

## Audit Highlights Report – November 2018 – February 2020

### 1. Introduction

There have been **1088 audits completed** within the audit programme to date. In total, 1,235 have been allocated and 147 have not been returned, which is an **overall completion rate of 88%**.

In terms of the **January audits**, 96 audits sent out on 31 December 2019 and **72 were completed with an overall compliance of 75%**. In terms of **February's audits**, 76 audits sent out on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 and **62 were completed with an overall compliance of 81.57%**. This is another month-on-month improvement from January's compliance rate (75%) and represents a significant improvement from December's (54%) and November's (60%) compliance rate.

#### January 2020 Further Details:

In addition to the monthly case audits, in January Service Managers and Assistant Directors were asked to complete a **practice observation on supervision**, in order to support on-going work to further understand our strengths and areas of improvement around supervision. There were therefore no re-audits undertaken in January.

- 21 out of a potential 31 supervision observations were completed and of a high standard which has allowed for valuable and evaluative information to be gained.
- The compliance rate was 67%, as 10 supervision observations remained outstanding.
- There were 41 Case Reflection Sheets returned, compliance rate of 57% which is similar to the previous month of 56% in November.

The children selected for auditing were randomly chosen from the following cohorts:

- Children Looked After including our Children with Disabilities
- Care Leavers
- Children in Need

#### February 2020 Further Details:

The re-audits were resumed in February and this was the ninth month where Service Manager's and Assistant Directors were expected to complete a re-audit of a child's case that was judged to be inadequate in previous monthly audits.

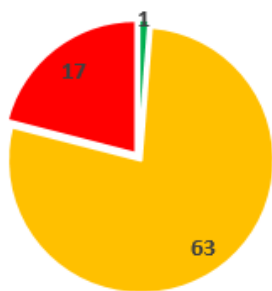
- 29 re-audits were allocated and **22 were returned with a compliance rate of 75.8%**. This is a significant increase from compliance of 56% in November 2019.
- The compliance rate for both audits and re-audits has remained low over the last three months.
- There were 27 Case Reflection Sheets returned, compliance rate of 44.2% which is down from last month's 57%. The reflection sheet should be completed with the allocated worker.

. The children selected for auditing were randomly selected from the following cohorts:

- Mental health / CAMHS / Missing Episodes
- Children Looked After including those placed in Residential Care
- Care Leavers

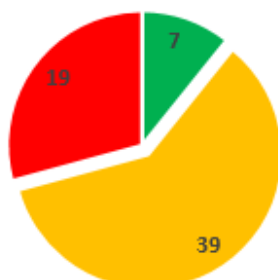
**2. Overall Judgements – November 2018 to February 2020**

Overall Judgements  
November 2018



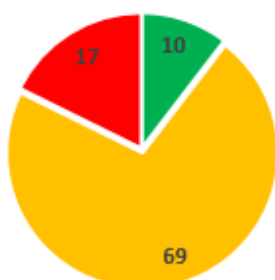
1% Good  
78% Requires Improvement  
21% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
December 2018



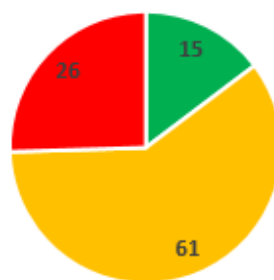
11% Good  
60% Requires Improvement  
29% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
January 2019



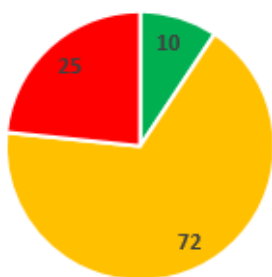
15% Good  
60% Requires Improvement  
25% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
February 2019



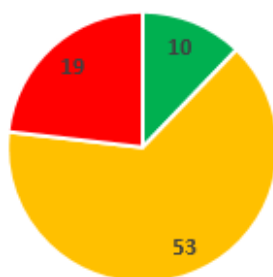
29% Good  
51% Requires Improvement  
19% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
March 2019



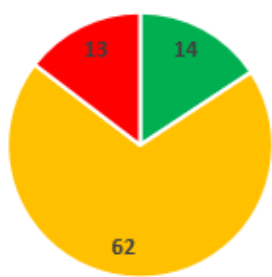
9% Good  
67% Requires Improvement  
23% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
April 2019



