



Quality Strategy

October 2021

SUMMARY

This document outlines Brighter Futures for Children's Quality Strategy, which sets out our approach to quality assurance and improvement across the company.

OWNER

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1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 Brighter Futures for Children's overall objective is to deliver the best possible opportunities for the children of Reading, and our vision is to unlock all the resources in the borough of Reading to help every child have a happy, health and successful life. We are embedding our values, set out in the diagram below (Figure 1), across the company.



- 1.2 Brighter Futures for Children is committed to providing high quality, responsive and impactful services for children, young people, their families and carers. We are focused on delivering outcomes and positive impact, that can be sustained over time, and help our community to thrive.
- 1.3 As a not for profit company, delivering statutory as well as regulated services, we must have confidence in our processes, the decisions we make and the services we deliver. Aligned with this is our need to provide assurances to stakeholders, including children young people and their families, that we have internal processes and governance arrangements in place to assure the quality of our work, and can evidence improved outcomes for children and families. This Quality Strategy, and its associated Quality Assurance Operational Framework, have been developed to support this requirement and commitment.
- 1.4 Our Quality Strategy sets out how we use a range of initiatives, including continuous improvement, to design, embed and deliver consistently good quality services and support to children, young people, families and carers including foster carers.

Architecture for Professional Practice

- 1.5 Relationship based practice - the recognition that building and strengthening relationships is key to successful practice and outcomes - is at the heart of our Architecture of Professional Practice. Our overarching approach is that we think trauma informed, respond restoratively, therapeutically and whole family. As a diverse workforce we will implement a range of models, tools and skills flexibly in response to individual children and family needs.
- 1.6 Our Architecture for Professional Practice supports our work to improve outcomes for children, young people and families through embedding effective practice, rooted in our knowledge of research and evidence of 'what works'. Our architecture applies to our leadership and our professional practice across the company. It is fundamental to how we work with children, young people and families and also underpins how we work with each other and our partners across all services and all layers of the organisation.
- 1.7 Our values and approach are outlined in our Architecture Professional Practice Circle (Figure 2):



- 1.8 At Brighter Futures for Children we believe that children should live with their own families and family networks whenever it is safe for them to do so. Our practice is underpinned by the value we place on working collaboratively with families with a systemic, holistic whole-family approach to support them in finding their own solutions and building on their strengths. We will always keep the focus on the child and we will make sure we know our children, young people and families well. We have relentless focus on improving outcomes for children young people and families; delivering the right services at the right time; and developing resilient individuals and communities.

Trauma Informed Approach

- 1.9 We know from scientific research that adverse life experiences, particularly in childhood, can have a significant impact on people's lives and can impact on a wide range of health, education and social outcomes. Trauma is common and within some services there are often particularly high rates of people who have lived with trauma. Some groups e.g. children are particularly vulnerable to trauma. People affected by trauma can be less likely to seek or access the help they need for a range of reasons.
- 1.10 Our Quality Strategy is underpinned by our Architecture for Professional Practice, which assumes that all children, adults and families requiring our services are more likely to have experienced adversity resulting in trauma. As we build consistently good services, and aspire to outstanding service delivery, being trauma aware helps us keep in mind that people's behaviour and communication may be a response to what has happened to them previously and consider how we may respond to them in that context.
- 1.11 We are committed to implementing a whole systems trauma informed approach that is embedded at each part of the child's journey through the system. We will develop a workforce that is confident and skilled in understanding, responding to and helping recovery from trauma.

Restorative Practice

- 1.12 Restorative and trauma informed approaches are based on the principles of working 'with' people rather than doing things 'to' them or 'for' them. Our architecture uses this approach to actively nurture connections, finding strategies to manage difficult conversations leading to strong, mutually respectful and supportive relationships within our organisations and the wider community.
- 1.13 Our Quality Strategy, and its practice development approaches including improvement work, audit and quality assurance, is designed to support how we will deliver and review our services to children and families, and measure the impact and outcomes of our approaches. This activity will help consolidate what is working well, and rapidly improve areas of challenge.

