

Quality Assurance Highlight Report

Programme Summary

Programme Name:	Quality Assurance Framework – Findings of Monthly Case File Audits
Directorate:	Children & Young People Service
Reporting Period:	October, November and December 2021
Date of Report:	18/01/2022
Authors	Julie Meek

1. Context & background: Quality Assurance Framework

Month	Audits distributed	Audits returned	% Returns
31 October 2021	69	38	55%
30 November 2021	69	49	71%
31 December 2021	77	37	48%

Themes:

- October cohort – all audits reviewed children where there is no current plan and an assessment outcome of NFA.
- November cohort – all audits reviewed children subject to a child in need plan.
- December cohort – all audits reviewed children subject to a child protection plan.

All cohorts are filtered to ensure there is only one case per social worker included in the sample, in order to offer the opportunity of a consultation to the widest number of staff. The samples are mapped against recent audit records to ensure children's case files are not audited more frequently than once every 6 months.

There were 17 exemptions in October, 23 in November and 10 exemptions in December 2021.

2 Audit compliance and quality

2.1 Audit Compliance

Compliance has significantly dropped from 77% in July and August to 55% in October. This has increased to 71% in November although remains below the 80% target.

CCHDT, Central and Safeguarding and Review completed 100% audit returns in October audit.

CCHDT, Central, East and Safeguarding and Review completed 100% audit returns in November audit.

There are not any areas who have completed 100% audit returns in December audit.

2.2 Social Worker participation

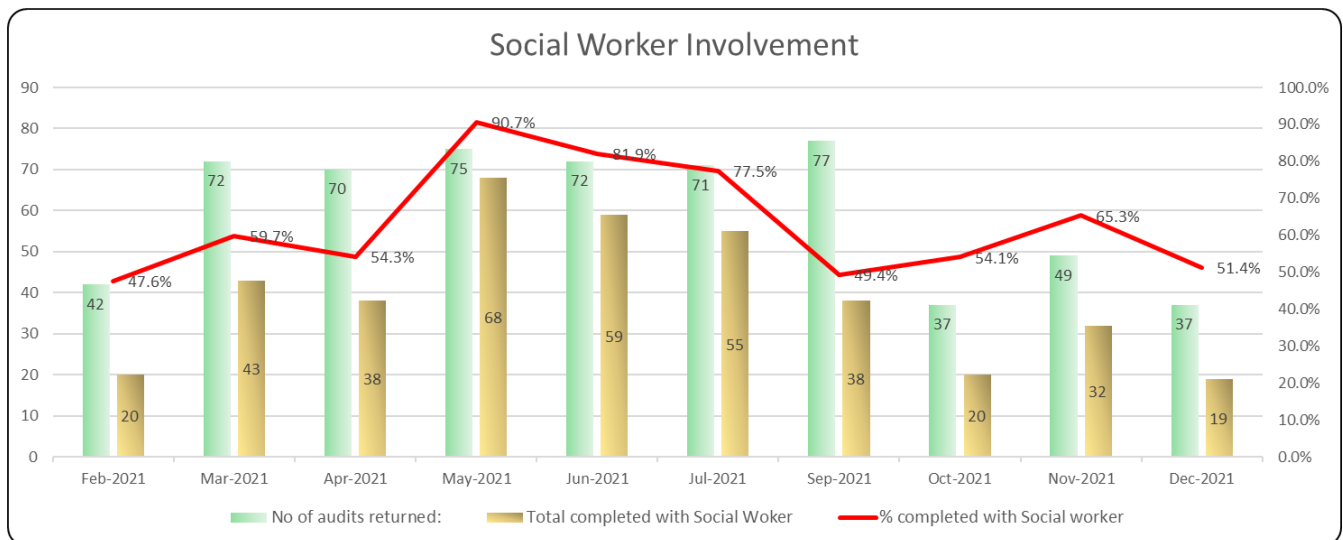
The percentage of social workers engaged in audit for October was 55.3%, with the most common reason given for non-participation relating to the social worker having left the organisation.