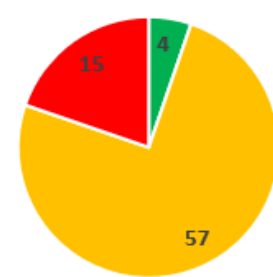
12% Good  
65% Requires Improvement  
23% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
May 2019



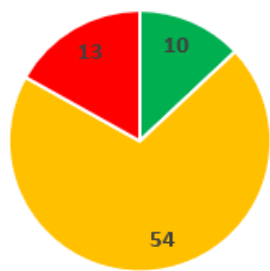
16% Good  
70% Requires Improvement  
15% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
June 2019



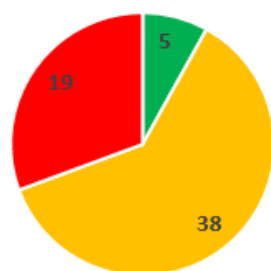
5% Good  
75% Requires Improvement  
20% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
July/August 2019



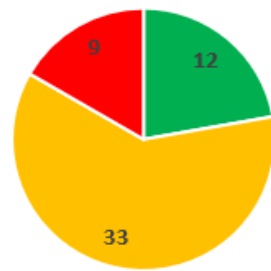
13% Good  
70% Requires Improvement  
17% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
September 2019



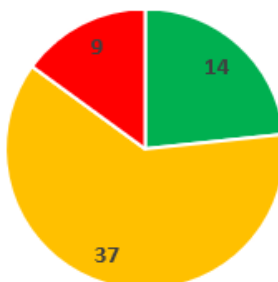
8% Good  
61% Requires Improvement  
31% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
October 2019



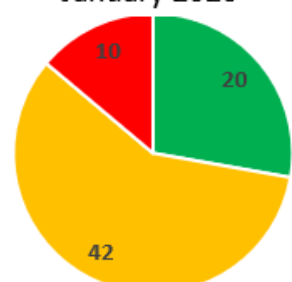
22% Good  
61% Requires Improvement  
17% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
November 2019



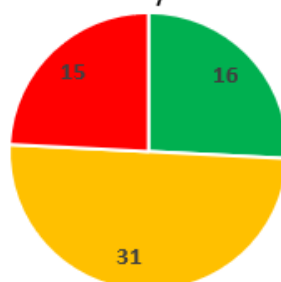
23% Good  
52% Requires Improvement  
15% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
January 2020



28% Good  
58% Requires Improvement  
14% Inadequate

Overall Judgements  
February 2020

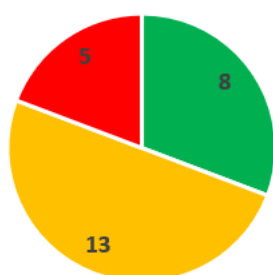


26% Good  
50% Requires Improvement  
24% Inadequate

### 3. Area Breakdown of Overall Judgement Grades – January AND February 2020

**South East:** Total number of children’s cases audited for the NE area were 26. 35 were allocated and 9 were not returned.

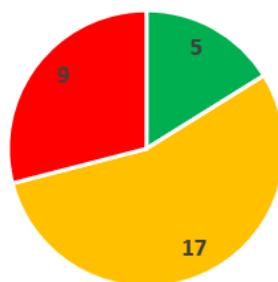
South East  
January & February 2020



31% Good  
50% Requires Improvement  
19% Inadequate

**North East:** Total number of children’s cases audited for the NE area were 31. 39 were allocated and 8 were not returned.

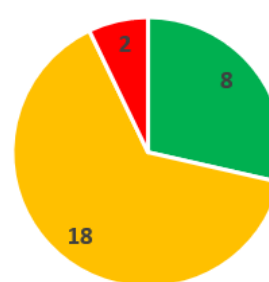
North East  
January & February 2020



16% Good  
55% Requires Improvement  
29% Inadequate

**South West:** Total number of children’s cases audited for the NE area were 28. 34 were allocated and 6 were not returned.