Whole Family Approach

- 1.14 To help a child or young person achieve positive outcomes we need to understand how their challenges shape their experiences and thinking in the context of their family and the wider 'system' that is around them. This includes developing our understanding and embedding a wider contextual safeguarding approach to our work with young people.
- 1.15 We support parents/carers in recognising and addressing underlying issues in their lives that impact on their ability to function effectively as adults and as parents. We work with the whole family to help them achieve sustained change.
- 1.16 Our Quality Strategy relies on having a sound understanding of what 'good' looks like in the context of a whole family approach. This includes supporting the roll out of approaches within the architecture with policy and procedure development and implementation, workforce development and support, and quality assurance activities across the company.

Regulation

- 1.17 Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. It is responsible for inspecting and regulating services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.
- 1.18 The Care Quality Commission (CQC) are responsible for ensuring health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care. CQC is responsible for registering care providers and inspecting all registered health services provided to children (working in partnership with other inspectorates)
- 1.19 For Education colleagues, Ofsted uses the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) which replaced the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) in September 2019. The EIF covers maintained schools and academies, non-association independent schools, further education (FE) and skills providers, and registered early years settings. Inspectors consider teacher workload and wellbeing; and make key judgements about: quality of education; personal development; behaviour and attitudes; and leadership and management.
- 1.20 Types of inspections and the regulatory body responsible for these inspections are summarised in the table below:

INSPECTION	REGULATORY BODY	DETAILS
Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS)	Ofsted	For Children’s Social Care and Early Help services, from January 2018 Ofsted has used ILACS for inspecting children’s services including early help for local authorities. ILACS inspections focus on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements to help and protect children; the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home; the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption; and the experiences and progress of care leavers. They also evaluate the effectiveness of leaders and managers; the impact they have on the lives of children and young people; and the quality of professional practice.
Joint Targeted Area Inspection Programme (JTAI)	CQC, Ofsted, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons	JTAs are inspections of local authority areas in that look at the effectiveness of front-line safeguarding and how well the different agencies work together.

INSPECTION	REGULATORY BODY	DETAILS
Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF)	Ofsted	<p>The SCCIF applies to inspections of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children’s homes • secure children’s homes • independent fostering agencies • boarding schools and residential special schools • voluntary adoption agencies • adoption support agencies • residential family centres • residential holiday schemes for disabled children • residential provision in further education colleges
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) inspections	CQC and Ofsted	Evaluates implementation of the reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014. Inspections look at how well education, social care and health services work together in partnership to identify those children and young people (aged 0 – 25) who have SEND and/or a disability; and how well they assess and meet their needs.
Youth Offending Service	HM Inspectorate of Probation	<p>Inspection of youth offending work consists of the following two elements:</p> <p>Full Joint Inspection – targeted at a small number of YOTs each year where performance gives particular cause for concern, together with at least one where published performance is strong and worth sharing.</p> <p>Short Quality Screening – targeted at approximately 20% of YOTs each year across the whole range of published performance. The focus of this programme is work at the start of the sentence, along with pre-sentence reports.</p>

1.21 Following a series of inspections across the whole service, Brighter Futures for Children has developed and implemented an overarching Improvement Plan, and related service-specific improvement plans, as part of our practice development journey. Other key improvement and action plans also support specific operational practice development and contribute to the strategic direction of services.

