
Joint meeting of Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee & Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee

THURSDAY, 6TH MARCH, 2014 at **19:30 HRS** or on the rise of the **Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee**- CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 8LE.

MEMBERS: Councillors Adamou, Allison, Brabazon, Browne, Hilary Corrick, Dogus, Hare, Reece, Scott, Solomon, Stennett, Stewart and Waters.

AGENDA

1. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR

It has previously been agreed to alternate the responsibility of Chair for the joint meetings between Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee. The Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee is due to chair this meeting.

2. APOLOGIES[IF ANY]

3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair will consider the admission of any late items of urgent business. (Late items will be considered under the agenda item that they appear. New items will be dealt with at item 8 below. New items of exempt business will be dealt with at item 10 below.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a prejudicial interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered:

(i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, and

(ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must withdraw from the meeting room.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Members' Register of Interests or the subject of a pending notification must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal interests and prejudicial interest are defined at Paragraphs 5-7 and Appendix A of the Members' Code of Conduct.

5. PERFORMANCE (PAGES 1 - 4)

The purpose of this report is to brief Members on two key areas of performance: Priority 2: Enable every child and young person to thrive and achieve their potential; and Priority 4: Safeguard children and adults from abuse and neglect wherever possible, and deal with it appropriately and effectively where it does occur.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE UPDATE (PAGES 5 - 8)

The purpose of this report is to brief Corporate Parenting and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee members on quality assurance in relation to our progress against performance data and audit activity. In other words 'how well we know ourselves'.

7. NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT - QUARTERLY UPDATE (PAGES 9 - 22)

This report provides the data collated during this quarter and a view of how the project's aims have developed. Also there is a report back on the quality assurance activity in relation to the compilation of court reports as requested at the last joint meeting.

8. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any new items of urgent business as per item 3.

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following items as they may contain 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.

10. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any new items of exempt urgent business as per item 3.

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Report for:	Joint Meeting of Corporate Parenting Advisory Group and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee 6 March 2014	Item Number:	
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Title:	Performance
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Report Authorised by:	Lisa Redfern Director, Children's Services (Acting)
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Lead Officer:	Richard Hutton
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Ward(s) affected: All	Report for Non Key Decision:
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1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief Members on two key areas of performance:

Priority 2: Enable every child and young person to thrive and achieve their potential;
and

Priority 4: Safeguard children and adults from abuse and neglect wherever possible, and deal with it appropriately and effectively where it does occur

1.2 A full set of data will be reported at the next meeting of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee on 1 April 2014.

- There has been a continued downward trend in the number of **children subject to a child protection plan**. Children on a plan have reduced by 35% since the end of March 2013, 100 fewer children. At the end of December there were 168 children subject to a plan, a **rate** of 29 per 10,000 population below the 2012/13 rate for our statistical neighbours (40). This is a significant change from being an authority with the 7th highest number of children subject of a CP plan in London at the end of March 2013.



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- A **children and families single assessment** went live from 1 July and initial and core assessments were replaced with simple and complex assessments. 702 of these assessments have been **completed** in the year so far, **78% in 45 working days** against a target of 85%.
- 81% of **children assessed were seen within 10 days** below the 95% target.
- 8.8% (23 out of 260 children) of **child protection plans** that ceased this year **lasted 2 years or more** close to our statistical neighbour position of 9% but higher than the England position of 5.2% and our 7% target.
- Indicators around **stability of placements** for looked after children remain slightly below and in line with our statistical neighbours. 8% of children had 3 or more placements compared with 12% amongst our statistical neighbours
- 87 out of 505 or 17% of **Children are placed 20 miles or more from Haringey**. This is a reduction of 3 children from last month but that combined with an increase in the number of children looked after has brought the proportion 20 miles plus closer to our 16% target.