The percentage of social workers engaged in audit for November was 65.3%, with the most common reasons given for non-participation relating to the social worker not responding and no reason recorded.

Audits received for December highlight that the percentage of social workers engaged in audit was 51.4% with the most common reasons given for non participation relating to auditor availability and no reason recorded.

A reminder is sent out for each month to support better engagement of social workers in audits.

Social Worker Involvement Chart



2.3 Audit Quality

October Moderations – no current plan and assessment NFA audits

15 out of 38 audits were moderated in October.

The outcome of the moderations was –

- 12 remained the same grade following moderation
- 3 were downgraded from Requires Improvement to Inadequate
- No moderations were downgraded from Good to Requires Improvement
- No moderations were upgraded

November Moderations – children subject to child in need plan audits

In November, an auditor was linked to each area to support auditing arrangements to improve the quality of audits and apply learning from audits whilst embedding quality assurance as integral to all the work that is undertaken. The aim of this to support a move away from seeing auditing as an “add on” with an emphasis on supporting learning through the child’s journey.

As part of this work, 32 audits were moderated from the locality teams. The remaining 14 audits were from the Safeguarding and Reviewing service; a sample of 5 out of 14 were moderated. 37 audits were moderated in November in total.

The outcome of the moderations was –

- 25 remained the same grade following moderation
- 1 was downgraded from Requires Improvement to Inadequate
- 9 were downgraded from Good to Requires Improvement
- 1 was downgraded from Outstanding to Requires Improvement
- 1 was upgraded from Inadequate to Requires Improvement

November’s moderations showed that there was an increase in the number of audits that had been downgraded from Good to Requires Improvement. It would suggest that there has been a slight decline in the confidence of auditors grading thresholds. Allocating auditors to each locality should help with this as it is enabling feedback and conversations to take place with auditors regarding grading’s and rationales both prior and following completion of the monthly audits.

December moderations – children subject to child protection plan audits

20 out of 37 audits were moderated in December.

The outcome of the moderations was –

- 15 remained the same grade following moderation
- 2 were downgraded from Requires Improvement to Inadequate
- 2 were downgraded from Good to Requires Improvement
- 1 were downgraded from Good to Inadequate

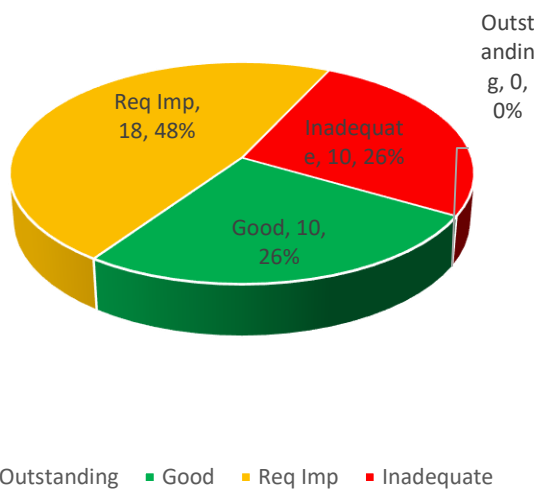
3. Findings of monthly case file audits – October, November and December 2021

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Overall grades (prior to moderation)