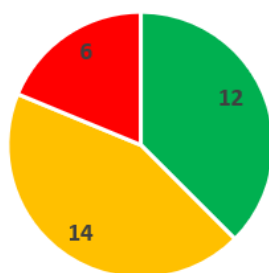
South West  
January & February 2020



29% Good  
64% Requires Improvement  
7% Inadequate

**North West:** Total number of children’s cases audited for the NE area were 32. 38 were allocated and 6 were not returned.

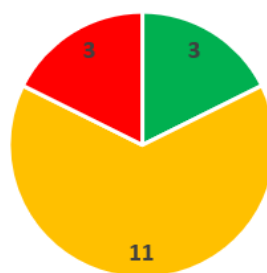
North West  
January & February 2020



38% Good  
44% Requires Improvement  
19% Inadequate

**CWD:** Total number of children’s cases audited for the NE area were 17. 26 were allocated and 9 were not returned.

CWD  
January & February 2020



18% Good  
65% Requires Improvement  
18% Inadequate

### 4. Moderation

#### Approach

As previously reported, the Audit & Practice Standards Team are now moderating at least 25% of case audits each month. While we can be reasonably assured – based on the moderation of audits since November 2018 - that the quality of auditing by managers has improved to a good enough level, the moderation process continues to be a key part of the programme to ensure that this high standard is maintained and to quickly address issues with auditing if they are identified. The

intention is to continue moderating at this rate each month however the team will increase the percentage of moderation if this is deemed necessary.

## Results

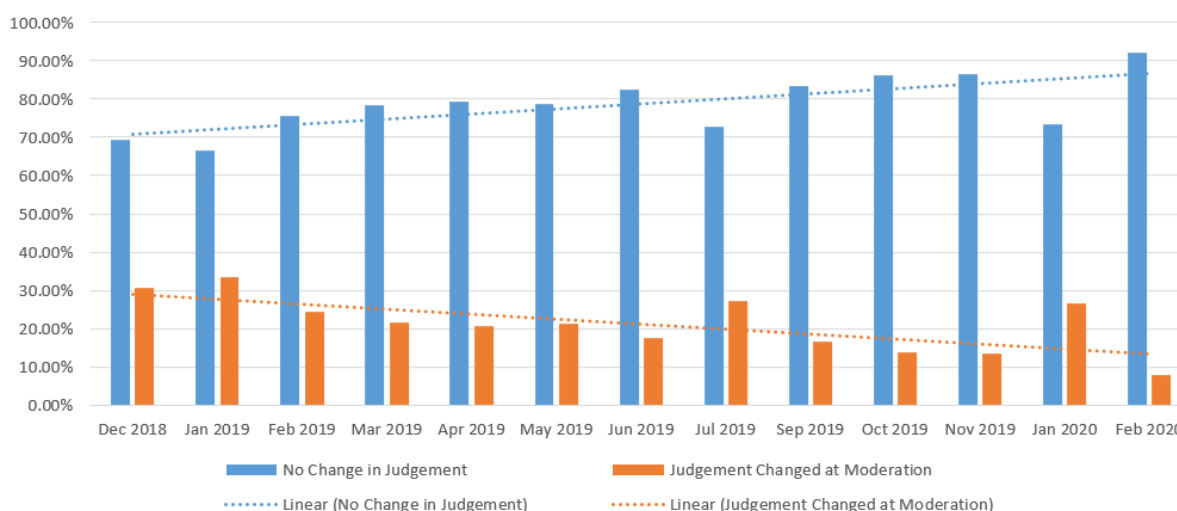
25% of the 96 audits allocated in January and 38% of the 76 allocated in February were moderated by Audit and Practice Standards (APS) Leads.

To ensure we are moderating a range of completed case-audits, during this period we have focussed on those that were judged to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding' – this enables QA to provide the assurance that we are accurately assessing practice as good in those instances. The team also moderated a small sample of those judged to be 'Requires Improvement' in February.

- January 2020: 26 were graded as good and 1 outstanding
  - After moderation, 1 'outstanding' downgraded to 'good' and 7 'good' downgraded to 'requires improvement'. All other overall judgements remained the same.
- February 2020: 16 were judged as overall good and 7 were judged as requires improvement.
  - After moderation 2 audits that had been judged as overall good were downgraded to requires improvement. All other remaining judgements remained the same.

