

Children's Services November 2018 Practice Week Feedback Scrutiny Report

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Scrutiny Panel-16 January 2019

- The views of Scrutiny are requested as to whether the new format of auditing within the Children and Young People Services meets the objective of
 - Reducing bureaucracy
 - Enabling senior managers to be closer to frontline practice
 - Giving opportunities to celebrate good practice
 - Knowing where we need to improve

Practice Weeks—19-23 November 2018

- **Aim** – provide a more consistent, effective and efficient audit process to ensure interventions improve outcomes for children and young people.
- Director, Heads of Service and Service Managers will spend a full week in teams completing audits, observing practice and talking to frontline workers.
- **Benefits include:**
 - Opportunity for workers to practice discussing their work and their rationale for intervention and support
 - Provides workers with immediate feedback
 - Doubles as a learning and development opportunity for practitioners
 - Senior Management will have a good overview of what we do well and where we need to improve
 - Process is more “real time” and less bureaucracy
 - Senior managers experience front line practice first hand rather than through reading case files
 - Opportunity to seek views of service users after observations of practice

Practice Week

What happened?

- Audits and observations of practice were undertaken in:
 - Social work
 - Early Intervention
 - Inclusion Support
 - Intensive Family Support and the Youth Offending Team
- 96 files for children in receipt of support were audited across the directorate.
- 35+ observations of practice took place.
- Senior managers spent time talking to frontline practitioners about what is working well and what needs to improve.
- Practitioners have reported preferring this approach to quality assurance and liked receiving immediate feedback regarding their work.

Findings-Audits

- Audit outcomes were:

Audit Period	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Total
Legend:	 = Positive Result	 = Positive Result	 = Positive Result	 = Positive Result	
Social Work	1 (3%) 	17 (55%) 	11 (35%) 	2 (7%) 	31
Early Intervention	3 (25%) 	5 (42%) 	4 (25%) 	0 (0%) 	12
Specialist Support	0 (0%) 	5 (83%) 	1 (17%) 	0 (0%) 	6

**Trajectory of the direction of movement from the last audit period (September 2018 Practice Week Pilot)

Findings—Observations

Audit Period	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Total
Social Work	0 (0%)	13 (87%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	15
Early Intervention	3 (30%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	10
Specialist Support Services		8 (mostly good with areas for development)			8

**Observations were not previously rated.

What We Do Well

The key areas of strength identified by auditors were:

- Practitioners really know the children and young people they are working with and work hard to build positive relationships with them and their families. Inclusion Support provided strong evidence of restorative practice in action.
- The voice of the child came out as an area of strength in many audits, including examples such as:
 - The young person's voice was clear in planning and in children and young people in care reviews, including one young person who chairs his reviews
 - There was evidence of creative approaches being used to hear the child's voice where this had been difficult
 - There were some excellent examples of the use of direct work tools
- There were green shoots of progress with regards to planning in social work with several plans being judged as high quality and some incorporate EHCP and PEPs.
- Evidence that intervention is making a positive difference to children and young people, especially in Early Intervention.

Where We Need to Improve

The key areas for improvement identified by auditors were:

- The quality of assessments needs to improve within social work and Early Intervention.
- Management oversight was an area for improvement across all areas except Inclusion Support. Supervision needs to take place on a monthly basis and management recording improved within the various systems that are used.
- Child focused care planning, including permanency planning, continues to require further development and plans between social work and Specialist Support Services need to improve.
- Schools also expressed their feelings that Early Help Assessments made the referral process more difficult and served as a barrier to accessing early Intervention/social care interventions.
- This audit highlighted the need to continually review thresholds to ensure that they are being applied consistently and that children are supported at the right level.

What Next?

- Practice Week will continue to take place twice/year but will now run differently.
 - Practice Week will run over two weeks, with auditors auditing for a total of four days.
 - Audits will not be predetermined. Instead, auditors will randomly choose files to audit while sitting in teams.
- Auditors will spend practice days across a variety of services, including their own.
- Service User Feedback will be obtained as part of observations completed.

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