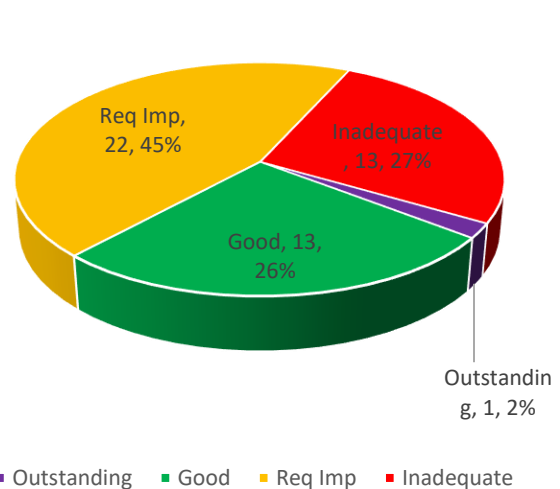
OCTOBER 2021

OVERALL OUTCOME

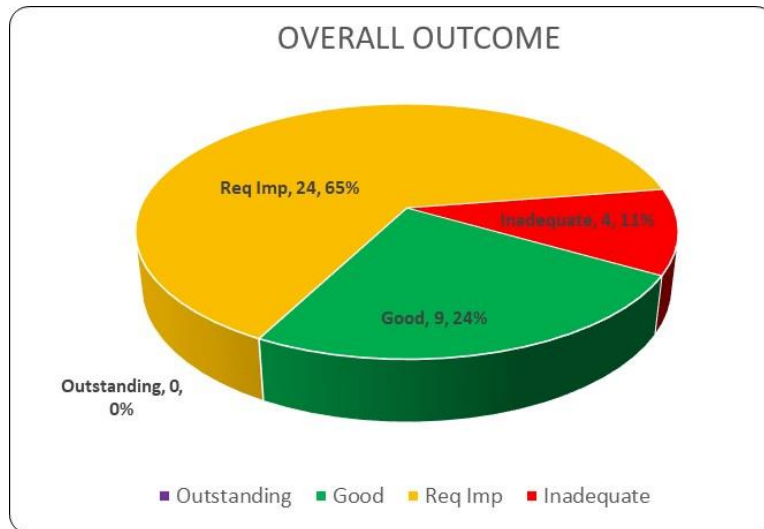


NOVEMBER 2021

OVERALL OUTCOME



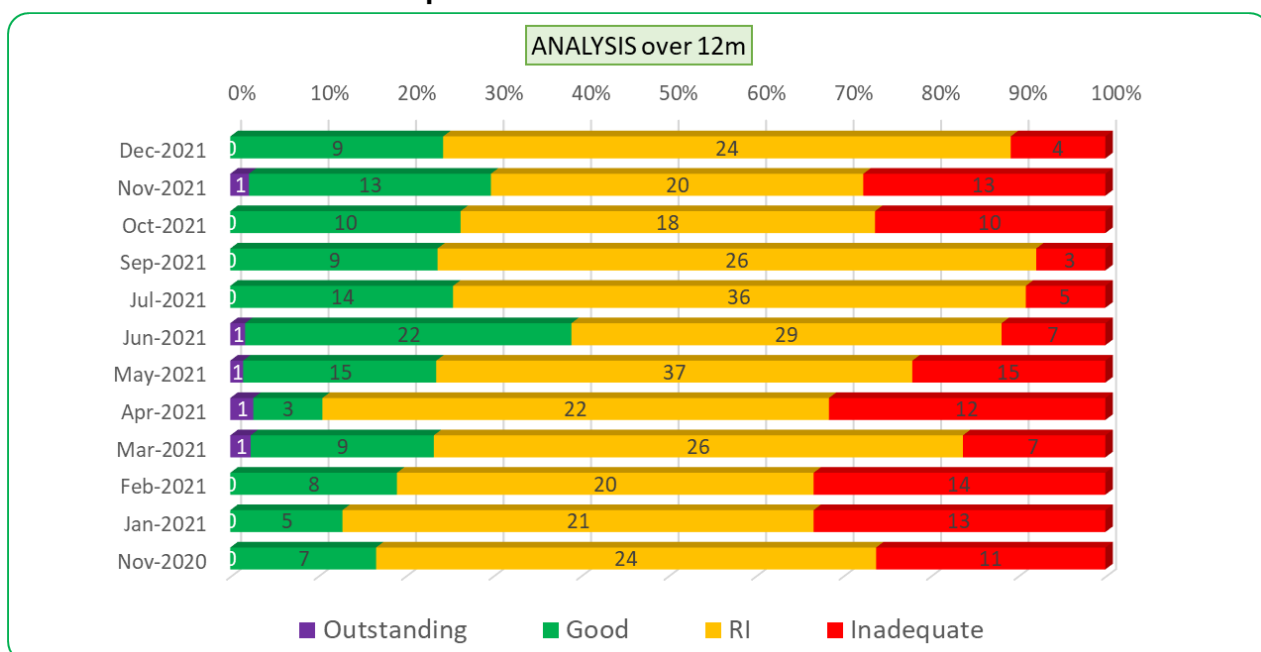
DECEMBER 2021



Grade by service area - October, November, December 2021

Grad by Service Are in October, November and December					
Grade by service area	O	G	RI	I	ALL
16+	0	1	3	1	5
CCHD	1	4	2	5	12
Central	0	4	11	2	17
East	0	5	8	5	18
Keighley & Shipley	0	5	9	1	15
South	0	3	14	6	23
West	0	9	17	7	33
TOTAL	1	31	64	27	123

Overall audit Grades over the past 12 months



3.1.2. Audit grades across key performance areas – October, November and December 2021

The following table records cases reaching a standard of “Good/Outstanding” and “Requires improvement” against each performance area.

There has been an increase in good grades for assessments in October and November but this has declined in December with the majority of audits been graded as requiring improvement.

There has been a considerable increase in the good grades for planning and review in December, this has almost doubled from October and November. There has also been an increase in requires improvement grading for plans as well. There has been no change in grading for the voice of the child across the last 3 months.

There has been an increase in the good grades for family engagement and partner agency involvement has remained good across the months.