The moderation activity over the last 2 months has highlighted some issues with audit reports requiring amendments to spelling, grammar, adding rationale for judgements and formatting – these issues have been followed up with the individual auditors.

Quality of Audits: % of Judgements Changed at Moderation



## 5. Re-audits

In February, 29 re-audits were allocated and **22 were returned** with an overall **Compliance rate of 75.8%**. As with Audit compliance rates, this represents a significant improvement from November (55%). Re-audits were not carried out in January as Service Managers and Assistant Directors conducted direct Supervision Observations instead that month.

- 11 children's cases remained inadequate.
  - This was the second re-audit for 8 children's cases, and they remain inadequate. 3 were children's cases held in the North East, 1 was from the North West, 3 were from the South East and 1 from the South East CWD Team. 3 of these children's cases were first subject to audit in May 2019.

- For the remaining 3 children's cases who were judged to still be inadequate, this was the first re-audit. 1 child's case was from the North East, 1 from the north West and 1 from the North East CWD.
- 9 children's cases were judged to have improved in terms of practice and outcomes and graded requires improvement. 2 were children's cases held in the North East, 1 was from the North West, 4 were from the South East and 2 were from the South West.
- 2 children's cases were judged to have improved in terms of practice and outcomes and graded good. 1 child was from the North West and the other from the South West.

**Of the 22 completed Re-Audits, 50% remained 'Inadequate' and 50% improved.**

The key themes identified with the children's cases that continue to be judged inadequate are:

- Supervision and management oversight not addressing the findings of the original audit or following up on identified actions
- Supervision and management oversight still not being recorded for children
- Chronology and case summaries not being up to date or to an acceptable standard
- Timeliness of planning and intervention.

However, the key reason why a re-audit remains inadequate is due to a lack of action taken from the original audit by the case holding team as opposed to new concerns or differing thresholds of auditors.

## **6. Supervision Practice Observations: replaced re-audits in January 2020**

The audit programme has consistently highlighted the importance of improved supervision recording. The Supervision practice observations were intended to gain a better understanding of the following: How supervision is recorded, understand the quality of child and personal supervision, if previous actions are reviewed, reflections from the observer and practitioners being observed.

### **Process**

- Recording style- Almost every observation recorded that the supervision was typed within the supervision and only a 3 that were handwritten and typed later.
- Type observed- There was a good mix of observations that covered both a portion of personal supervision and child supervision.
- Length of Observation- The average supervision lasted around just over an hour. The shortest recorded as 60 minutes and the longest at 2 hours and 45 minutes.
- Previous actions reviewed- 70% reviewed the actions from previous supervision as required. In the instances where it was not recorded, it was due more to issues such as being the first supervision.

### **Principles of Individual Supervision- (Wellbeing, Performance, and Training)**

- When applicable, 100% of the observers reported good practice seen in this area. (5 did not apply)
  - Use of appreciative inquiry observed to help Social Worker see their own development and apply to future situations
  - Good triangulation of a Team Manager's improvement following a recent training course.

- Service Manager discussed the Team Manager's use of Tableau and timely responses to audits.
- Reflective conversation addressing the emotional impact of a child sustaining a bruise during a contact session.

**Principles of Child Supervision-** (*Workload, reflective, outcomes-focused*)

- When applicable, 100% of the observers reported good practice seen in this area. (*2 did not apply*)
  - 3 very clear and good examples of the use of Motivation Interviewing (MI)- in one instance, the reflection developed alternative approaches required given the parent's place within the cycle of change and what they were trying to achieve.
  - Clear next steps, review of plans, and use of threshold document
  - Use of open-ended questions and opportunity given to supervisee to tease out their analysis.
  - Appropriate challenge seen when a missed opportunity to report safeguarding concerns with clear management expectations for the future.