Business Priorities

- 1.22 Our priorities for practice development are set out in our Business Plan, and underpin all the work we do. For 2021/22 (Year 3 of the company's three-year Business Plan), our priorities are set out as below:
- **Priority 1:** Deliver transformation of services in all areas of the company to ensure continuous improvement and better outcomes for our children and young people.
 - **Priority 2:** Make optimal use of resources, deliver best value and scope opportunities for external funding and income generation to maximise our impact for children and young people.
 - **Priority 3:** Complete end-to-end process mapping and develop and embed a demand management approach for all services.
 - **Priority 4:** Implement and embed the Early Help approach securing active commitment of community partners.
 - **Priority 5:** Support education providers to give our children and young people the best start and to promote excellent teaching and learning, especially for those with SEND.
 - **Priority 6:** Focus on building a stable workforce of permanent staff.
- 1.23 Sitting underneath the Quality Strategy, our Quality Assurance Operational Framework sets out the activity across the organisation that will deliver this strategy and contributes to the delivery of excellent outcomes for children, young people and families. Quality assurance is a key thread in ensuring that our support and services are of the highest quality and align to the current and futures needs of our community.
- 1.24 This Quality Assurance Operational Framework sets out Brighter Futures for Children's approach to quality assurance and practice development. It outlines our principles and approach to providing a consistent and embedded approach to quality that encompasses our services to meet the needs of children, young people and families. It also embeds a learning and continuous improvement culture within our organisation.

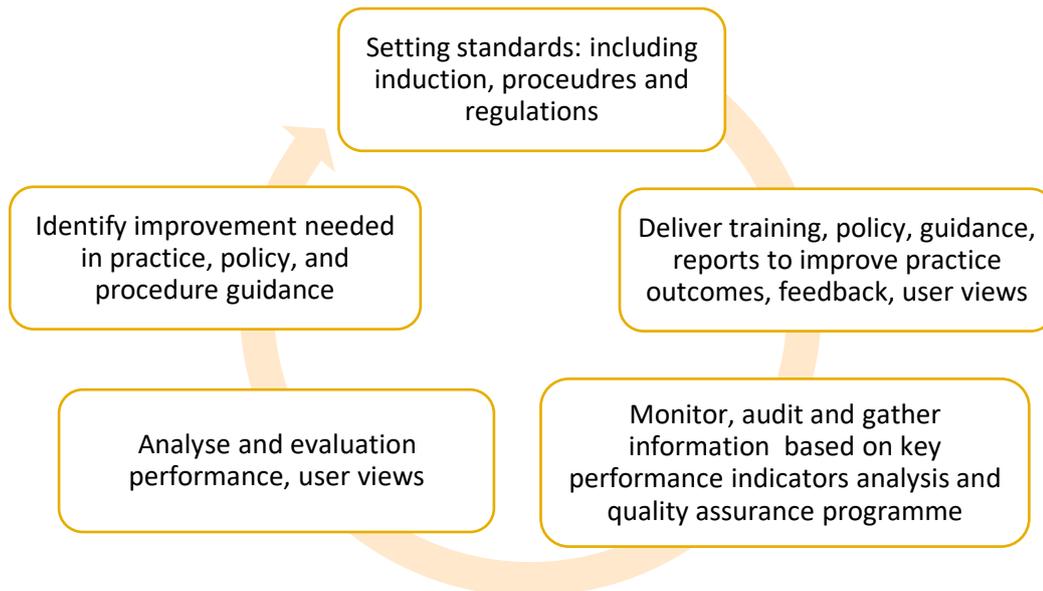
2. Aims of the Quality Strategy

- 2.1 Our Quality Strategy is built on four central aims.
- **Aim One** – Brighter Futures for Children sets quality standards within and across the operational teams, and implements, measures and monitors that our practice is underpinned by these standards by using appropriate performance and quality assurance processes.
 - **Aim Two** – Audit and wider quality assurance activity provides information and evidence including themes, impact on practice and outcomes, and informs recommendations on cross-cutting operational practice.
 - **Aim Three** – Quality assurance practice is supported and further developed as a central component of our organisational culture, emphasising that quality is everyone's responsibility.
 - **Aim Four** – Quality assurance supports performance, improvement and practice development across the company.

- 2.2 The Quality and Improvement team works with services across the company to support and oversee implementation of this strategy and its operational framework, and to support continuous improvement and practice development.

