

REPORT TO: Children, Young People and Families
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 8th September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director of Children's Services

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People & Families

SUBJECT: Quarterly Quality assurance Report

WARD(S): All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide PPB with an update on the quality of practice in Childrens services through audit findings.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 65 Case file audits have been completed over quarter one. The findings in quarter 1 support the improvements being seen across services and evidence progress being seen due to stabilisation of the workforce and strengthened practice.
- 3.2 The number of audits graded as inadequate continues to fall both in overall effectiveness and through the audit sub headings. The service continue to utilise differing approaches to improve practice, this will continue.
- 3.3 The grading within the subgroups can be effected by recording issues. For example where a worker has completed a piece of work or a meeting but has not had opportunity to upload the work to the record, or where the quality of the recording does not reflect the quality of the work. In these instances the grade at audit will reflect the work on the child's record.
- 3.4 Lower audit returns in some areas across the services has resulted in skewed data that does not reflect the overarching practice and therefore the numbers of audits graded inadequate in Children in Care services for example looks high but this is because of a number of audits not being completed due to staff absence. There is evidence in feedback from children / carers and parents of good practice and positive relationship building.
- 3.5 ICART monthly audits consider the quality of partnership referrals

and the response to those referrals. Significant work is taking place to support improved quality of referrals and ensure strong management oversight of the screening process.

- 3.6 Overall audits confirm that practice is improving. There is variability in practice and this is attributed to changes in workforce and embedding changes that will strengthen service delivery.
- 3.7 The QMR quarter 1 report identifies a steadying of data and practice and this is supported within the audits. A focus needs to remain on the quality of management oversight and supervision as this area will drive practice quality. The Quality assurance work will continue to monitor the progress of initiatives such as the edge of care service, discharge service and family time.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Continued reduction of children coming into care will support the savings. The Audits and QMR data both align in respect of improved practice and reduction of numbers entering care of the LA.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

QAF provides a measure of how we are working towards improving and promoting success and wellbeing for families and children.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

n/a

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Have a strong and robust audit framework for identifying and responding across all agencies is key to supporting children and young people, and partners are clear about their responsibilities and role in working together.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

n/a

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

n/a

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

n/a

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Quality assurance activity will continue to support the LA in identifying strengths to build on and risks to address and track progress.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’