



Children's Services Quality Assurance summary for ISC Board



Introduction

This report has been created to help the Improving Services to Children Board understand quality assurance activity undertaken by Children's Services, HBC in the quarter.

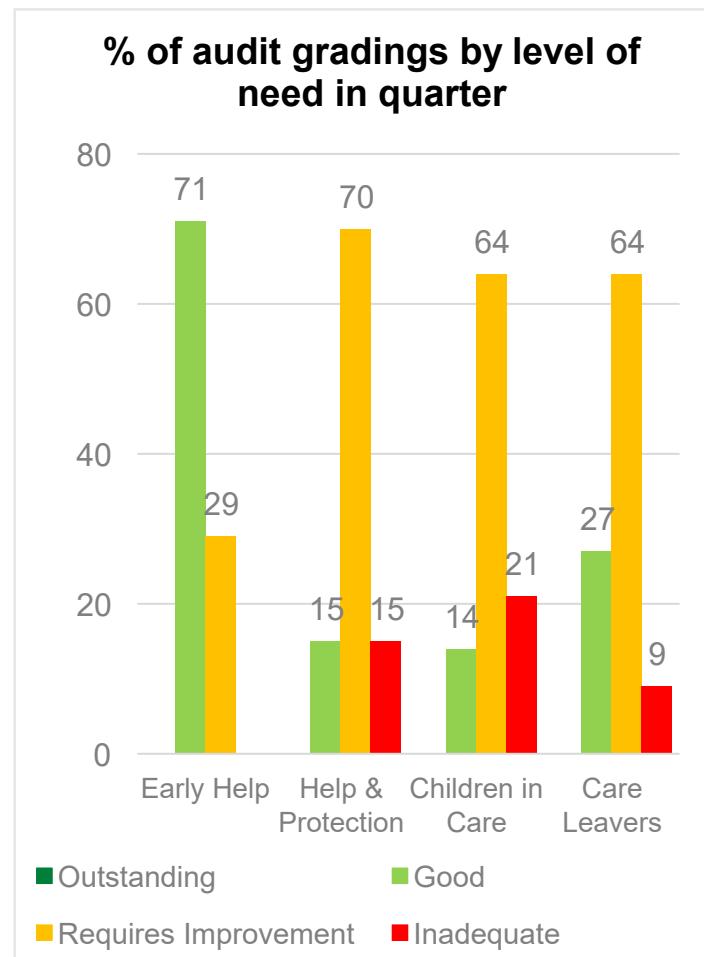
This report covers:

- Grading of audit with comparator data for understanding trend, including break down by level of need
- Moderation activity including outcome of moderation
- Summary of strengths and progress identified in the quarter
- Areas that are continued areas of focus
- Actions being undertaken

This report **covers Q1 2025-26 (April – June 2025)**. The report covers the activity undertaken against the monthly deep dive case audit programme by Early Help and Children's Social Care, monthly iCART multi-agency audits and thematic audits undertaken during the quarter. Any findings from ad hoc managers quality assurance activity undertaken is also included in the summary of strengths and progress, areas of focus and actions being undertaken.

Monthly Audit Programme

During the period Q1 2025-26 (April – June 2025) 65 audits have been completed across Early Help and Children's Social Care.



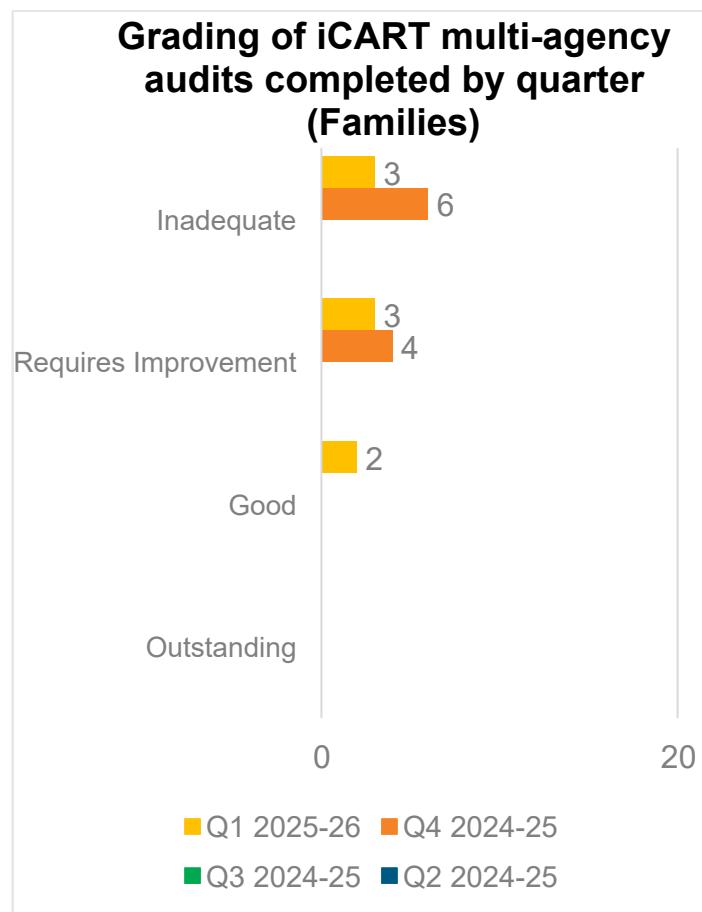
Moderations

This quarter 32 audits were subject to moderation. Of these 9 had their grading changed through moderation (28% of the audits moderated).