The audits have highlighted that performance in relation to management oversight, care records and how we are making a difference has been inconsistent.

Performance Area	Sept		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	G/O	G/O	G/O	RI	G/O	RI	G/O	RI
There is timely identification, response and reduction of risk and need	47%	47%	43%↓	43%↓	59%↑	35%↓	47%↓	41%↑
Assessments are timely, comprehensive, analytical and of good quality	37%	37%	39%↑	37%	43%↑	29%↓	27%↓	54%↑
Plans and reviews drive progress towards positive outcomes.	26%	26%	25%↓	32%↑	29%↑	43%↑	54%↑	38%↓
Children’s voices and lived experience are at the centre of everything we do.	37%	37%	34%↓	43%↑	31%↓	47%↑	42%↑	47%↑
Families are appropriately engaged in the work	45%	45%	35%↓	46%↑	41%↑	41%↓	50%↑	42%↓
Partner professionals around the family work collaboratively to improve children and young people’s lives	55%	55%	51%↓	27%↓	47%↓	35%↑	62%↑	30%↑
Management oversight ensures decision making is effective, proportionate and timely, and standards of work are good	26%	26%	22%↓	59%↑	39%↑	35%↓	38%↓	46%↑
Case records are correct and up to date	16%	16%	24%↑	50%↑	18%↓	63%↑	19%↓	68%↑
Have we made a difference?	53%	53%	49%↓	40%↓	44%↓	40%	44%↓	39%↑

3.1.3 Children Open with No Plan comparator data

Children open with no plans were audited in April and October 2021 and the data indicates an improving picture.

