

The new Framework for Quality Assurance in Wirral Children's Social Care:

This Quality Assurance Framework for children's services in Wirral has been developed to ensure there is a clear and succinct approach to understanding how well our services are doing, checking the impact of services for children, and learning from what we find to guide our improvement actions. This framework is at the heart of our ambition to provide the best possible services to children and young people and their families in Wirral. It is what they deserve, if we expect only the best for our children.

Applying the Framework to Support Learning

The key elements of the Quality Assurance framework include:
Live audits: Collaborative monthly file audits to assess the quality of recording, practice, impact and outcomes for the child.
Service dip and file sampling audits.
Direct observation of practice.
Feedback from children and families.
Feedback from staff.
Data Analysis.



Quality Assurance: The new outline

- Wirral Children's Social Care aim to gain quality assurance information from each team across the service through the implementation of this new Quality Assurance (QA) Framework.
- Teams across the service will undertake monthly live audits, these will allow teams to gain a better understanding of the quality of their work, the impact this brings for families and individual performance. There will be a focus on celebrating and recognising areas of strengths whilst also identifying areas where we need to improve.
- Team Managers will undertake a regular programme of dip sampling to ensure that performance remains a high priority.
- Observations of practice need to become a routine activity for all staff rather than an activity that only takes place at the beginning of the Social Work career.
- We will strengthen how we obtain feedback from children and their families by providing easier access to channels where feedback can be provided at any point in their journey.

- Regular reporting on the findings of the QA activity will enable learning and development opportunities to be tailored to address the needs of individuals and teams and a further cycle of quality assurance can review whether progress has been made.
- When required, further deep dive collaborative audits will be completed by the Practice Improvement Team to support wider thematic service developments or emerging areas requiring enhanced support.

Live Audits

Monthly live audits will be completed with the team by a **Senior Manager** if present, or the **Team Manager**. A case will be randomly selected from each Social Worker within the team and audited using the tools provided on the Liquid Logic System.

The process of moderation will be undertaken by **Operational Leads, Heads of Service, and the Assistant Director**, where necessary. The purpose of moderation is to support outcome focussed auditing, ensure consistency in grading and decision making, and to provide oversight of frontline practice to inform service development.

Following the completion of the live audit activity the **Senior Managers** from the relevant service will provide a report to the **Practice Improvement Team** with recommendations to support practice development, learning and improvement.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) and Child Protection (CP) Chairs will continue to undertake routine quality assurance as part of their midpoint reviews. The quality and effectiveness of the **IRO/CP Chairs'** role will be considered in monthly live audits conducted within the Safeguarding Unit.

All live audits must be sent for moderation by the **28th day** of the month.

Actions should be completed, and audits returned to the PI team for finalisation within **4 weeks** of the audit.

Service Dip Sampling Auditing

In addition to the audits above that measure quality and impact, **Team Managers** will undertake a programme of monthly dip sampling to review performance across several key areas, to include:

Case summary
 Chronology
 Visits
 Management oversight
 Voice & DLE of the child
 Life story work/direct work
 World of the adult/DLE parent

Dip samples will be completed on Liquid Logic, these will not be returned to the Practice Improvement Team, and it will be the responsibility of the **Team Manager** to close the loop with the **Social Worker (SW)** and finalise the form once completed. Reporting will be completed using Power BI.

Practice Observations

Observing practice will allow us an opportunity to fully assess the work our staff undertake. It will allow us to witness how they support and build relationships with our children and families. It is proposed that:

- **Team Managers, Advanced Practitioner (ASWP) or Social Worker** will observe the practice of **newly qualified workers (NQS)** in line with local and national Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) policy.
- All **Team Managers** and **ASWP** will observe the practice of workers within the team at least once every year; Consideration may also be given to peer observed practices.
- All **Team Managers/ASWs/SWs** to share observations with the worker and undertake a shared reflective review at the next supervision.
- Any learning from observations is to be shared with the **Operational Lead** and any themes/areas of support to be highlighted to the **Practice Improvement Team** who can support with any learning or mentoring needs identified.

Feedback from Children and Families

Feedback helps us to understand the experiences of children and families, providing an additional layer to the quality assurance framework. Feedback will be sought from families following live audits and more widely using the newly developed forms. All SWs and IROs have been made aware of the new forms and QR codes to give out to families. Any other feedback that comes in via other channels is also shared with the **Practice Improvement Team**. Any feedback received will be used to support development work and practice improvement.

Reporting

Activity	Reporting	By Whom
Live audits	Monthly	Ops Leads or HoS
Dip samples	Monthly	Power BI/Performance team data
Observed practice	Twice Yearly	Team Managers
Family feedback	Quarterly	PI Team

In addition, the **Practice Improvement Team** will provide a quarterly overview report feeding back on themes for the audits and impact for children and their families.

Closing the Loop and Learning

All of the key components described above provide useful evaluations of practice and give clear evidence and information to inform learning to improve both systems and practice. All managers

should discuss audits with their social workers in their next supervision and ensure any individual learning is identified and support is put into place. The reporting process and action plans, linked to training and development activities, closes the audit loop.

Feedback and learning from the audit activity will be disseminated to the wider workforce through the quarterly **Learning & Celebration** events. Through this regular event good practice and positive feedback will be celebrated, and there will be a spotlight on practice which has achieved a positive outcome for children and their families.

The Practice Improvement Team will take the lead in monitoring and overseeing progress in 'closing the loop' on learning. Training will be delivered that is bespoke to the needs of the teams and/or individuals where necessary. Further audit reviews will be scheduled as appropriate to evidence impact and service improvement.

All **Team Managers** will identify any workers within the team in need of individual support with improving performance. In these cases the performance management Policy and Procedure should be followed with an action plan agreed with the staff member.

Practice Improvement Team
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