What is the Quality Assurance Framework?

It is how we bring together all the different information that tells us about the quality of service that we provide to children and families who need additional help to keep children safe and well. From the point at which contact is made with the Children’s Services Department we measure and assess the quality of our work with children in need, children on child protection plans, children looked after, children with disabilities and care leavers. We learn from the information we gather and use it to improve our services in the future.

What underpins the Quality Assurance Framework?

Working with families
We use a practice framework called Signs of Safety and Wellbeing (SoSWB) to work with children and families. We look at strengths and worries. We explore what the immediate and wider family can offer. We agree a plan together to keep a child safe and well.

Working together with other agencies
We work with other agencies to provide good service to children, for example, midwives, health visitors, doctors, early years workers, teachers, police, and probation officers.

Workforce Strategy
We have a workforce strategy to recruit, retain and develop the best people to deliver Children’s Services.

Commissioning
We apply our Quality Assurance Framework to commissioned services. We monitor contracted services closely to ensure our practice standards are met and value for money is achieved.

What are the key components of the Quality Assurance Framework?

Practice Standards
We have Practice Standards that set the minimum quality of service defined through legislation, statutory guidance and research into best practice.

Procedures
We follow national procedures to make sure we are working effectively with children and families. Procedures tell us in detail how to approach our work; how often we should do certain tasks; when we should escalate concerns to a higher level; how to get good outcomes for children.

Supervision and management oversight
We operate a line management structure where all staff receive regular supervision from a senior officer. The senior officer is responsible for the quality of work carried out by the staff they supervise. If they have evidence that work is not being carried out to the required standard the Council has Codes of Practice to address performance with the member of staff.

Listening to what children and families tell us about the quality of our services
We make changes to services on an individual or larger scale in response to what children and families tell us about services we provide to them.
We actively listen to children we are working with through direct work, seeing them alone on visits, participating in statutory reviews of their circumstances, encouraging children looked after to participate in the Children in Care Council (CLICK).

**Performance Data and analysis**
We aggregate and analyse data to measure our performance against key indicators. This is reported to senior managers and Councillors in a monthly Children’s Services Performance Report. Operational managers are accountable for performance in their services and teams and required to take remedial action if performance is below target.

**Case audit**
We read case records and talk to allocated social workers. Auditors encourage social workers to reflect on their work and take learning from it. Cases are graded using Ofsted case evaluation criteria based on compliance with practice standards, procedures and whether social work has made a positive difference to the child.

Audit findings are fed back to managers for them to apply learning across cases and implement improvement on the audited case. Improvement is monitored through supervision.

Audit grades and findings are aggregated to inform service and departmental assessment of the quality of social work. Common themes are extracted for service and departmental improvement.

**Internal Challenge**
The Safeguarding Standards Service is responsible for providing challenge to the day to day quality of social work practice. If Independent Reviewing Officers or Child Protection Co-ordinators come across work that falls below the practice standard they have a duty to challenge and raise a formal care planning or practice alert if remedial action is not taken in a timely manner. The challenge process escalates through line management if the issue is not resolved.

**External Challenge**
Independent assessment of the quality of our work is important to make sure our judgement is accurate and up to date with the latest national policy, procedures and statutory guidance. External consultants are employed to carry out case audits, benchmark us against good and outstanding departments and quality assure our interpretation of policy, procedure and practice.

The Wandsworth Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) has a statutory responsibility to scrutinise local arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This involves monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their board partner agencies individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In order to fulfil its statutory functions WSCB should use data and as a minimum should:

- Assess the effectiveness of the help provided to children and families, including early help
- Assess whether partner agencies are fulfilling their statutory obligations
Training and Development

Continuous professional development contributes to the quality of services provided to children and families. All training can be accessed on Training and Professional Development Online (TPD Online).

Multi Agency Safeguarding Training

The Wandsworth Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) is committed to providing high quality learning opportunities for the children and young people’s workforce in Wandsworth to ensure it is capable and confident to safeguard children and young people.

Training is driven by an understanding of the skills, knowledge and abilities that the workforce requires to achieve good outcomes for children, young people and their families. The multi-agency safeguarding training programme is delivered through a combination of training courses and conferences.

The Training and Development Service, within the Children’s Services Department, is commissioned by the WSCB to deliver the training programme.

Children’s Social Care Workforce Training

Wandsworth Council is committed to providing high quality learning opportunities for social care staff to support their continuing professional development. There is an integrated approach to training driven by an understanding of the skills, knowledge and abilities that the workforce requires to achieve good outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Through a combination of internal training events, external award programmes, external courses and conferences, the Training and Development Service, within the aims to ensure that all social care staff are kept up to date with developments and best practice.