

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 19 APRIL 2012**

Councillors Amin, Hare, Rice and Stewart

Apologies Councillor Davies

Also Present: Sylvia Chew, Iain Low, Hilary Corrick

| MINUTE NO. | SUBJECT/DECISION | ACTON BY |
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| CSPAP C58 | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE(IF ANY) Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Matt Davies. | |
| CSPAP C59 | URGENT BUSINESS The Chair agreed to accept a follow up report by the Head of First Response on cases examined by the Independent Member of the committee, involving children under 2 years old, referred to the First Response in July 2011 and where the primary concern was domestic violence. | |
| CSPAP C60 | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest put forward. | |
| CSPAP C61 | MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held on the 26th January 2012 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting by the committee. | Clerk |
| CSPAP C62 | MATTERS ARISING There were no matters arising. | |
| CSPAP C63 | DISABLED CHILDREN AUDIT The committee had previously discussed the possibility of auditing referrals to the Safeguarding service of children with additional needs. They were particularly concerned about those who fell below the threshold for obtaining services from the disabled children's team. The Independent Member of the committee had since met with the Head Services to Children & Young People with the Additional Needs & | |

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| | <p>Disabilities to discuss the scope for a potential audit in this area. From this discussion the Independent member had learnt that there were three forthcoming audits concerning disabled children. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A learning audit focused on a specific child and the services received by the child and family. A report on these findings was due to be considered by the LSCB and its appropriate sub group in May 2012. • Examining all cases of Domestic Violence referred to First Response where the family includes a child known to the Disabled Children's Team. • A joint audit was to take place between the Additional Needs & Disabilities team and the health therapy service, of all children where Domestic Violence is thought to be a feature in the household, and where one of the children in the household is thought to have additional needs which do not meet the Disabled Children's Team thresholds. <p>It was proposed to the committee that they consider the findings of these three audits at their meeting in September. The committee could then decide whether the findings raise particular concerns which need to be explored further in an independent audit or whether they can make recommendations as a committee for changes in practice and policy.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the findings of the audits outlined above be considered at the committee meeting in September 2012.</p> | Clerk |
| <p>CPAPC 64</p> | <p>PROGRAMME OF AUDITS FOR 2012/13</p> <p>The Independent Member updated the committee on the compilation of the committee work plan for 2012/13. This would be informed by discussions with the LSCB manager and there would be further contact with the Head of First Response about the service audits occurring in the forthcoming year and which ones could be considered by the committee. The following topics were put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of year Performance data for safeguarding in comparison to comparator borough and national data • Looking at how lessons can be learnt from Serious Case Reviews in particular looking at "looking at lessons learnt" a key section from the SCR on baby Peter and how we can show that the lessons have been integrated into the work of the service • Potentially considering service audits into cases involving: unborn | |

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| | <p>babies, neglect referrals and re-referrals jointly with Children's Centres. (Subject to discussion with the Head of First Response)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the interface between Safeguarding and Adult services. In November considering cases subject to planning where a parent has substance misuse issues. • Exploring the interface between Mental Health services and Safeguarding services in cases which are subject to child protection planning. • A report on the work with families, who have no recourse to public funds. • A report on interface between Safeguarding and other key partner agencies which provides an understanding of their communication lines. <p>The Chair touched upon the current governance review which was considering the current role and functions of this committee. He indicated that discontinuation with devolution of its functions was a possibility. The Independent Member advised that the scrutiny function of this committee was still needed and if the committee was to be decommissioned it would be important for this function to be passed to the appropriate body. Committee Members commented on how they had found the detailed case analysis important to getting a real understanding of the work in safeguarding. They agreed that the Independent Member should highlight the key scrutiny functions of the committee to appropriate members and officers and continue working on the work programme as the chosen audits and focus areas could still be transferred to the appropriate children's body.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That a final work programme for Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee for 2012/13 be completed by the Independent Member and distributed to committee members for information.</p> | HC |
| <p>CPAPC 65</p> | <p>PROTOCOLS FOR RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <p>The Head of First Response shared with the committee the protocols used by Social Workers to aid working with young people that have been experiencing domestic violence. The protocols and links to relevant information and contact points were put in one place for Social Workers to access and use when dealing with cases involving young people and domestic violence. They further helped build awareness of the issue of domestic violence between young people. The need for the protocols</p> | |