Original grading of audit	# Retained original grading after moderation	# Changed grading after moderation
Outstanding	1	1 Good 0 RI 0 Inadequate
Good	14	0 Outstanding 7 RI 0 Inadequate
Requires Improvement	12	0 Outstanding 0 Good 2 Inadequate
Inadequate	6	0 Outstanding 0 Good 0 RI

Monthly multi-agency iCART audits

During the period **Q1 2025-26 (April – June 2025)** **8 families** were subject to multi-agency iCART audits.



Thematic audits & ad hoc manager quality assurance activity

During the period **Q1 2025-26 (April – June 2025)** the following thematic audits have been completed:

- Placement With parents (PWP) 10 children across 7 families.
- Prevention of Homelessness and Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 Year Olds who may be homeless and/or Require Accommodation; and Duty to Refer – 3 children
- Under 2's - engagement and support of Fathers (11 children)

Additionally, during the period, the following ad hoc manager quality assurance activity has been completed:

- Voice of the child, making good decisions and providing effective help
- QA of children's plans
- Quality and strength of the child's views in visit records and their contribution in CIN reviews
- Dip sampling of placement requests for children in care
- Observation of practice ASYE SW visit
- Reviewed the IRM Footprint and impact in respect of the completion of Private Fostering Assessments and Arrangements. (4 children)
- Dip sample of the initial visit from the IRO to children (10 Children)
- Review of CP categories at ICPC (6 families)
- Review of overdue assessments for CIC (92 Children)
- Children not seen alone 4 years plus on CIN, CP or CIC plans

Areas of Strength identified through quality assurance activity

- Timely response to risk
- Assessment captures the lived experience of children
- Quality of assessment - evidence of well written assessments, voice of the child is increasingly stronger on file Early help continues to have no audits graded as inadequate.
- For the audits with an overall grade of RI, there are some pockets of good practice captured within the sub-gradings
- 14 of 16 (87.5%) children subject to reaudit had improved practice and gradings
- Early help continues to evidence good practice in terms of direct work and engaging with children and their families
- Management oversight drives plans and gives clear directions to workers to best support families in reflective supervision
- Management oversight that is timely and evidencing scrutiny of risk is evident alongside prompt response to those children needing immediate support and risk management via strategy meetings and s47
- Social workers are evidencing relationship-based practice that is having a positive impact, and this is supported by family feedback
- Evidence of stronger voice of the child
- Timely PEP meetings, direct work with children, good relationship-based practice for our CIC

Feedback Quotes from family

- **I've learnt it is ok to reach out and ask for help. The worker's openness and honesty has allowed me to make decisions throughout our time together and for the future. Aswell as protecting and safeguarding around my child, I have felt fully supported both practically and emotionally**
- I was expecting someone to talk down to me, especially being a man, but SW didn't do that. I feel trust in her which is something I like, she seems really nice
- **I like MAP. It means agencies are accountable**
- Go in as a victim ... come outs as a survivor - it was (Worker's) referral and the "Best thing ever"
- **I just want to say SW is a brilliant social worker she took time to help me and understand and work through the situation and was very truthful with what she was saying about the process**
- They have made a huge amount of difference, I've been able to develop into the adult I am today, and my worker has aided that journey quite considerably and I owe him a lot for that
- **I find having a PA amazing!**



Areas of learning and development identified through quality assurance activity

- Threshold application to be consistent
- Actions within planning are not always SMART
- Supervision is not always reflective or driving planning for children and young people
- Changes in Social Worker is a common denominator in audits graded as inadequate
- Supervision and management oversight remains a targeted area to achieve sustained improvement
- Father inclusive practice needs to be strengthened across all service areas
- Chronologies need to be improved and purposeful
- Case summaries need attention on a regular basis to include accurate information and contingency planning
- Direct work to be included on children's records with context and meaning
- Management grip and oversight in improving and driving outcomes
- Positive relationship-based practice is needed to drive improving outcomes for children and their families.

Feedback Quotes from family



- Social Worker didn't always return my calls
- Plan some visits further in advance to allow Child to prepare please
- Answer text messages in timely way and Shared holiday dates (when SW is on AL)
- C has had many different social workers in her life

Our response to quality assurance findings

The full service reflect on findings from quality assurance at monthly Aiming High meetings. From this actions are identified to ensure that good practice is embedded across the full service, or areas of learning and development are responded to with actions that the full service can use to support consistency of practice.

In the last quarter the following key actions have been identified for action as a result of quality assurance:

Action agreed	Lead	Timescale
Review Tri-X documentation and Practice Standards to ensure aligned to improve consistency in practice for visiting timescales for CP children.	Kadie Molyneux	September 2025