3. Principles

- 3.1 The Quality Strategy and Quality Assurance Operational Framework provides practitioners, managers and leaders with a sustainable framework that improves services to deliver consistently good and impactful support to children and families. The Quality and Improvement team works with colleagues within Brighter Futures for Children to capture key processes and use this information to further embed quality assurance and improvement activities, supporting teams to own and use their data intelligence to inform practice development.
- 3.2 The Quality Strategy for Brighter Futures for Children is underpinned by the following six quality principles:
- **Child Centred:** quality assurance processes focus on the experiences, progress and outcomes for the child during their journey through all our services and support; families can influence and shape services that they receive.
 - **Impact and outcome focused:** quality assurance processes are impactful and outcome based, improve performance, and evidence the impact of our support and intervention through improved outcomes.
 - **People and Participation:** quality assurance processes are restorative rather than taking a top-down approach. They are based on working with staff and managers and building relationships. Practitioners and managers at all levels have the opportunity to influence and shape the services that they deliver and contribute to continuous improvement, recognising that quality is integral to all our work and it is everyone's responsibility to deliver it.
 - **Reflective and Proactive:** Quality assurance is an ongoing and dynamic process that sets and checks standards, monitors achievement against those standards and uses the information to improve services.
 - **Supports Decision Making:** Quality assurance processes support decision making by providing data and intelligence at both operational and strategic levels.
 - **Leadership:** Leaders and managers create and maintain an environment where practitioners are supported to provide good quality services, and have responsibility and accountability for local quality assurance processes and continuous improvement.
- 3.3 Good quality assurance in children's services is part of a continuous improvement cycle, designed to improve the lives of children, young people and families, and strengthen the organisation. This is described in the cycle overleaf (Figure 3):



3.4 An effective quality assurance framework that informs practice development has:

- a focus on sustainable change that supports positive outcomes and impact on children;
- a ‘can do’ culture where individual motivation is positive and sustained;
- a culture which is open challenge and willing to learn from it; and
- a workforce which is skilled, supported, and committed to ongoing learning and continuous improvement.

3.5 Within our operational framework, quality assurance activities are structured and target areas that are working well as well as areas needing development and improvement, with a focus on how the learning is cascaded and embedded. In 2021/22, our quality assurance activities are particularly focused on identifying good practice, and how to embed this good practice across the company, as well as identifying what improvements are needed to bring practice up to at least ‘good’ levels where this is currently not consistently delivered. It is aligned to our Architecture for Professional Practice, and our draft Engagement and Participation Strategy (due to be finalised by October 2021).

3.6 Our separate Quality Assurance Operational Framework sets out how we put this Quality Strategy into practice, and this framework includes our annual Quality Assurance Activity Plan.

4. Driving improvement

4.1 To consistently deliver good quality services and support, Brighter Futures for Children employs a range of strategies to improve its practice and be confident that practice is moving towards being consistently at least ‘good’, with an aspiration to be outstanding.

4.2 These strategies include:

- A focus on partnership work in quality assurance and audit activities, tackling both practice and culture within and across organisations.

- Continuous improvement approach, keeping the focus on improving the way things are done on a regular basis, and including both regular incremental improvements and achieving larger practice and process improvements.
- Rapid improvement in process change, seeking to understand what can be improved quickly and without additional or significant resources.
- Adherence to the 'plan, do, check, act' approach, to support a structured and logical approach to improving quality.
- Ensuring learning from quality assurance and audit is linked with our learning and development programme, including workforce development.
- Including qualitative and quantitative data and information in the improvement programme and its associated reporting, including using local, regional and national datasets to benchmark and identify outlier performance.
- Celebrating success and using a strengths model to promote change and consolidating what is working well, rather than a sole focus on deficits, to inspire and empower operational staff and leaders.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 We are driving improvement in practice, process and culture to enable us to consistently deliver good quality support and services to children and families by aligning our quality assurance activities to our business priorities. We are also informed by key service documents, including self evaluations, action plans and datasets, ensuring our programme of work reflects key lines of enquiry and concern. Increasingly, we are using hypothesis-led approaches to audit work, to target findings and analysis in areas requiring improvement.
- 5.2 We are also keen to demonstrate the impact of hearing from and responding to a range of feedback including the impact of our work with and the lived experiences of children and families we support. By using this intelligence, we can be confident that our support and services are responsive and impactful, and deliver the outcomes we seek to achieve across our local area.