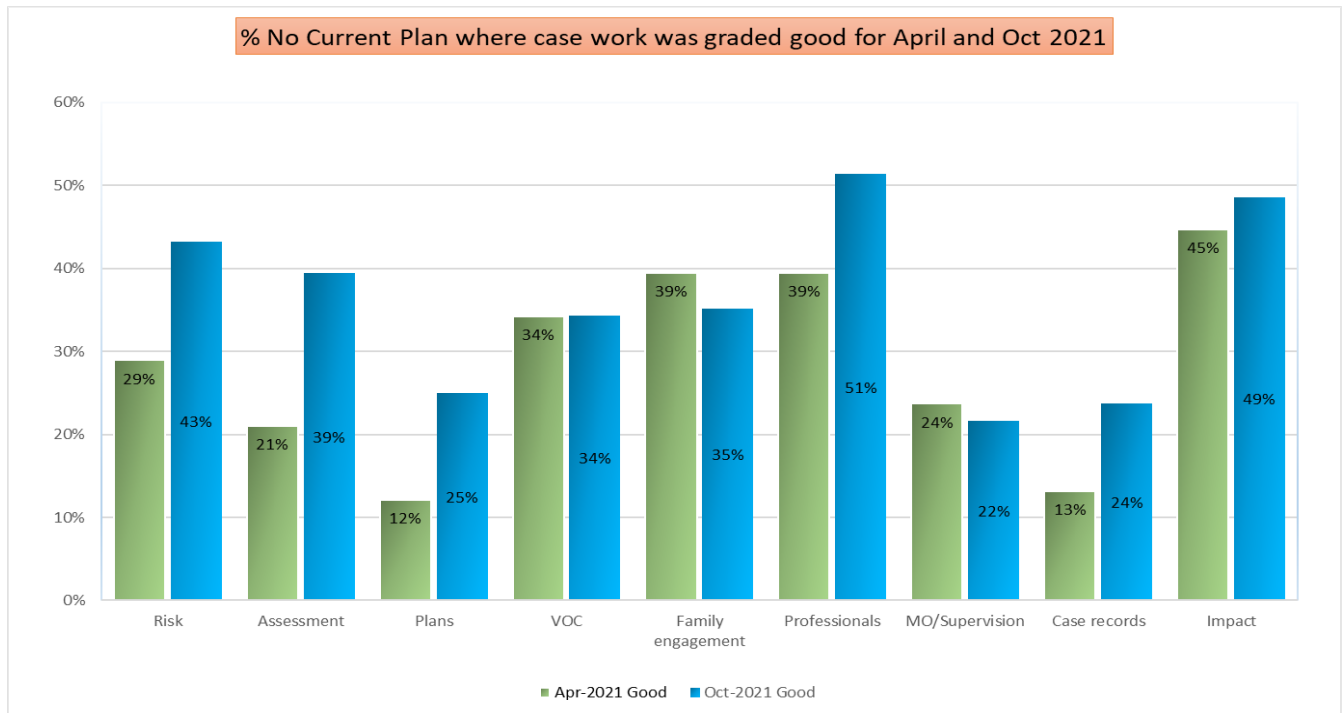
Improvements are evidenced against most of the key standards reported below in terms of Good grades, particularly for

- Timely identification, response and reduction of risk and need.

- Assessments are timely, comprehensive, analytical and of good quality.
- Plans and reviews drive progress towards positive outcomes.
- The voice of the child.
- Partner professionals around the family work collaboratively to improve children and young people's lives.
- Case records.
- Impact.

There has been a decline in October audits in the good grades in relation to

- Families are appropriately engaged in the work and management oversight/supervision.
- Management oversight/supervision.



3.1.4 Children on a Child in Need plan comparator data

Children on child in need plans were audited in January, May and November 2021 and the data indicates an improving picture.

