

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2011

Present: Mrs. Corrick (lay member), Cllr Davies, Cllr Hare and Cllr Rice

Apologies Councillor Amin

Also Present: Marion Wheeler, Sylvia Chew, Iain Low, Phil De Leo, Deirdre Cregan, Michelle Robson.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
CSPAP C25	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Amin.	
CSPAP C26	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business for the Committee to consider.	
CSPAP C27	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interests put forward.	
CPAPC 28	MINUTES The minutes of the 13 September were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes of the joint meeting between the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee and the Corporate Parenting Committee were tabled. It was agreed that any comments or amendments be put forward to the clerk.	All to note
CSPAP C29	SAFEGUARDING DISABLED CHILDREN IN HARINGEY When recently considering the Safeguarding and Looked after Children Action Plan, the Committee had remarked on the low number of disabled children in Haringey subject to a child protection plan and had wanted to find out more about the safeguarding of disabled children in Haringey. This was to be assured that the disabled children that needed the attention of the safeguarding service were being identified. The Head of Services to Children & Young People with Additional Needs & Disabilities attended the meeting and presented a briefing paper on	

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how the service worked to safeguard disabled children living in Haringey. The service was mainly responsible for disabled children with high levels of need (tier 3 and 4 on the threshold of need). Work with disabled children involved a multi agency approach due to the range and complexity of support required by the child. The briefing note contained information about :

- How disabled children are referred to the service
- The evaluation of safeguarding referrals received by the team
- The connections made with safeguarding services and bodies
- How the DFE guidance is followed
- The development of practices and policies for schools and professionals working with disabled children
- Engagement with present and past users of the service to develop and continually improve services to disabled children

The vulnerability of disabled children was a key concern of the Committee and the Head of Children & Young People with Additional Needs & Disabilities presented a leaflet that had recently been publicly distributed. This leaflet contained the telephone numbers to contact if there was concern about the care of a disabled child.

The Committee further learnt that the service were continually self evaluating the care given to disabled children through the completion of case reviews, and having challenging discussions about the attention given to a disabled child . This was to allow better practices to be developed and inform training to schools and professionals.

In relation, to disabled children that were subject to a child protection plans, there was analysis of their journey, through this care process with an analysis of the thresholds of need considered by the service and an examination of the quality assurance work being undertaken by the Children's service.

The Committee gained an understanding about the current tools used by professionals to support their communication with severely disabled children. These were a range of symbol cards in use by local authority and health professionals.

The Committee were provided with information on the number of disabled children subject to a child protection plan in Haringey with some comparisons provided with other borough's figures.

The Committee asked information about parents that employ carers or have family members help with the care of their disabled children, and if they have a completed CRB checks on the people working with their children given the intensive responsibility they have for them and as they will likely receive direct payments for this care. The Committee noted that legally, the Council could not dictate to a parent that a CRB check was needed for an external carer or family member helping care

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for their disabled child. However when working with parents there were sensitive approaches employed to ensure that parents understood the importance of them and that CRB checks were completed. There were currently no parents employing carers or family members without a CRB check. The Council would also ask parents receiving direct payments to complete a pro forma on what services and activities they were spending funding on and the Council were able to audit bank accounts to ensure funding was being spent appropriately.

Questions were asked by the Committee about the engagement with disabled children of different ages. It was noted that the type of communication method would depend on the child's age, physical ability, and language ability. The service was always self evaluating and challenging the approach taken with a disabled child to ensure that it was equal to non disabled child. The Police were more guarded about recommending the use of symbols for communicating with disabled children as there could be legal challenges later on if this evidence was relied upon in a court process. This was a current partner debate in the policy forum attached to the LSCB.

Further understanding was sought on the thinking behind the compilation of statistics relating to London Boroughs and their disabled child population set out in the briefing note. It was noted that the boroughs listed were those that had provided a response to the survey. However there would be a further response sought from North London boroughs with their responses added to the table and provided to Members as an update. There was a further query on the percentages shown for the disabled child populations and whether the percentage range could be increased to 10,000 to enable fuller comparisons to be made with other boroughs. The Head of Services to Children & Young People with Additional Needs & Disabilities agreed to examine the feasibility of this.