Related indicators

- 11% of children have become the **subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time** lower than the 13% reported by our statistical neighbours in 2012/13 and in line with our 10% target.
- **Child contacts** are on a reducing trend with current numbers suggesting over 1,000 fewer contacts in 2013/14. 464 contacts in December 2013.
- 1291 **referrals** in the year, 14% reduction from 2012/13 in contrast to SN which increased slightly in 2012/13. This is equivalent to a referral rate of 224 per 10,000 population (projection of 299 rate for 2013/14) and low compared to our SN rate of 545 for 2012/13.
- The rate of **re-referrals within 12 months of the previous referral** at 15% is in line with our target (16%) and our statistical neighbours.
- 90% of **child protection cases have been reviewed within timescale** for the current cohort, below the 100% target and below levels achieved by our statistical neighbours.
- 92% of **child protection visits** (144 out of 157) completed in the month as at the end of December short of the 95% target. This includes 5 children whose whereabouts were unknown and a number of children away.
- There has been a 3% reduction in the number of **children in care** since the end of March 2013. 523 children were in care on the last day of December, an increase of 14 children since October and reversing the trend in the first 6 months of the year. This equates to a rate of 91 per 10,000 population, which remains higher than the level in similar boroughs (72) although a significant reduction on this point last year



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(rate 93).

- 8 children missing from care in the month of December 2013, 3 of whom were missing for less than 24 hours.

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Report for:	Joint Meeting of Corporate Parenting Advisory Group and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee 6 March 2014	Item Number:	
Title:	Quality Assurance Report		
Report Authorised by:	Lisa Redfern Director, Children's Services (Acting)		
Lead Officer:	Myra O'Farrell Assistant Director, Quality Assurance		
Ward(s) affected:	Report for Non Key Decision:		

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 Quality Assurance

The purpose of this report is to brief Corporate Parenting and Children's safeguarding Policy and Practice members on quality assurance in relation to our progress against performance data and audit activity. In other words 'how well we know ourselves'. Areas for consideration in this report are:

1.2 Audits

Two areas were undertaken this month. Domestic abuse and s.47/strategy meetings, discussions to assess quality and attendance to ensure compliance with *Working Together 2013*:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children> .

1.3 Domestic Abuse Audit

18 cases were audited for the audit. The methodology included tracking each case from the point of entry into the service via the screening and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) processes currently in place.



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Highlights included:

- The Audit highlighted good information sharing between agencies on 74% of cases;
- Consideration of risk was evidenced at an early stage on 72% of cases; however, this indicated that approximately 25% of cases audited did not meet the above requirement;
- 67% evidenced management direction on cases;
- In 80% (8:10) protection plans were considered to be clear and to provide direction to both victim and perpetrator of what actions were needed to reduce risks and improve the safety of the child;
- 90% plans included actions that supported as well as monitored. Tasks were realistic and achievable in 89% of those cases;
- A small cohort of children became subject to Children in Need (CIN) plans. These were primarily step down plans from Child protection. Auditors noted that where the plans included the perpetrator 75% saw those plans being effective. However, auditors noted a lack of services/resources for perpetrators currently in Haringey. Auditors recommended that this be taken forward to support both children subject to child protection plans and children subject to CIN plans;
- Systems to develop genograms and multi-agency chronologies to be developed. These are being developed currently to support the realignment of the MASH;
- Auditors highlighted the quality of referrals being received from agencies referring in needed to be improved, therefore recommended that training be offered to them to address. The training officer for the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) is due in March 2014 when this will be addressed. Auditors also noted that training on direct work with young children who experience domestic abuse should occur to develop a confident workforce in this area of work, to enable their voice to be distinctly heard;
- Findings also highlighted a lack of evidence being present to demonstrate research influencing practice and decision making. This is being addressed through a number of mediums. The Principal Social Worker highlights specific training such as Domestic Violence (DV) and tools to support practice as part of his role. OFSTED preparation focus groups are currently on offer to staff to enable them to know what to focus in preparing for inspection.
- Review pathways to refer to other forums such as Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for CYPS as these appear to be high; and
- Supervision of all staff to occur as per the supervision policy on a monthly basis.

All of the above have now been developed into an action plan with the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator leading on this for CYPS. There will be another audit using the same parameters as before to assess progress against the actions above later in the year.



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1.4 Section 47 / Quality of strategy meetings/discussions to ensure compliance with *Working Together 2013*

The methodology of this audit links to an agreement at the Quality Assurance sub group of the HSCB for all agencies to audit the same number of cases and the same cases from each perspective and discuss the findings alongside the development of an action plan. Five cases were selected. The number is small on this occasion as the purpose was to ensure quality was assessed rather than quantity.

1.5 Planning and preparation for Inspection

To support a co-ordinated approach to audit activity the audit programme for the year has been developed and is aligned with the needs of the organisation in preparation with OFSTED readiness and performance data. This will be reviewed on a three monthly basis through the Quality Assurance Board to ensure alignment remains.

