

## Appendix 2D: Follow up audits

### Purpose of these audits

To assess whether the actions agreed in the original audit report have been implemented and are now effectively embedded into the day-to-day operation of the service.

### Management Response to Quality Assurance audits

#### Original Objective

To assess whether senior managements revised arrangements for ensuring prompt action is taken to address the improvements required where a children's social care file is assessed as 'inadequate' or 'inadequate critical', are operating effectively to minimise the risk to Children.

#### Results

Fully implemented	Substantially implemented	Partially implemented	Not implemented
2	1	4	4

#### Summary

Period	No. of Audits	No. of Inadequate	No. of Repeat Inadequate
June 2018 – May 2019	219	8 3.7%	0 0%

The stages for improving practice detailed within the 'Departmental Response to Audits' process (the process) remain well designed. If consistently applied the process aims to ensure the robustness of action taken to improve social work practice for children whose case files are assessed as inadequate.

Since the original audit, the process has been updated to reflect areas where there is some flexibility to move away from the process e.g. where the criteria for a full caseload review of a social worker's caseload has been met but deemed not to be required.

Further updates are required to:

- ensure cover arrangements are followed when the Practice Lead is out of the office and the day three meeting is going to be missed
- make clear the requirements of managers to proactively monitor cases found to be inadequate to ensure remedial actions are happening consistently and are effective.

A monitoring spreadsheet has been developed and is well designed to give adequate oversight of the key stages of the process and whether they are being met. Introducing dedicated administrative support to regularly review the spreadsheet against the Case Management System Liquid Logic (LCS) will help ensure any deviation from, or delay in the process will be highlighted quickly and can be escalated as necessary.

## Appendix 2D: Follow up audits

The improvement process remains focused on the practice of the Social Workers responsible for cases. There is opportunity to extend this to other professionals and their roles in cases, such as Team Managers and Independent Reviewing Officers.

Outlining how these are addressed, managed and reported (e.g. in a similar way to how practice issues relating to Social Workers are addressed through the Whole Caseload Review process) will help to improve practice across the department where required.

Until November 2018 there was monthly reporting to the Director of Children's Services on the results of Quality Assurance audits but these are on hold while the role of the new Practice Unit is developed. These reports provided:

- overall file gradings following new audits and re-audits of previously inadequate cases
- a breakdown of grading's against various audit themes, such as 'voice of the child'.

There is limited information about the process reported within these, with the exception of November's report where more information was given on:

- manager performance in responding to monitoring and reviewing plans in line with the process (i.e. Service Manager review within 10 days) and the timeliness of response to the case found to be inadequate in that month
- work being undertaken to improve the notification process, including engagement with Managers to better understand what they need to support them effectively monitor the implementation of improvement plans.

Reintroducing consistent reporting inclusive of feedback on adherence to the improvement process will allow the Director of Children's Services to:

- get assurance the process is working effectively and consistently
- challenge where the agreed process has not been followed.

Due to the lower number of inadequate cases, this will be reported formally on a quarterly basis. The Head of Children's Services Transformation will provide updates on the progress of individual cases to the Director of Children's Services as required.