practice through closer collaboration, peer exchange and the sharing of good practice

Service Planning and Development

It is essential that our quality assurance activities not only seek to maintain high levels of practice standards, but also contributes to a learning organisation that is skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge in which to adapt, develop and grow.

Continious improvement requires a commitment to learning, and through our quality assurance framework we seek to meet our corporate objectives which includes those outlined in our Camden Plan. Service wide planning and development is a partnership between the Quality Assurance Unit and the Senior Management Team (SMT), and is driven by responses to the following:

- Developments in social work practice
- Changes in legislation and statutory guidance
- New research
- Performance indicators
- Government initiatives
- Service user feedback.
- Inspection recommendations

The Policy, Participation, Staff and Service Development team based within the Quality Assurance Unit is our golden thread for identifying, responding to and implementing whole scale service improvements. Drawing together a specialist mix of experts in their field, the team, led by a service manager, includes:

- An officer responsible for writing divisional and multi-agency policies, procedures and protocols
- 3 governance and performance management information officers
- a participation and user engagement officer
- 2 MOSAIC development officers and 2 MOSAIC super-users
- a practice educator responsible for oversight of social worker learning and development.

Working in close consultation with the workforce, the team can respond flexibly and quickly to the ever changing social, political, educational, and technological landscape that shapes social work practice.

Policy Development

The Quality Assurance Unit provides the framework for delivering high standards of service by producing policy, procedure and guidance for social work staff; This includes the development of multi-agency protocols and agreed joint working processes across adult social care, education, Youth Justice Service and mental health services. The unit has a central role in the communication and dissemination of policy and practice information to staff but also in the writing, production and quality assurance of service information leaflets for service users.

Performance and Information service

The Performance & Information service within the Quality Assurance Unit provides a development, management information and analysis service to all services across

Children's Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW). Management information is collected and reported at various intervals as this allows us to build up a "snap-shot" picture of activity within the division as well as longer-term picture that enables us to spot trends and emerging issues. The QA Governance & Performance Development Manager and Child Protection Quality Assurance Information Officer are responsible for producing all the Children's statutory returns for CIN, Child Protection and Looked After Children to the Government including the CIN Data Collection and the 903 (LAC) return. The Information team provides advice on research and statistics to senior managers and other colleagues within the Quality Assurance Unit to support the delivery of service and is responsible for liaising with Government Departments in relation to any questions that are raised relating to the data. Service planning and development is evidenced through strategic data reporting including:

- A monthly and annual management information report to Senior Management Team on service activity and trends.
- Annual statutory returns to the Department for Education.
- Quarterly returns to the RIIA/LLIA and London Councils
- Annual reports to the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership
- A monthly Vulnerable CYP survey (Covid) to the DfE

Innovating social work practice

The Quality Assurance Unit contributes to service development by engaging in initiatives with outside agencies around safeguarding issues (including for children abused through sexual exploitation, missing children, sex offenders and children at risk of trafficking etc); by undertaking pieces of research to improve underperforming areas of service and through the production of best practice guidance. As part of its remit to improve social work practice, the Unit has been heavily involved in the introduction of new approaches to social care and the re-modelling of social work practice in Camden. In all cases, the Unit will ensure that whenever there is any innovation in practice or new training, the impact of this on practice is carefully monitored to ensure it is leading to an improvement in practice and outcomes for children.

Equality Impact Assessments

As a council, Camden has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 (known as the Public Sector Equality Duty). This means the council must have due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other conduct prohibited by the Act when developing policy or service development. The duty covers any form of discrimination based on the following characteristics (known as protected groups)

To ensure the duty is implemented, the council uses an equality impact assessment (EIA) to look at how any changes in policy or service delivery may impact on protected groups prior to implementation of the changes. It is corporate policy that that individual service areas, through the service manager and Head of Service, carries out an EIA whenever changes to policy, service structure or delivery are proposed as a result of quality assurance activity.



4. What difference are we making to children, young people and families in Camden?

Our testimonials:

'I have known [the social worker] for 2 years... When I turn 18 she will go, not good. She involves me with everything she does. I am very happy with her. She is always contacting me, always asking me what I need, she's always working for something I need. She is always positive, when I feel down, when I ask her about my status, she always says positive things and makes me motivated...she is involved, you have someone to help you, it makes life easier...' – Young person

My previous experience of social workers was not good. I must have had over 20 social workers in my life, but the last two...[the social worker] was amazing and gave me the opportunity to see what I was like as a parent. [The second social worker] is lovely, she offers me support. It's completely different from before, it's a lot better. She sees me as a good mum. I was on PLO but worked hard and my ex-partner has worked hard to come off. We have a review in September. Social Services have supported me, worked alongside me, its been a long road but it will feel fantastic when they are no longer around!' – Mother

