

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 12 March 2024
Subject:	Summary of Recent Audit Activity		
Report of:	Assistant Director, Safeguarding, Review and Quality Assurance	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:			
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

Summary of recent audit activity

This report provides a summary of quality assurance activity over the last two months. March's Overview and Scrutiny Meeting is unusual in that it takes place before Improvement Board. In order that the documents presented to this board can be viewed as soon as possible by members of O and S, a QA and performance briefing will be offered at a time/format to suit members.

Recommendation(s):

That the report be noted

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To appraise the Committee of developments.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Not applicable

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Not applicable

(B) Capital Costs

Not applicable

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None directly	
Legal Implications: None directly	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Impact on Children and Young People: No	
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Not Applicable
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Report provides a summary of quality activity over the last 2 months
Commission, broker and provide core services: As above
Place – leadership and influencer: As above
Drivers of change and reform: As above
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable
Greater income for social investment: Not applicable
Cleaner Greener: Not applicable

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7570/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5670/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee

(Please delete as appropriate and remove this text)

Contact Officer:	Joe Banham
Telephone Number:	07584 667600
Email Address:	Joe.banham@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Children's Social Care Performance Scorecard

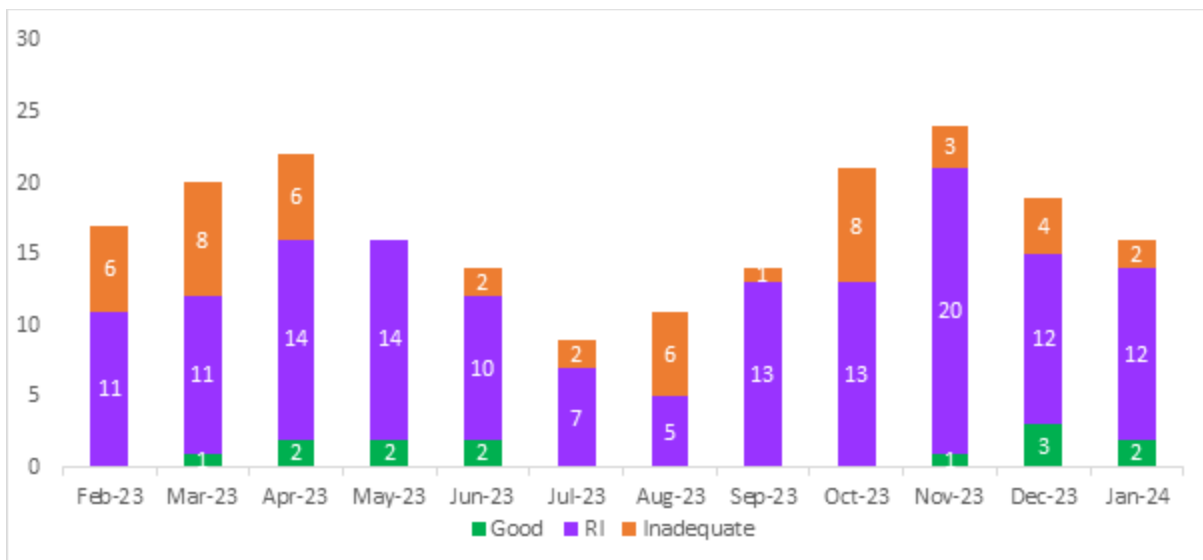
Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

Audit judgements - last 12 Months

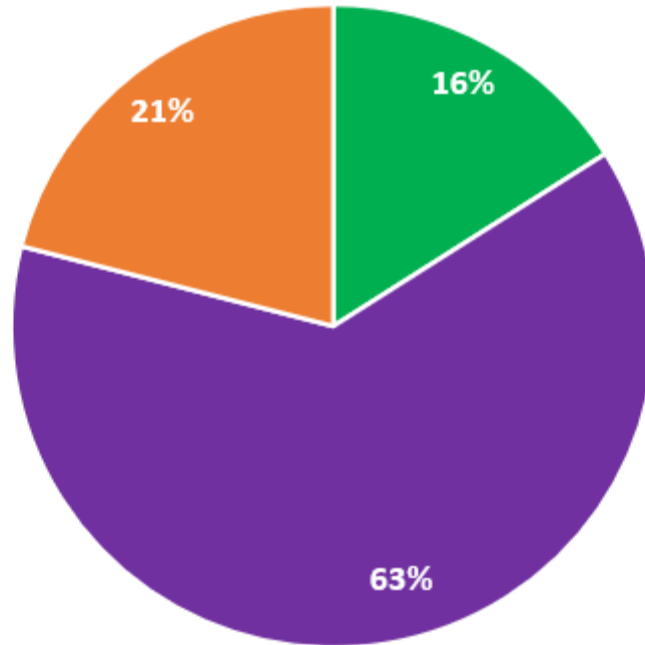
The chart below summarises activity over the last 12 months; it provides a wider context and shows gradual improvement over time. There is clear evidence that the amount of work graded Inadequate has reduced significantly over the last year; (February 2023 35% versus January 2024 13%). Although good work has been identified each month in the last 3 months, most work audited is considered Requires Improvement to Be Good.