1.6 Data for Safeguarding and Looked after Children

The number of children subject to a child protection plan in January was 184. However this number is rising and as of week beginning 10 ~February 2014 this had risen to 192. This has increased since early January from 164-192 and is an increase of nearly 30 children. This appears rapid but reflects the population size and the apparent low numbers previously and the high numbers for LAC. The use of the child protection plan being used to protect children in the community is welcome.

The number of Looked after Children as also increased but at a slower rate and as of 10 February 2014 the number was 533. There are some anomalies with the looked after data as there appear to be a number of children being placed away from their home for short periods and then placed back. Data to date indicates that the police service appears to be undertaking Police Powers of Protection orders which last for 72 hours and have a stipulated placement for the child, thus tying up placements for that period. Further investigation is required to understand what is occurring behind this data, this is being managed through the audit programme that will audit this area later in the year.

40 Young people will cease to Looked After by June 2014 as they will by then have reached their 18th birthday.

The quality of child protection plans and LAC care plans is the current focus of activity as part of the process of 'knowing ourselves' as part of our preparation for inspection in the short term and improving practice in the medium and long term. Audit activity is being organised to assess the quality of care plans by the end of February / beginning of March 2014.

2. Actions from Previous meetings



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2.1 Updated LADO Report

Independent reviewing officers (IROs) should report on whether young people know about their rights and entitlements. IRO managers should include this in their annual report to the Corporate Parenting Board.

Briefing for:	Joint Meeting of Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee March 2014
Title:	North London Care Proceedings Project: Quarterly Report
Purpose of briefing:	To report back findings of quality assurance monitoring in relation to the compilation of court reports.
Lead Officer:	Eileen Flavin Practice Manager, Safeguarding and Support
Date:	06 March 2014

1. Introduction

This report provides the data collated during this quarter and a view of how the project's aims have developed.

Also at the joint meeting of Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee held on 5 November 2013, it was agreed that the Court manager should undertake some quality assurance activity in relation to the compilation of court reports and report back findings to the joint committee. This information is attached as an addendum to the report.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the findings.

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NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT (NLCPP)

Second Quarterly Report - 01/09/13 – 30/11/13

London Borough of Haringey

Court case manager - Eileen Flavin

Introduction

This report provides the data collated during this quarter and a view of how the project's aims have developed.

Data

Cases issued in Q1 between 03/06/13 -31/08/13

- 24 applications in respect of 21 children from 15 families/cases
- 14 applications from Safeguarding and Support Service
- 9 applications from First Response Service
- 1 application from Children In Care Service/Court Team

Cases issued in Q2 between 01/09/13 – 30/11/13

- 30 applications in respect of 27 children from 19 families/cases
- 13 applications from Safeguarding and Support Service
- 8 applications from First Response Service
- 5 applications from CIC Service/Court Team
- 3 applications from Disabled Children's Team
- 1 application from Out of Borough

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Cases Concluded in Q2/Ongoing

- 1 case concluded in 27 weeks. This case involved the Official Solicitor's Service
- 49 applications/33 cases ongoing

Applications

Application	No of children	Application Outcome
EPO x 3	2	1 withdrawn 1 granted and extended
ICO x 27 – Threshold criteria met in all cases	27	ICO x 14 ISO x 1 Sec 20 x 5 RO x 2 No order x 5

Age of Child at First Hearing

0 – 5 years	11 (7 under 1)
6 – 12 years	14
13+	2
Total	27

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Ethnicity (as identified on FWi)

White British	2
White British/ Black Caribbean	3
Black British/Black African Caribbean	10
British Asian	4
Other White European	8
Total	27

Is Case Duration Reducing/Are Court Hearings Reducing/Effective?

Following a promising start to the project with all cases being timetabled at the Court Management Hearing (CMH) within the 26 weeks maximum timetable:

18 of 21 cases (85 %) timetabled to be completed within 26 weeks from Q1 have not concluded or are unlikely to conclude within 26 weeks. These cases are currently timetabled between 27 – 47 weeks.