**Themes from the Observer**

- **Comments in this section tended to focus on constructive criticism**
  - Discussion about children was thorough and captured their voice well but were too long often lasting 30 minutes plus per child.
  - SMs felt that TMs could save time within supervision if they conducted a basic review of children's files in advance of the supervision as time was often taken up with both practitioners getting up to speed on history within the session.
  - We need to empower workers to come up with solutions and analysis as there were several instances where the SM felt the TM was too quick to take over and give their opinion. (*There is of course acknowledge this is likely down to time pressure*)
  - Social Workers need a set structure. When it was not in place the topic often changes quickly and where good discussions started, they quickly jumped to actions.
  - Motivational Interviewing can be used much more. Questions from TMs are often indicative of their own views.
  - TMs need to support workers to enforce statutory requirements such as the role of fathers in No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)
- **Most comments were positive while also supporting on-going learning**
  - In one instance, an SM observed positive discussion around direct work with children so they understand our involvement. Follow up questions provided by the observer to support future sessions: *What evidence supports your view? and Who else has seen these changes with the family?*
  - Good professional curiosity observed as well as many positive working relationships between supervisor and supervisee
  - Conversations that were based on Cycle of Change led to plans for future sessions with parents. In this instance, the SW felt able to ask for support on reframing the discussion with parents to get them to agree to an FGC.
  - Where SWs and TMs were prepared and knew their families well it was as you would expect...more efficient and covered more children.

### Themes for the Practitioners being Observed

- Most welcomed feedback and chance to be observed despite needing time to settle into the process
- Most agreed and acknowledged the need to take time to prep in advance
- Many highlighted the need to feel more comfortable with MI- type questions in supervision but welcome and appreciate the need for it.
- One TM highlighted the need to factor in the impact of stress levels on the quality of supervision.
- The review of actions could be clearer and for one worker this was down to their knowledge of what had been completed and not realising skipping this process made it unclear when the final record was reviewed.

### What did we learn from the experience

- The use of MI needs further development. It is being observed not in most of the supervisions within this exercise.
- SMs are more aware of time constraints for reflective case supervision but acknowledge a need to work through this and make prep time for supervision a priority.
- Constructive feedback and appropriate challenge are integral good quality supervision
- There is a training need across the organisation to improve analysis and what good supervision looks like that incorporates MI.

## 7. Social Work Feedback: What Social Workers Are Telling Us

Some of the most important learning, messages about practice, needs for professionals working directly with young people, and our celebrations come from the Case Reflection meetings held with the Social Workers. The Audit & Practice Standards Team are working with managers and auditors to ensure this part of the process is prioritised each month.

A sample of the feedback and learning captured from these meetings is included here:

### 1. What do you think you have done well on this case?

Most practitioner's responses in this section relate to the importance and sense of accomplishment that comes from a good working relationship with the child and family.

- One Social Worker felt good about the relationship she had formed with a child and how she felt that she had really captured this in her case recordings.
- Built good relationship with the child's Residential home, this has ensured a joined up approach that I believe has positively supported the child through a difficult time of separation.

### 2. What have been the challenges in this case?

The usual responses within this section relate to addressing disguised compliance, building a relationship with families where there have been multiple changes of workers, and not having more specialised support for adult-specific issues and high caseloads. The following points have been highlighted.

- Not being able to visit and spend more time with the child to build a relationship due to high caseload.
- Familiarising myself with new systems

- High turn around/change of social workers
- Having the resources to support young people towards independence.

**3. Do you have sufficient tools to enable you to undertake your role?**

Social Workers generally feel that they have what they need to undertake their role but there were a few points to highlight:

- The social worker said not always because we are dependent on lots of other people, i.e. health who he do not always engage, school, and the placement.
- SW would like some training in CLA processes and has had no induction and no training on either the LCS systems or SCS procedures and policy's.

**4. If you had a case like this again, what would you do differently?**

A key theme from several social worker's reflection sheets in this section related to early planning for permanency.

- To look at the long-term plan earlier.
- Have network, family meetings earlier in the intervention.

