



Northumberland County Council

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

02 November 2023

Children's Social Care: Quality of Practice Framework

Report of Councillor(s) Guy Renner-Thompson, Cabinet Member for Inspiring Young People

Responsible Officer(s): Audrey Kingham, Executive Director for Children, Young People & Education

1. Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan

This report links to the Corporate plan priority of Tackling Inequalities: Children and Young People have the Best Start in Life and Grow Up Well: Keeping our children safe through early support, assessment and delivering our statutory functions, including being an effective Corporate Parent for those we care for and supporting our care leavers.

2. Purpose of report

The report is to share the Framework that is used to reassure ourselves about how we evaluate practice in Northumberland Children's Social Care. The framework outlines the numerous mechanisms that we use to explore the quality of practice and identify learning and continuous improvement. This document highlights the quantitative and qualitative methods that we adopt in Northumberland, striving for better outcomes for our children and young people through our early help and statutory functions.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Members identify areas for scrutiny, challenge and clarification.

Members recognise how we assure ourselves that we are improvement lives and safeguarding children and young people.

4. **Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable**

27 July 2023

5. **Background**

The most recent Quality of Practice Framework was launched in March 20123 to outline and highlight our methodology for looking at the quality of our practice in Children's Social Care. The Framework is used to steer the workforce (including Managers and Senior Managers) in line with our model of practice, Signs of Safety, and is an integral document to demonstrate to Ofsted in any inspection as to how we work with families and partner agencies to work with the priorities outlined from the Corporate Plan as cited above.

6. **Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations**

7. **Implications**

Policy	CSC practice is underpinned by a range of policies which are based in legislation, regulation, and national practice guidance
Finance and value for money	This report does not have financial implications, it is to share the framework and mechanisms to explore quality of practice
Legal	The provision of Children's social care is underpinned by legislation and regulation. This self-assessment is part of the oversight of CSC services by Ofsted the regulatory body.
Procurement	Commissioning of services in particular external placements are rigorously managed and overseen by senior managers.
Human resources	Responses to the workforce recruitment and retention challenges are supported by HR.
Property	One element of future planning includes the building of new children's homes both to meet demand locally and to reduce expenditure on external placements.
The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?	No - not required at this point CSC work with, support, and safeguard the most vulnerable children in Northumberland.
Risk assessment	Quality of Practice Framework outlines the mechanisms for inherently identifying risks and would flag areas of risk for the council and links to the overall corporate risk register.

Crime and disorder	The Youth Justice service is one element of social care provision and has been subject to inspection this year by HMIP which is referenced in the Self Assessment.
Customer considerations	The leadership pledge and the practice framework bedded within CSC has effective engagement with children and families with whom we work at the centre of what we do.
Carbon reduction	None have been identified
Health and wellbeing	None have been identified
Wards	(All Wards);

8. Background papers

Quality of Practice Framework

9. Links to other key reports already published

Not applicable

10. Author and Contact Details

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