"Something happened when [the social worker] turned up at the 11th hour... I don't know where he came from... he came from out of the blue to steer a rocky ship through the storm. He's not your average run of the mill practitioner, he's a social worker, but a social worker at the top of his field... I can talk to this guy... there is trust between us, I didn't trust anyone before. I've got a lot of respect for this guy. He knows where I'm coming from

and I know where he is coming from. He takes the time to listen... When he arrived, the tide started to go out and its been much calmer ever since." – Father

"My relationship with social workers is complicated...but there is a before [this social worker] and after [this social worker]. Before, the way they approach us, they increase the problem, made me scared of them, I wasn't clear about the process, I was trying to understand. I have to rely on the system, but I'm scared of them. But after he came in, he brings a human approach, the power he has in his hands, he has a lot of respect. You can depend on him, he listens, he asks me my views, he tells me clearly what the mistakes are, he says "I want to do things for you, but you also have to help me" ... he's not soft, he has a lot of experience and is very professional" – Mother

I've had social workers in the past, I used to feel that they weren't listening, but [the social worker] has been brilliant. She understands the whole story, its nice to be believed, she doesn't judge. You can talk to her, be straight up and honest, like talking to a family member. She lets me know what things need doing. I never thought I'd get on with a social worker, who would... I never did before, but she got me support, helped my children. I've dealt with many, many social workers in the past, but out of all the social workers I've had, she is a 10 out of 10... make sure you put that in your feedback! – Mother

Appendix 2: Quality Assurance practice focus and responsible officer/service area

Responsible officer/service area	Quality assurance focus
Contact, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Brief Intervention teams (BIT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of Contact/MASH processes to be checked by the MASH manager on a weekly basis from MOSAIC reports. • Quality of assessment, analysis and decision-making on cases to be measured via bi-annual audits of 30 cases for all RAG ratings carried out by team managers/IROs.
Brief Intervention/Family Intervention teams (BIT and FIT, Child in Need Teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of CIN reviews to be checked by the team manager on a weekly basis from MOSAIC reports. • Implementation of the CIN plan and quality of decision making and outcomes to be included in all audits
Children Looked After Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of all care planning tasks such as reviews, visits, medicals, developmental checks, immunisations, dental checks and PEPs to be checked by the LAC manager on a weekly basis from MOSAIC reports. • Completion of care plans, placement and other key LAC documents to be checked by the LAC manager on a monthly basis on receipt of reports from the QAU. • Quality of updated assessments, care planning and decisions on permanence to be measured via the CSSW audit programme during Practice Week. • Implementation of the care and permanence plan, placement stability and improved outcomes to be included in all audits. • Quality and timeliness of needs assessment, pathway plans to be included in audits of cases where the young person is 16 and over.
Leaving care team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of pathway reviews and visits to be checked by the team manager on a weekly basis from MOSAIC reports. • Quality of pathway assessment and planning, decision-making on independence and attainment of good outcomes to be measured via the CSSW audit programme during Practice Week.
Fostering team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of fostering assessments measured via regular audit and by the Fostering and Permanence Panel. • Effectiveness of the fostering recruitment strategy checked by the fostering manager. • Quality of placements assessed during visits, including unannounced visits by supervising social workers and via the foster care review process. • Timeliness of visits and reviews and completion of fostering assessments and referral to fostering panel checked by the fostering manager on a monthly basis using MOSAIC reports. • Quality of management of foster carer's training and development progress checked by the fostering manager through supervision and audit of foster carer's training manuals.

Quality Assurance Framework

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and accuracy of record keeping around foster carers and fostering placements checked regularly by the fostering manager via a MOSAIC report. • Annual report to CSCP by the Private Fostering service on private fostering activity, trends and standards. • Annual report to DMT by the Panel chair on fostering activity, trends and standards.
Permanence team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of the quality and timeliness of kinship care and special guardianship assessments and processes checked by the Permanence team manager • Oversight of the permanence planning for children and young people
Resources team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and availability of care provision from external private and voluntary providers through monitoring, reviewing and user feedback. • Quality and accuracy of record keeping around private and voluntary placements checked regularly by team manager. • Suitability of placements and quality of care packages measured through placement request information, attendance at key meetings and involvement in care planning. • Quality of the supervised contact service measured by feedback from parents, children, social workers and the Family courts.
LAC virtual school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and timeliness of PEPs
Head of QAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of the CSSW audit programme • Annual report to SMT on audits • Role of the Principal Social Worker • Chair of the CSCP Quality Assurance sub-group.
All managers and supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of staff supervision to be checked by managers and supervisors via monthly MOSAIC reports. • Quality of reflective supervision through audit of supervision notes and case audits to reflect the impact of supervision on practice. • Impact of supervision on staff development through audit of the quality and implementation of staff training and development plans. • Quality and safety of the work environment to be checked regularly through workload analysis, supervision and discussion in team meetings. • Quality of case recording checked via CSSW audit programme. • Staff performance measured via the annual performance development system. • Quality of multi-agency working measured via yearly external audit programme carried out through the CSCP.
Service managers, Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of quality assurance systems in their service area and across the division. • Quality and timeliness of staff supervision and case decisions through supervision of managers and audit of case records and supervision records.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of service provision through development of services and resources, restructuring of service delivery.
Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency decision-maker in relation to adoption and fostering decisions. Overview of all quality assurance processes as a member of the senior management team.