The following factors have contributed to this outcome:

- more hearings;
- more expert or other assessments;
- a ‘trial of treatment’;
- the involvement of the official solicitor;
- the late appointment of experts;
- the late filing of Local Authority evidence in 2 cases;
- difficulties with court time;
- the family proceedings court not setting final hearing dates until the Issues Resolution Hearing;
- recent case law;
- fact finding hearings;
- parental cooperation with experts and assessments.

Of the 27 applications listed in Q2 – information is available in respect of 20 applications:

8 applications have been listed for final hearing between 17 – 30 weeks.

12 applications have no final hearings set (3 of these have fact finding hearings set).

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Is Judicial Continuity Increasing?

Judicial continuity has not been achieved in majority of cases.

In most county court cases continuity is provided from CMH onwards.

The family proceedings court has been unable to provide continuity of lay magistrates or legal advisers. This has been raised with the judiciary as a concern. The end of Q2 strategic steering group meeting will need to consider judicial continuity.

Is Local Authority Continuity Increasing?

In common with Barnet and Enfield, Local Authority (LA) continuity is not being achieved in Haringey due to the structure of service provision where the child is transferred between teams (First Response and Safeguarding and Support to the Court Team) at the CMH.

Social work continuity has continued to be taken seriously across the service and assisted by collaboration across the teams and the early involvement of the Court Team. There are examples of the Court Team issuing proceedings in respect of new born siblings in five cases where they have case management responsibility for care proceedings in respect of older siblings.

The Court Team has undertaken a pre - birth assessment in one case where there was insufficient notice of an imminent arrival of unborn baby for the First Response Service to undertake a child and family assessment. The Safeguarding and Support Service retained case responsibility for the children in one case.

Are Guardian Timescales Improving and Continuity Increasing?

Guardians were appointed in all cases for the CMH/Contested Hearing and either attended, gave a view or provided a position statement. In most cases the IA was not available for the CMH or contested hearing. In one case the guardian appointed was unable to see the children or attend a contested hearing and the hearing was adjourned for another guardian to be appointed who could see children and attend the contested hearing. In a further case the Guardian did not see the child and was unavailable for the final hearing.

Are Assessments Reducing in Length/Frequency?

In the majority of cases the parenting and risk assessments required were undertaken by LA social workers either prior to or during the proceedings.

NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT (NLCPP)

There have been no residential assessments directed in Q2 and the use of mother and baby foster placements has assisted in cases where immediate removal is not necessary.

Where parenting assessments have not been undertaken prior to proceedings it is proving to be challenging for the Court Team to complete parenting assessments within the agreed 8 weeks timescales particularly where the assessments are complex. In Q3 cases which are transferred to the Court Team requiring a parenting assessment will be undertaken by independent social workers appointed by the Local Authority.

In a small number of cases timescales for completing parenting assessments were not achieved because of parental non compliance. It is proposed that the Court provide direction in all cases where parenting assessments are proposed in the event of non compliance. The Local Authority will provide evidence of significant non compliance with assessments prior to proceedings if this has occurred.

The parenting assessment by Enfield's Moorfield Assessment Centre directed in Q1 made a recommendation for a trial of treatment for the parent necessitating delay in the proceedings, currently timetabled to 34 weeks. In the case where a residential assessment was directed in Q1 a community assessment was recommended leading to a delay in the Issues Resolution Hearing /Final Hearing.

Connected persons' assessments. The revised initial (viability) and full connected persons' assessment guidance and template developed under the NLCPP project was introduced in this quarter.

Initial connected persons' assessments have been undertaken on the basis of one interview and on a limited number of potential carers. Full connected persons' assessments have been completed within the recommended 10 week timeframe in all but one case. In 8 cases assessments have been directed in shorter timeframes between 3 – 8 weeks. Shorter timescales place considerable pressure on resources and cause some concern about the rigour of the assessment. In one case the court permitted a late viability assessment of a relative leading to an adjourned IRH/FH.

Where further expert assessments have been required they have been undertaken in short timescales. Child and adolescent psychiatric assessments have been ordered for 3 children. In 3 cases the court adjourned the IRH and permitted adult expert assessments. In 1 case the court permitted an updating psychological assessment where the LA had commissioned one three months previously. The application was not made at the CMH and an adjourned hearing was listed.

NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT (NLCPP)

The Project

The project has continued through this quarter after Jo Tunnard, the project manager across the three partner boroughs, left at the end of Q1 with Barbara Babic Enfield court case manager assuming the project manager's role for the quarter.