Recent Audit Activity – December 2023 and January 2024

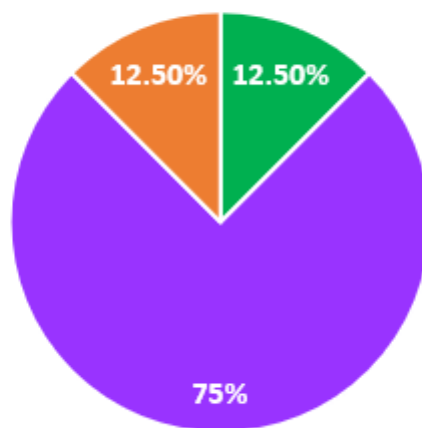
Since the last report, **35** deep dive audits have been completed across Childrens Social Care (December 2023 and January 2024). **14** of these audits were moderated (**40%**) which resulted in **2** audits being downgraded from 'Good' to Requires Improvement to be good following moderation.

Audit judgements December 2023 Post moderation



■ Good ■ Requires Improvement to be good ■ Inadequate

Audit Judgements January 2024 Post moderation



■ Good ■ RI ■ Inadequate

Other audit activity undertaken in December 2023 and January 2024
Analysis of Inadequate Audits- July- December 2023

This audit was undertaken to understand the factors that continue to contribute to inadequate grades.

20 audits were graded inadequate during July 2023 – December 2023 (20% of all audits undertaken during this period). Of the 20 graded 'inadequate', 11 were moderated (55%) and 5 of these were graded 'Requires Improvement to be Good' prior to being downgraded to 'Inadequate' following moderation.

Main findings:

- For most children, drift and delay in achieving permanence contributed to the inadequate grade.
- In 9 out of 20, it was clear that the lack of timely, thorough assessment which included family, partners and the child contributed to the inadequate grade.
- In 7 out of 20; it was clear that the inadequate grade was linked to a child being deemed to be at risk of significant harm, or there was insufficient evidence to be assured that this risk did not apply.
- In 4 out of 20; it was clear that the inadequate grade was linked to ineffective IRO/CP oversight/contact with the child or escalation.

The findings of this report will be shared with relevant Assistant Directors/Service Managers for them to consider and target individual and team support.

The Practice Improvement team will be allocated every audit graded inadequate to follow up with the Team Manager and Practitioner ensuring that a reflective learning conversation takes place with both; and support is provided to close the loop/ link to any helpful resources e.g. refresh of assessment training, review of care planning video, individual coaching, team sessions etc – ongoing.

Moving forward there will be a far greater focus and challenge on those cases which are graded as inadequate. Over the past twelve months there is clear evidence of improvement, with most practice now being graded as 'requires improvement to be good' alongside increasing amounts of work which is graded as 'good'. The development of the QA Framework, a growing cohort of experienced auditors and increased moderation means that there is far greater confidence than there was 12 months ago that our view of practice is accurate. This progression provides a firm basis to increase our challenge of that work which continues to be graded as inadequate, both in terms of individual practice issues and partnership and systems improvements which will improve outcomes for children and their families.

Thematic dip samples

December 2023:

- Quality of assessments in the Help and Protect teams- 16 assessments sampled.
- January 2024:
- Impact of the Safer Families Practice Hub- 10 families sampled.
 - Quality of assessments in the CWCN and Corporate Parenting teams- 7 assessments sampled.

All thematic dip samples have individual actions set by the auditors for follow up and feed into practice improvement activity.