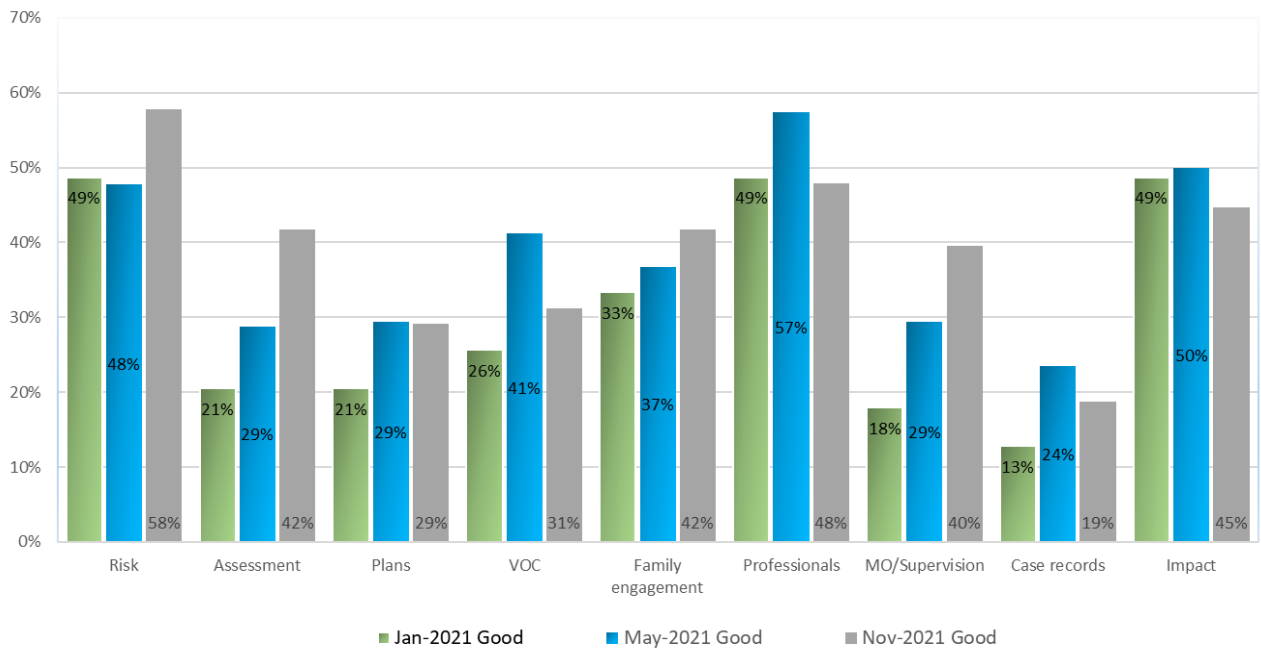
Improvements are evidenced against most of the key standards reported below in terms of Good grades, particularly for

- Timely identification, response and reduction of risk and need.
- Assessments are timely, comprehensive, analytical and of good quality.
- Plans and reviews drive progress towards positive outcomes.
- Families are appropriately engaged in the work.
- Management oversight/supervision.

There has been a decline in November's audits in the good grades in relation to

- The voice of the child.
- Partner professionals around the family work collaboratively to improve children and young people's lives.
- case records.
- Impact.

% Children in Need where case work was graded good for Jan, May and Nov 2021



3.1.5 Children on a Child Protection Plan comparator data

Children on Child Protection plans were audited in February, September and December 2021 and the data indicates an improving picture.