The project was restructured early in Q2 following discussion between the three Local Authority Assistant Directors (ADs), with the ADs and Heads of Service attending the strategic steering group meetings on a quarterly basis and an operational group meeting in between.

Regular attendance at the steering groups has not been achieved. The judiciary and family solicitors have been unable to attend the strategic steering or operational steering group meetings during the quarter. After an absence from the steering group the senior legal adviser and his manager were able to attend the operational steering group. Cafcass was unable to attend the operational steering group or to send a deputy.

The end of Q2 Strategic Steering Group meeting will need to consider attendance at the steering group and set clearly agreed tasks and objectives for the partner agencies.

Progress

The recommendations for future work made at the end of Q1 have progressed as follows:

- Developing collaborative working relationships across Haringey Children's and Legal Services and with Barnet and Enfield. I have continued to work with the Children's Services teams and developed positive working relationships. I have continued to work with the Principle and Senior Lawyers and communicate directly with them in respect of cases. I have developed and presented training with them. I have met regularly with the Barnet and Enfield court case managers to progress the project's aims, focussing on issues relating to delay and pre proceedings work.
- A cross service operational steering group was set up and has commenced work on the following pre proceedings practice and policy issues: family group conferences (FGCs), legal planning meetings; a common parenting assessment framework and care planning. It is proposed that the work in relation to FGCs and a common parenting assessment will be undertaken under the project with Barnet, Enfield and Cafcass contributing to the outcome. Haringey is currently undertaking work on the parenting assessment in order to contribute to the agreed working practices already in place between Barnet and Enfield based on Enfield's Moorfield's Assessment Centre's Parent Child Assessment plan.

NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT (NLCPP)

- Social work skills development with a focus on initial and final written and oral evidence has continued through individual coaching with social workers and workshops undertaken with teams in the First Response Service, Safeguarding and Support Service and the Disabled Children's Team. A further workshop is planned for the Court Team.
- Feedback from Heads of Service and Local Authority lawyers and the evidence of more analytical statements suggests that the overall quality of social workers' evidence has improved. Work will be undertaken in Q3 to explore ways to measure ongoing improvement. Care planning for the permanence of the child has also improved but requires further cross service working.
- Social workers advised and supported by Haringey Legal responded quickly to the new case law requirement and the quality of final evidence has benefitted. Haringey's principal lawyer has worked on revising the project's approved final evidence statement template to address the case law and the draft statement template is being circulated for consultation within the service and with Barnet and Enfield at the time of writing.
- Working with NLCPP partner agencies. Despite the challenges highlighted above with respect to achieving the project's outcomes, there have been developments in the partnership working relationships. The senior legal adviser has been very responsive to issues which have arisen on individual cases and to general issues e.g. flexibility with regards to documents filed in short notice contested cases. It was very helpful to have the Deputy Justice's Clerk London in attendance at the operational steering group.

The Family Justice Board (FJB) performance subgroup has provided a useful forum for working with legal advisers, Cafcass and other Local Authority's court case managers and solicitors. A working group of the subgroup is developing the statement templates, considering the court chronologies and court care plans.

The performance subgroup was approached to raise the following issues with FJB: permitting short notice contested hearings; flexibility with regard to the documents filed for short notice hearings; and a mechanism to permit timetabling of the Final Hearing before the IRH where this was required. All three requests were subsequently agreed.

A further meeting is planned with Cafcass in January 2014 and Cafcass has approached Haringey and been invited to the Haringey operational steering also in January 2014. I have begun to write to all guardians advising them that the cases are being tracked and requesting contact with any concerns or delays. No guardians have yet done so. The respective roles of the 'expert guardian' and 'expert social worker' have not been progressed and will be on the agenda for the meeting in January 2014.

NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT (NLCPP)

- Court attendance. I have attended court for contested and case management hearings but have been unable to do so, on a sufficiently regular basis to assist to deliver the project's outcomes. The strategic steering group might consider whether the presence of the court case managers at hearings would assist the partner agencies to achieve the project's outcomes.