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| | <p>had arisen following a past Ofsted inspection which had raised questions about how reports of violence were taken forward when reported by young people. The committee were interested in the details of this specific case and it led them to seeking an understanding about the level of focus a Social Worker has on young people and older children in a family where domestic violence is apparent and they are part of a plan.</p> <p>The committee wanted further assurance that the practices developed following the Ofsted inspection continued. The committee noted that the domestic violence co-ordinators, Deirdre Cregan and Michelle Robertson were currently undertaking training with council and partners on raising awareness of Domestic Violence and could provide this presentation to the committee. There were monthly workshops delivered to Social Workers to maintain the awareness of Domestic Violence issues. There was also the opportunity to complete service audits to monitor how Social Workers were dealing with reports of domestic violence amongst young people.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That Deirdre Cregan and Michelle Robson provide a presentation on the training activities being undertaken with partners and Social Workers regarding raising awareness of Domestic Violence to committee in July. ii. That the Head of First Response complete an audit on cases where domestic violence is reported to examine the focus of the Social Worker on the children in the family and whether it is equal for all ages. | <p>Clerk</p> <p>SC</p> |
| <p>CPAPC 66</p> | <p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>The press and public were excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item as it contained exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the local government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the local government act 1985) paras 1&2 namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p> | |
| <p>CPAPC 67</p> | <p>CHILDREN SUBJECT TO PLANNING</p> <p>A programme of audits had been established by the committee in order to monitor practice and performance in Children's Social Care, and identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement. These audits had focused primarily on new referrals and children within the First Response service. Members previously wished to look more closely at</p> | |

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those children who become subject to a child protection plan as the result of a Child Protection Conference. These children were involved with Children and Young People's Services for longer periods of time, generally, than those who have a brief, targeted intervention from First Response, and were dealt with by Social Workers within the Safeguarding Service.

Cases were chosen at random from Framework I to examine and the Independent Member remarked on the complexity of navigating cases on the framework I system; although this could have been a reflection of the density of the cases looked at. The Head of Safeguarding and Support explained that they were examining a windows based model of the Framework I system but there would be a cost to changing the view of cases on the system. Social Workers were experienced in the use of the system.

The case findings highlighted that there was a significant fall in the number of child protection cases open but they were still a high number. The cases examined were rightly found to require being subject to a protection plan after 18 months as there were longer term issues involved.

The committee considered the case study findings and asked whether a menu of intervention services or specialist services could have been provided at the start of some of the cases and if this could have had an impact. Also whether options such as adoption could have been considered earlier especially when children were young or babies and could be offered an alternative to staying in a family where their needs were not being met. In response, it was noted that the service were taking forward early intervention programmes with families but some families required the structure of being on the child protection plan as issues being faced could be long term and complex. The service would monitor and complete regular audits on long term child protection cases to check their progression.

The committee spoke about the need to find alternative solutions to helping families on long term plans and providing structure to their lives in a different way i.e. through helping them into work. The committee acknowledged that the Troubled Families project helped a small number of families and therefore this route could not always be used. One suggestion was to consider parents of children that were subject to long term planning, for participation in employment initiatives.

The committee were further interested in understanding how the issues raised by the Independent Member in the audit would be taken forward.

RESOLVED

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| | <p>That the issues identified by the Independent Member identified such as the length of time that a child was known to the service before issues were brought to a multi agency forum, the length of time a child was subject to plan, the timeliness of proceedings, and the impact of intervention on family be responded to by the Head of Safeguarding and Support in a report to the next committee meeting.</p> | <p>IL</p> |
| <p>CPAPC 68</p> | <p>EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>The chair had agreed to accept this report as an item of urgent business as it was a follow up report by the Head of First Response on cases examined by the Independent member of the committee concerning a sample of children under the age two years old referred to the First Response team in July 2011 and where the primary concern was domestic violence.</p> <p>The committee noted that 58% of the cases audited by the Independent Member were now closed. The re-referral rate of these cases was considerably low but the committee were asked to note this with caution as this was unusual for cases involving domestic violence. A low number of these cases went to case conference reflecting the good follow up work achieved in the cases. Some of the cases had been open between 4 and 5 months and if they had remained open for longer there would have been a need to progress them to Child Protection conference for consideration.</p> <p>Generally there was a need to continue making use of the Voluntary Sector to provide ongoing support to the mothers. Social Workers would be seeking to work with outreach workers at the start of the referral and in tandem on the case to achieve longer term support for the mothers.</p> <p>The committee were interested in getting feedback from these mothers on their experience with the Safeguarding service. It was suggested that the Independent Member could contact some of the mothers involved in this recent case audit to gather this information which could be considered at the meeting in July 2012.</p> <p>The committee discussed the key role that Early Years Service had in early intervention, particularly children centres where children, subject to children in need plans, should be prioritised for places. This was seen as a key area for supporting families and stopping children becoming subject to protection plans and coming into care. The committee noted that the Safeguarding service was meeting with the Early Years on a regular basis to discuss places being made available for children in contact with the safeguarding service. It was felt that an assertive line should be taken, individually, with children's centres to ensure that their places were prioritised for children in need.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> | <p>HC</p> |

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| | That Ros Cooke, Head of Early Years be invited to the committee meeting in July to discuss the support provided for children in need in Children's Centres. | RC/ Clerk |
| CPAPC 69 | ANY OTHER BUSINESS NONE | |

Cllr Reg Rice

Chair