

Proposal for YJS/CSC Quality Assurance Framework

Context

The YJS has an audit tool that is well established. It has been reviewed by an external expert, who considers that is an excellent, comprehensive tool. The audits were also considered, and the independent person felt they were of good quality. They are currently conducted by the management team within the YJS, who have the relevant expertise to audit the children and young people's files and the interventions that they are offered using the HMPI framework.

WIP audit cycle is well established within CSC. There are revisions currently underway, and the cycle does not currently have a multi-disciplinary component. This is an opportunity to strengthen our understanding of our children's experience in the context of a broader service provision offered by Croydon – particularly those known to both Services.

Objective

To utilise the quality assurance processes between both YJS and CSC to assure ourselves that the operational social care teams and the YJS are working collaboratively ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and young people accessing these services in Croydon. This requires sharing of information, good communication and an understanding of how the services roles both differ and overlap.

A combined audit provides the opportunity to cross-reference activity, acknowledging there are different systems used by the Services, enhance a deeper understanding for each Service, of the other and to jointly consider how practice can be improved.

Proposal

There are currently 7 YJS auditors. The suggestion of bi-monthly, during the WIP month, a Youth justice and social care auditor will be allocated the same child, who will be accessing both YJS and CSC records. They will essentially be each other's 'buddies'. The expectation will be that the auditors complete their respective audit forms together and collaboratively, alongside the relevant social work and youth justice worker. One additional section will be added to each tool, entitled 'Quality of Youth Justice and Social Care Joint working', with some prompts added around what to consider.

This approach will support youth justice and children's social care managers and practitioners to gain a greater understanding of each other's roles and systems. It will enable us to understand where we are working well together and where there are opportunities to strengthen our collaboration.

Each of the youth justice and children's social care audits will be considered together at the moderation panel, further strengthening a shared understanding of roles and providing additional assurance around a shared view of 'what good looks like'.

This approach will mean that we audit approximately 42 children accessing both services every 12 months. 2022-23 saw 284 children access youth justice services, of which approximately 40% (110-120) were also accessing CSC. As such, this would mean approximate 33% of children accessing both services concurrently over the year, would be audited and would give us a very good representative sample.

Pilot

We can pilot this in the July audit cycle with the additional 'box' being captured as a case note and being added into the revised form from September onwards, if the pilot is successful. The combined audit would integrate into the WIP and moderation/scrutiny would also be applicable.

YJS Audit Framework

The YJS Manager's would continue to audit outside of this framework – remaining to use their existing tool and to consider themes. The Service Manager would compile a report summarising practice and performance themes for the Youth Justice Board chaired by the Corporate Director and Practice & Performance Forum, chaired by the Head of Service.

Areas of focus would include:

- Yearly audit on custody work
- Yearly audit on the delivery of Out of Court work
- Yearly audit working with girls
- Yearly audit on Sentence Delivery
- Yearly audit on work with victims
- Yearly audit on Anti-Discriminatory Practice
- Yearly audit on habitual knife carriers (knife Crime rated the highest offence type in the cohort).