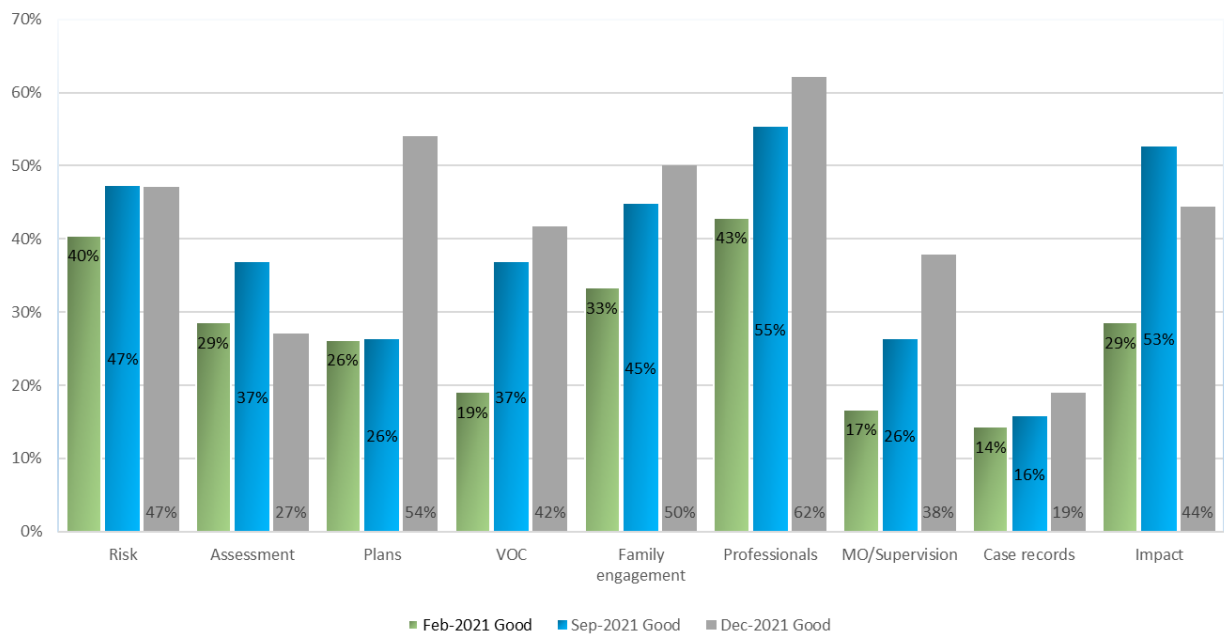
Improvements are evidenced against most of the key standards reported below in terms of Good grades, particularly for

- Timely identification, response and reduction of risk and need.
- Plans and reviews drive progress towards positive outcomes.
- The voice of the child.
- Families are appropriately engaged in the work and management oversight/supervision.
- Management oversight/supervision.

There has been a decline in December's audits in the good grades in relation to

- Assessments are timely, comprehensive, analytical and of good quality.
- Partner professionals around the family work collaboratively to improve children and young people's lives.
- Case records.
- Impact.

% Child Protection Plan where case work was graded good for Feb, Sept and Dec 2021



3.2 Key themes

3.2.1 October 2021 – no current plan and assessment NFA audits

Strengths

- **Assessments are timely, comprehensive, analytical and of good quality:** 25 (66%) audits evidenced that assessments were detailed, risks were taken into consideration as were views of the child, parents and professionals involved.
- **Case records are correct and up to date:** 31 (82%) audits evidence that case records are up to date. The audits highlighted that whilst case records are an improving picture, further work was needed to ensure consistency across genograms, case summaries and chronologies. Correct templates needed to be used and genograms need to be three generations where possible.

Learning

- **Supervision and management oversight:** The audits evidenced that management sign off was not consistent across all audits undertaken. 9 of the audits identified that assessments could be strengthened further by including key information to inform effective decision making.
- **Voice of the child:** 15 (40%) audits were graded as requires improvement as it was identified that whilst the voice of the child had been captured there was no evidence of what had been done with this information, how had it informed planning and support for the child.

3.2.2 November 2021 – Child in Need

Strengths

- **Timely identification, response and reduction of risk:** 29 (59%) audits were graded as good, evidencing clear recognition and analysis and a timely response to risk. This timely response to risk has ensured an appropriate and timely allocation of assessment and support in place. For example, in the case of one young person this meant that they were safe for the night in their own accommodation with a clear safety plan in place.

- **Assessments are timely, comprehensive, analytical and of good quality:** 21 (43%) audits evidenced that assessments were timely and of a good quality, risk was identified, history was taken into consideration and views of family members were sought. The voice of the child is clear, their views and those of their parents and professionals involved with them are carried through the assessment into planning and support for the child and their parents.
- **Families are appropriately engaged in the work:** 20 (41%) audits identified family engagement as good within the audits. The views of parents were captured within the assessments as well as those of the wider family and absent parents. Consent from parents was clearly recorded.
- **Management oversight:** 19 (39%) audits identified good supervision, supervision was regular, actions were tracked and management oversight was clear on the file.