Recommendations/Future work

The recommendations made for Q2 remain the focus for Q3. In addition the following recommendations are made:

- Continued focus on supporting and improving the quality of social work evidence and care planning. By the end of Q4 a number of social workers will have provided evidence in sufficient cases to begin to draw conclusions with respect to the sustained improvement in the quality of evidence. Development of way to assess/measure improvement.
- Development of the operational steering group working on: the development of joint guidance in respect of Family Group Conferences; a joint parenting assessment framework; development of Haringey guidance in respect of legal planning meetings; and improved practice from child protection plan to pre proceedings public law outline plans.
- The tracking of cases. Accessing the data required by the project is challenging and time consuming. The proposal of the appointment of a part time operational support officer will assist tracking.
- Tracking timescales from the pre proceedings public law outline meeting until the legal planning meeting (decision to issue proceedings).

Conclusion

The project's overall objectives to complete the majority of cases within the 26 week timescale, with fewer hearings and with assessments in exceptional circumstances only, have not yet been achieved. There is marked trend towards the reduced duration of hearings, with the longest hearing currently listed at 47 weeks. The majority of cases which commenced before the project started will have concluded during Q3 and the trend will then become clearer.

Factors of concern which are referred to earlier in this report continue to impact on the duration of hearings more strongly at this stage in the project than anticipated. Further joint corrective action is needed and the Q2 meeting should provide the focus for this.

The need to place an emphasis on pre proceedings work and to undertake as many assessments as possible pre proceedings has been highlighted by the complexities of the families whose children have become the subject of care proceedings and the

NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT (NLCPP)

difficulty experienced in undertaking these complex parenting assessments within the shortened timeframe of the revised Public Law Outline.

Eileen Flavin

Haringey Court Case Manager

January 2014

NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT (NLCPP)

North London Care Proceedings Project (NLCPP)

Addendum to Haringey Q2 Report

Quality Assurance of Initial and Final statements in Care Proceedings

Introduction

The revised Public Law Outline guidance was introduced in Barnet Court in August 2013. The guidance supported the view of the President of the Family Division that social work evidence was the expert evidence in care proceedings.

New statement templates were introduced to reflect the expertise which requires that statements are analytical and provide expert evidence to the court in respect of:

- the children
- the impact of harm on them
- their parents' capacity to care for them
- care planning to permanence

The care proceedings project manager supported training through the provision of coaching to social workers and team managers to support the development of this expert evidence.

Children and Families Legislation and National Statement templates

- Subject to timely completion of the Parliamentary process in relation to the Children and Families Bill, 22 April 2014 a new single Family Court will be created. There will also be implementation of the final version of the revised Public Law Outline guidance in public law cases including revised national statement templates.

Case Audit

- In February 2014 an initial benchmark audit of 17 cases, chosen randomly from 55 applications across three services in the Children and Families' Division, were audited by the care proceedings project manager.
- Initial and final statements were audited. These statements had been written by 16 different social workers; two final statements were written by one social worker.
- The criteria for the audit was whether statements were analytical and focussed on the children who were the subject of each statement; the

impact of harm on them; their parents' capacity to care for them and care planning to achieve permanence. Gradings of 1-5 were used to define the quality.

Findings

- In general the statements were concise and analytical with the factual basis for the application appropriately incorporated in the supporting chronologies.
- The statements focussed on explaining to the court the parental difficulties and the harm to the child caused by those difficulties and the support provided by Haringey to attempt to address the difficulties and reduce the harm.
- 46% (8) of statements were good, very good or excellent. These statements were noteworthy for being child centred and balanced, providing the court with a clear account of child impact and parental capacity analyses with thoughtful permanence planning.
- 41% (7) of statements were satisfactory. These statements were primarily focussed on the parental capacity analysis.
- 11% (2) of statements were adequate. One of these statements was completed shortly following the introduction of the new template and the social worker used the old template in error. The other statement was provided for a reunification and supervision order care plan and was primarily about the changes the parent had made.

Future actions

- A series of workshops for social workers and team managers will be led by the care proceedings project manager in order to introduce the new national statement templates and develop the inclusion of child centred evidence in April and May 2014. The services are starting to pilot completion of the new templates in order to inform national feedback prior to the launch.
- An initial snapshot of the quality of evidence has been provided by this first audit. A further audit by a lead auditor will be completed by end of June 2014. Graded findings will be used so that the standards of statements, ie outstanding/needs improvement, can be quantified.
- The scope of this second audit will be assurance that initial statements provide clear evidence in relation to harm; that they are child centred and fully address permanence planning. An action plan, mapping improvement based on outcomes from this will then be formulated.