

Good Practice For Agencies When Conducting Single Agency Audits

What is Quality Audit?

Quality Audit is part of a whole quality assurance programme to establish whether the work we undertake to safeguard adults is high quality, continually improving, and is effective in helping to keep children and young people safe. Effective quality assurance will contribute to a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Audit is **NOT**

- Gathering statistics/counting widgets
- Research
- An appraisal or disciplinary mechanism
- A paper exercise
- A distraction from the “day job”



It is part of but not the whole of Quality Assurance.

Quality audits involve reading the case record, and checking whether or not standards are met and to review the quality of practice and decision making. The process of carrying out an audit can sometimes be as beneficial as the outcomes. Audit provides staff with the time and space to reflect critically on practice.

A few tips

1. Audit should be undertaken on a regular basis and co-ordinated by a manager with responsibility for quality assurance.
2. The focus of the audit should be on safeguarding adults
3. The audit tool should include a set of quality assurance standards – the standards provide the framework for the questions used in the tool
4. Keep the audit manageable by limiting the number of standards – be absolutely clear about the main things you want to check. You don't have to check every aspect of practice.
5. Ideally each question should have a number of options for the auditor and a free text box where evidence can be provided if required.
6. Always pilot your audit tool before you use it. If you audit one or two cases yourself you will soon find out whether or not it works!
7. Audit should always involve practitioners e.g. practitioners complete the audit and discuss the findings with their manager
8. Audit should include the experiences of the adult and their family
9. Audit should identify the strengths and areas for improvement and where necessary a SMART action plan

Remember:

The primary use of the intelligence gathered from auditing is to find out how we can improve.

- What is good about our work?
- Where are we doing things well and can this be extended into other areas?
- Where there are concerns around quality of work, what do we need to do to put this right?
- What policies and procedures are relevant to the audit?