Learning

- **Voice of the child:** 23 audits (47%) of the audits were graded as requires improvement and 11 (22%) audits were graded as inadequate for the voice of the child. Audits identified that although the voice of the child was in the most part captured children were not always seen on their own or the file did not reflect the direct work that was completed with the children. This direct work didn't always inform decision making and planning.
- **Professionals work collaboratively around family to improve child's life:** 9 (18%) audits identified inadequate multi agency working and 17 (35%) audits were graded as requires improvement for this section.
- **Case records are correct and up to date:** 9 (18%) audits identified this as inadequate with 31 (63%) auditors grading this section as requires improvement. Auditors identified that not all demographics are completed, chronologies are not always up to date and genograms do not always include three generations.
- **A positive difference:** 8 (16%) audits evidenced that the intervention of children's social care had not made an impact on the outcome for the child and graded this section as inadequate. It has been difficult for the auditors to identify from the files the work that has been completed and therefore it is not possible to ascertain the impact for the child. It may be that the work has been completed but is not recorded on the file. In 19 (39%) audits this section was graded as requires improvement highlighting that there is evidence that work has been completed however it is not always clear from the file what difference this work has made. For example, safety plans have been put in place and the children may well be safe, however, work with the young people and their families needs to be analysed to inform future planning and support for the family if required.

3.2.3 December 2021 – Child Protection

Strengths

- **Voice of the child:** this is an improved picture from the last two months with 15 audits (41%) of the audits identifying this area of work as good and 17 (46%) audits graded as requires improvement. The auditors were able to see evidence of meaningful direct work taking place with children. Children were invited to their reviews and their voice informed planning and decision making. There was evidence of children being seen on their own and outside of the family home. The child's lived experience was clear from the file. In one child's file there was evidence that the social worker had listened to the child and had completed the direct work within the child's timeframe.
- **Plans and reviews drive progress towards positive outcomes:** 12 (55%) audits identified planning as good. There was evidence of plans being regularly reviewed with clear actions, these actions were informed through direct work with the child, conversations with professionals

involved with the family and from an assessment of risk and need. In one child's file the social worker had amended the plan following a conversation with the child around a safety concern which the worker had then discussed with their manager and decisions were made to safeguard the child.

- **Professionals work collaboratively around family to improve child's life:** 11 (50%) auditors graded this section as Good and 10 (46%) audits were graded as requires improvement. There is evidence of professional's attendance at meetings, their work with children and families is captured within meeting minutes and their views inform planning.

Learning

- **Families are appropriately engaged in the work:** family member views are not always included within planning in terms of what next nor are they always recorded within the file. This would add depth to the work that is completed and would enable children and families to feel that they are contributing to their involvement with social care.

4.0	Themes and Actions taken forward
4.1	<p>There are clear practice guidance's and training available in relation to chronologies, case summaries and genograms which auditors make reference to in their audits however these do not appear to be followed when completing the forms on children's files.</p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers and practice supervisors to quality assure / dip sample files regularly and promote guidance regularly to staff. • Staff to be supported to attend training where required to support practice development.
4.2	<p>Voice of the child should be central to planning and support for families.</p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers and practice supervisors to reinforce the need to promote the voice of the child ensuring that plans are informed by the voice of the child. • Staff to be supported to attend training where required to support practice development.
4.3	<p>Audits highlight the number of changes in workers and the impact that this has on drift and delay in terms of assessments being completed, planning, review of planning and engagement with families. Audits continue to reflect reoccurring themes that need to be embedded with the workforce to support a change in practice.</p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability in the workforce, alongside manageable caseloads to provide opportunity to attend training and embed learning.