**8. Audit Findings: Focussing on the 'Good'**

**When a Good rating was upheld the following was evident:**

- In many instances the audits were of young children where we responded appropriately and achieved permanence in a timely way.
- Use of historical information was a strength and liaised appropriately with OLA to obtain their history.
- Child's needs are paramount throughout the process.
- Quick response to risk and when discussions and decisions are made, they are clearly recorded with analysis
- Case notes are up to date
- Evidence of good quality MO and case discussion in supervision
- Clear link between the direct work with children connecting to the plan and evidence of improved outcomes

**When a 'Good' became an 'RI' the following was evident:**

- Changes in SW has resulted in drift
- Workbooks are not being filled in appropriately and not covering the multi-agency contribution, in the small number of children within this cohort and is likely down to newness of the recording.
- Supervision was a key factor in all 7 that were downgraded to RI.
- Case summaries are unclear, and chronology does not reflect the child's journey
- The recording of our process is unclear, and we do not record MO to outline the reason for our decisions.
- Life Story work not routinely being considered or completed with UCAS.
- Important documents such as CLA review minutes, CLA plans, and pathway plans not routinely being translated into their first language.



## 9. Audit Themes

### Positives:

- Children are seen regularly and seen alone. Their wishes are generally considered and inform assessment and planning.
- Evidence of good relationships between SW's and children.
- Evidence of well written assessments, one included research about a child's health needs, children's wishes and feelings clear and engagement with parents. Although case notes do evidence that the assessment had been shared with family and what their views were.
- Really good piece of recording of work with a disabled child. The SW understands his communication needs and records them well to ensure his wishes and feelings are clear.
- If threshold criteria is evidenced in the referral this results in a good judgement. However, if we are not able to demonstrate we have analysed threshold, this results in either a RI or IA judgement.
- Evidence that the threshold document is being utilised at the referral stage has increased.
- Where there is evidence that visits are taking place the recordings of the child's wishes and feelings has been identified as good.

### If Undertaken Practice would improve:

- Workbooks being utilised to their full extent, with multi agency contribution.
- Workbooks reflecting visits completed in LCS case notes.
- Management oversights being recorded on a consistent basis to explain overdue actions. I.e. statutory visits.
- Supervision taking place on a monthly basis or as agreed in procedures and evidencing reflective discussion, review of plan and actions and progress of plan.
- Chronologies were up to date and of good quality.
- Recording of direct work tools used and these are signposted within the case note.
- Consideration of ethnic/cultural/religious in assessments, case recordings and plans.
- RHI's include full exploration of why the child has gone missing, where they were, who they were with and what they experience when they were missing is not consistently evident and the plan of intervention addressing these.

## 10. Practice Issues to Take Forward

### From February 2020

- ❖ This month the cohort included CLA, pre-birth assessment, planning for permanency- the findings from the audit demonstrates that intervention and plans for permanency are still not timely- This is supported by the recent thematic audit completed regarding permanency- from March 2020 workshops focusing on permanency will be delivered to all areas by the Practice and Audit Team.

- ❖ Albeit a small percentage, there are audits returned of a poor quality which require them to be sent back for further work. The Practice and Audit Team routinely send induction emails to new starters and also offer a one-to-one session.
- ❖ Timeliness and quality of supervision and management oversights remains an area of inconsistent practice.
- ❖ Recordings in the child's workbook is not consistently reflecting what is recorded in the child's LCS case notes.
- ❖ Consideration of a child's cultural, religious, ethnic and social needs are still not routinely explored in the completion of assessments, audits, plans and intervention. A learning soundbite has recently been sent to all teams to support improvement in this area.

### From January 2020

- ❖ There will be an ongoing review of CLA audits across the year to support practice development and further analyse issues relating to impact of placement breakdown, access to services, and on-going permanence.
- ❖ Ongoing review of issues relating to a continued decline in audit compliance in completion of audits, re-audits and social work reflection sheets.
- ❖ In April, we will be sending a Learning Bulletin, Practice Sound Bite on difficult to engage children and families.
- ❖ Audit and Practice Team will be completing permanency workshops in all the areas that focuses on the following; revisit of the Permanency Policy, explore and review the impact of the Policy and Tracking Panel arrangements, emerging themes from the thematic audit regarding permanency, raising awareness, understanding and implementation of permanence for children at the earliest opportunity, to ensure consistency across all Services, in all areas and to provide an opportunity for workers to share their experiences and highlight areas they feel could be improved
- ❖ Audit and Practice Leads in the areas will work alongside managers to encourage and promote continued review of children's cases who have been judged as either inadequate or requires improvement. Currently managers are recording the initial findings of the audit but there is no follow up to ensure that actions are completed, learning is embedded, and practice improves.

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