

Principal Social Worker Conference

Good Outcomes for Children

Quality Assurance Workshop

January 2020

Check-in for Attendees

What is your relationship with QA?

What do people say about Quality Assurance?

"QA its important but sometimes it annoys people"

(Operational Manager)

"It's important to know where QA information goes – it should be communicated with training." (training officer)

"It can be valuable but it depends on whether it is a tick box exercise or not."
(Team Manager)

"Can let us know that we are all doing a good job and areas for improvement"
(Team Manager)

"Valuable measure that is needed to ensure effective practice and understand performance"
(project manager)

"It's really important to show good practice, however don't like areas for improvement being pointed out"
(IRO)

"QA keeps children safe."
(Senior manager)

"We have a positive experience in the assessment teams and it keeps us child focused and timely."
(Snr Social Worker)

"Not really sure what Quality Assurance is."
(social worker)

"QA holds people to account but doesn't necessarily take into account how busy SWR's are" (CP Chair).

It doesn't really effect us.
(Social Worker)



Social Workers and Managers have mixed feelings about Quality Assurance

Why is Quality Assurance Important?

QA enables us to know what we do well, what we don't do so well and work out a way to get better

- A learning organisation is the business term given to a company that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself.
- A group of people who are continually enhancing their capabilities to create what they want to create.
- Learning organisations can provide work environments that are open to creative thought, and embrace the concept that solutions to ongoing work-related problems are available inside each and every one of us.

Quality Assurance helps us to improve practice

A Learning Organisation and Ofsted?

The local authority knows itself well, is a learning organisation and can demonstrate evidence of practice that is informed, modified and sustainably improved by feedback, research and intelligence about the quality of services and the experiences of children, young people and families who use them. This may, for example, include feedback from the children in care council, change that arises from complaints that children and families make about their experiences or from successful or disrupted placements or adoption breakdown.

Good Local Authorities tend to be learning organisations

A learning organisation

Sources of knowledge?

Foster Care Forums

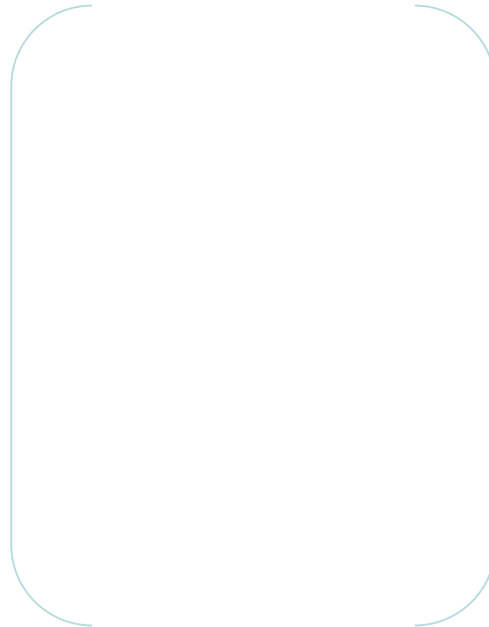
Compliments and
Complaints

Serious Case
Reviews

Adoption
Disruptions

Social work health
check

Inspections



Quality Assurance

- Audit
- Self-Evaluation

Children in Care
Council

Questionnaires

Reviews and
conferences

Peer reviews

Performance data

What type of questions are important in QA?

A.	Areas for Audit
1	Can the allocated worker tell the story of the child?
2	Has there been any drift/delays in decision making, allocation or actions taken that have impacted on the child/young person?
3	How is the assessment making things better for the child/young person? Are assessments timely and comprehensive and analytical; do they consider background factors, and do they lead to appropriately focused help and effective interventions?
4	Specialist assessment tools (e.g. CSE, Safer Lives, SDQ, Neglect tool, etc.) are used where necessary.
5	Is there evidence of effective direct work leading to sustained changes for this child and their family?

Questions
What happened? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been done to help/support you? • Were you treated respectfully? • Does the child/adult feel practitioners have listened to them? • If this feedback is after an observation, does the child/adult understand what just happened and what will happen next?
Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What difference has social care involvement made to you and your family? • Are things better or are they getting better? • Is there anything that could have been done differently?
What needs to happen next? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you like to happen next? • What else will make things better for you and/or your family?
Is there anything else want us to know?

Utilising these questions can lead to more thorough Quality Assurance

What has changed for Ofsted regarding Quality Assurance?

Ofsted's new ILAC inspection programme has resulted in a greater emphasis on the Local Authority's ability to know itself. Children's Services are expected to produce an accurate Self Evaluation Framework (SEF), which presents its strengths and weaknesses and all of the past 6 months of auditing must be sent to inspectors prior to an inspection.

The key Quality Assurance questions for Ofsted are:

- What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice with children and families in your local authority?
- How do you know it?
- How do you plan to maintain or improve practice?

Inspectors speak directly to social workers RE the outcome of auditing, expecting to see the impact of audits on case files and the narrative provided by social workers.

The new ILAC inspection has emphasised the importance of Quality Assurance within Children's Services – You have to know yourself!

Why are we so obsessed with Impact?

Children Act 1989

- Children are best looked after in their families – parents playing a full part.
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of the child in need and enable the child to be brought with his or her family
- Reduce the need to bring care or supervision proceedings

Help!

- Improve the lived experience of the child
- A focus on impact (has our support/intervention improved the lived experience of the child? If not change the support/intervention)
- Avoids drift and delay (achieve change in timescales that are right for the child)
- Prevent a focus on processes and procedures and creates a focus on the child. (The Child is our Primary Responsibility)

Social work practice has to be impactful for children to create good outcomes

Exercise 1 – What does good practice look like?

What are the key components of good practice?

Good practice creates good outcomes

Exercise 2 – What are the barriers to good practice?

Do you experience any barriers within your organisation or roles to good practice?

Social Workers often report barriers to good practice

Exercise 3 – What are the solutions?

Let's pick the top 3 barriers to good practice – can we think of any solutions?

For every barrier to good practice, there can be a solution.

What happens when QA works well?

“An embedded quality assurance culture, underpinned by rigorous performance monitoring, audits and peer reviews with a strong focus on safeguarding and early help in 2015 and 2016, has informed learning and practice development across all areas of the service.” (Shropshire, October 2018)

“A combination of clear permanence plans and good-quality direct work help children and young people to make sense of their history and experiences. The attainment of children is good. In Wolverhampton, children looked after outperform their peers.” (Wolverhampton, January 2017)

“Most children and families in Staffordshire receive a good service and benefit from good-quality social work practice. Skilled practitioners work with children and families to reduce risks, meet needs and achieve positive change”. (Staffordshire, February 2019)

“One development we believe has been particularly influential is the introduction of “practice weeks”. Twice a year, the senior leadership team spends a week out and about: observing practice and discussing cases with social workers. We ask the social worker to take the senior manager through a case, explaining the objectives and describing how the intervention is designed to help the child or family achieve what is desired. These “practice weeks” give the leadership team a good understanding of the strengths and capabilities of the organisation. Changes to policies and practice are made as a result of the observations. (Andrew Christie on the success of the Tri-borough, February 2016)”

QA that works well has a significant impact on practice and outcomes

Exercise 4 – What are your QA tools?

What are your QA tools within your organisation?

We all have our own tools within our organisation for Quality Assurance

Exercise 5 – Name 1 action that you are going to take away.

Can we all make a commitment to taking 1 action away?

We can all act as relational activists, either sharing knowledge or taking away what we have learned from colleagues.