Appendix 2: Schedule of routine management information cycles

Report title/scope	Frequency	Recipients
Children who are currently missing list and record compliance checks	Weekly	TMs, CSE and Missing Analyst, Service Managers
CP children living at addresses out of borough report	Weekly	SWs
CP children with visits due in next week (all teams)	Weekly	SPs and TMs
CP conferences incomplete on MOSAIC	Weekly	IRO service, MOSAIC Superusers
CP lists to borough agencies (NHS, CAIT)	Weekly	All hospitals and CAIT team
Current CP plan with last visit date & last visit seen alone report	Weekly	SPs, TMs, Service managers, Head of Service, Children's SW Director, MOSAIC Superusers
Initial CP conferences with 1st Review timeliness reporting	Weekly	IROs, Business Support
Review CP conference with next Review timeliness reporting	Weekly	IROs, Business Support
Strategy discussions not yet started & started but incomplete	Weekly	TMs
Assessments not yet started and started but incomplete with working days calculations (current working days open and 35 th working day)	Fortnightly	SPs, TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service
Fortnightly allocations and caseload per team analysis	Fortnightly	SPs, TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service, Children's SW Director
Fortnightly CIN visits due	Fortnightly	SPs and TMs
16+ homeless notifications and disposals report	Monthly	LAC and Leaving Care TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service
Analysis of distribution of working days from last strategy discussion to ICPC	Monthly	TMs, Service managers, Head of Service, SPs, MOSAIC Superusers, Children's SW Director
Assessment factors consistency	Monthly	SPs, TMs, MOSAIC Superusers
Assessment factors forms not created	Monthly	SPs, TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service, MOSAIC Superusers
Care and Pathway Plans compliance reporting	Monthly	IROs
Children home educated and known to children's SW service	Monthly	SWs, Education Welfare Officer, Head of QAU
Child and Family assessment timescale monitoring	Monthly	TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service, Children's SW Director

Quality Assurance Framework

Children & Young People's Disability Service clients aged 18+ assessments timescale monitoring	Monthly	SPs, TMs, , Head of Service
Children & Young People's Disability Service clients aged 18+ reviews timeliness and compliance monitoring	Monthly	SPs, TMs, Head of Service
Children & Young People's Disability Service clients aged 18+ visit monitoring	Monthly	CYPDS: SPs, TMs, Head of Service
Children & Young People's Disability Service Performance Overview (summary of all CYPDS SW indicators)	Monthly	CYPDS: SPs, TMs, Head of Service
Children & Young People's Disability Service Transition assessments not started and started but incomplete	Monthly	CYPDS: SPs, TMs, Head of Service
Children & Young People's Disability Service Transition Assessments timescale monitoring	Monthly	CYPDS: SPs, TMs, Head of Service
Children & Young People's Disability Service u18 reviews timescale monitoring	Monthly	CYPDS: SPs, TMs, Head of Service, Short Breaks coordinator
Children & Young People's Disability Service u18 Short Breaks status case reviews	Monthly	CYPDS: SPs, TMs, Head of Service, Short Breaks coordinator
Children on CP plans who are known to Housing department	Monthly	Monitoring and Development Officer (Housing)
Children subject to CP in the last month (to Tavistock Clinic)	Monthly	NHS safeguarding lead at Tavistock
CIN reviews performance timescale monitoring (includes list of overdue reviews and reviews due in next month)	Monthly	SPs, TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service, Children's SW Director, MOSAIC Superusers
CIN visits timescale monitoring and performance overview	Monthly	SPs, TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service, Children's SW Director, MOSAIC Superusers
CP conferences reviewed on time	Monthly	IROs, Business Support
CP monthly visit compliance monitoring/performance report	Monthly	TMs, Service managers, Head of Service, SPs, Children's SW Director
CP plans durations report	Monthly	TMs, Service managers, Head of Service, SPs
CP visit 12 month overview per team	Monthly	TMs, Service managers, Head of Service, SPs
CSSW Performance Overview (summary of all Children's SW indicators)	Monthly	SWs, SPs, TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service, QAU, Corporate Strategy, Commissioning, Children's SW Director, Executive Director, DMM
Detailed allocations report per worker and team	Monthly	TMs, Service managers, Head of Service, SPs, Children's SW Director
Duration of open cases report	Monthly	TMs, Service managers, Head of Service, SPs

Quality Assurance Framework

Front Door monthly management information operational reporting	Monthly	MASH manager, One Stop Early Help TM, Head of Service (CIN, Early Help), Service Managers (CIN and Family Support/Complex Families), SW AD
MOSAIC Episodes not copied to siblings compliance monitoring	Monthly	SPs, TMs, Service managers, Head of Service
GOSH Performance Overview	Monthly	SPs, TMs, GOSH Head of Service
LAC health overview (to NHS)	Monthly	LAC Health Team, LAC Head of Service
LAC list of checked placements/addresses with educational consultant/SEN/EHCP details & list of LAC starting/ceasing in last month	Monthly	LAC Virtual School, Head of LAC service, IRO Manager
LAC review child and YP participation	Monthly	IRO service
LAC reviews timeliness and episode compliance	Monthly	TMs, Heads of Service, IRO service, MOSAIC Superusers, Children's SW Director
LAC visits timeliness reporting	Monthly	SPs, TMs, Heads of Service, MOSAIC Superusers, Children's SW Director
LAC with checked placement details (to Business Support service)	Monthly	Business Support
LAC with SEN plans and EHCP support - details of support levels and arrangements (to LAC Virtual School)	Monthly	LAC Virtual School Head, Operations Manager and other VS staff
LAC without correct placement recorded as care package (involves full audit of all LAC records to ascertain correct placement and check this is recorded)	Monthly	Resource Team, TMs, MOSAIC Superusers, Heads of Service
List of all LAC ceasing in last 6 months	Monthly	LAC Virtual School Head, VS Operations Manager and other VS staff, LAC Head of Service, IRO Manager
Monthly CP figures for Child Abuse Investigation Team	Monthly	CAIT
Open cases with information gaps report	Monthly	TMs, Service managers, Head of Service, SPs
Care Leavers Pathway Plan compliance monitoring	Every 2 months	SPs, TMS and Heads of Service
Care Leavers visits monitoring	Every 2 months	SPs, TMs and LAC Head of Service
Quality Audit compliance reporting	Every 2 months	TMs, Heads of Service, MOSAIC Superusers
Transitions plan monitoring for 17 year old CYPDS cases	Quarterly	CYPDS TMs and Head of Service, Adults Social Work service, NHS
Case Supervision compliance monitoring	Quarterly	SPs, TMs, Service managers and Heads of Service
Children's SW service indicators for DMT reporting	Quarterly	Corporate Strategy
Compliance Audit compliance monitoring	Quarterly	Team Managers, Service managers, Heads of Service

Quality Assurance Framework

CP Child and YP conference participation	Quarterly	CSCP, Children's SW Director
CP conference attendance report for all professional agencies	Quarterly	CSCP, Children's SW Director
CSCP Data Set (all required children's SW service indicators)	Quarterly	CSCP, Children's SW Director
Deaths report – quarterly	Quarterly	QAU Head of Service, Assistant Director of Public Health
Disabled Children's Register	Quarterly	CYPDS: TMs and Head of Service
Front Door quarterly management information overview	Quarterly	MASH TM, One Stop Early Help TM, Head of Service (CIN, Early Help), Service Managers (CIN and Family Support/Complex Families), Children's SW Director
Identification and tracking of OC3 (Care Leavers) cohort and data quality checks	Quarterly	TMs, LAC Virtual School, LAC Head of Service
LAC missing episodes and offences committed report	Quarterly	Assistant Director and LAC Head of Service
LAC pregnancy (to NHS)	Quarterly	LAC Health Team, LAC Head of Service
List of all open SW cases to each Camden maintained school	Twice termly	Assistant Headteacher and CP lead for maintained primary and secondary schools
Quality Audit analysis of findings	Quarterly	Head of QAU and Auditors group
SW Workforce Profile	Every 6 months	SWs, SPs, TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service
Annual Children's SW service management information report – includes full benchmarking and data analysis	Annual	SWs, SPs, TMs, Service managers, Heads of Service, QAU, Corporate Strategy, Commissioning, Children's SW Director, Executive Director, DMM
Identification and tracking of LAC Substance Misuse cohort (to FWD substance misuse service)	Annual	FWD substance misuse service
Identification of SDQ (Emotional Health) cohort (to Business Support)	Annual	Business Support & LAC Head of Service
Pupil Premium Allocation calculation (to LAC Virtual School)	Annual	Virtual School Head and Operations Manager