The Committee recognised that there was rigorous care process involved with children that had high complex needs as a child protection issue was less likely to be apparent. This led to discussion about disabled children that met tier 2 and 3 of the threshold of need. It was noted that information on children with a disability or special need meeting these lower thresholds of need could be extrapolated from existing data bases. However the Committee would also need to keep in mind that children could be assessed as having a special need or disability after they had come into contact and assessment with the Safeguarding Service.

The Chair of the Committee felt that there should be an audit exercise focused on children with disabilities that met threshold of need at tier 2 and 3 to enable the Committee to get an understanding of the type of services and support they were receiving. This would help give further confidence to the Committee that the number of children with a disability subject to a child protection plan was right. The Head of Services to Children & Young People with Additional Needs & Disabilities agreed to

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	meet with the Independent Member of the Committee to compile a proposal for this audit for the Chair to consider.	
CSPAP C30	<p>BEST PRACTICE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORK</p> <p>The Committee received a presentation from Deirdre Cregan, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, and Michelle Robson, Senior Practitioner for Domestic violence on the subject of Domestic Violence. The presentation enabled the Committee to obtain a more focused view about domestic violence which was currently a factor in 70% of child protection cases. This finding had led to the movement of the Domestic Violence team from the Policy section of the Council to Children's services.</p> <p>Previously in 2001 a best value review had found a lack of co-ordinated of services for women escaping domestic violence. This led to the establishment of Hearthstone a centre for survivors of Domestic Violence providing support with housing and access to services. Since 2002 there has been a strong policy message in the borough about the zero tolerance of domestic violence. There has been training programmes with partners and agencies to raise awareness of Domestic Violence. MARAC (Multi agency risk assessment conference) was established in 2008 to enable a co-ordinated multi agency response to cases where there was risk of significant harm to an individual.</p> <p>The Committee further learnt that Domestic Violence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is gender based violence • Has a far reaching impact on families • Can be seen as a non crime as the violence has to result in serious injuries i.e. ABH for prosecution to occur • Although there was a positive arrest policy it was felt by Domestic Violence practitioners that this was not well embedded as a practice • There was prevalence of domestic violence amongst young people and in particular Committee noted that 1 in 5 teenage women reported violence from a partner. • A government survey into attitudes about domestic violence indicated that domestic violence was still seen as acceptable in relationships. <p>The Committee asked if there were any statistics on domestic Violence involving the elderly and it was noted that there was now further research being carried out into elderly abuse as there was a current lack of services available to older victims reporting abuse. The organisation which was responsible for addressing reports of elderly abuse was SOVA (Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults)</p> <p>The Independent Member reported that, prior to carrying out her audit of referrals which involved 2 year olds and where domestic violence was a factor, she had gathered some valuable insight and knowledge from the</p>	

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	co-ordinator and Practitioner on Domestic Violence which had informed the audit which members were to consider in the next item.	
CSPAP C31	<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>	
CSPAP C32	<p>AUDIT OF REFERRALS OF UNDER 2 YEAR OLDS WHERE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WAS A FEATURE</p> <p>The Independent Member of the Committee introduced her report which set out the findings into referrals involving children under the age of 2 where domestic violence was a factor in their referral to the Safeguarding Team.</p> <p>A positive finding of the audit was the support being given to mothers to leave a violent relationship. Although after care arrangements for mothers was continuing to improve, the Safeguarding Service acknowledged the need to continue to focus on this area as feelings of isolation experienced in a new setting could often be a trigger for returning to a violent partner. The service was looking to encourage involvement in Children Centre services and instigating introductions to community based organisations to help mothers feel independent and supported. On a wider scale there was continuing work with Solace to develop long term practices for safeguarding children living in house holds where domestic violence was featured.</p> <p>Although the sample of cases looked at was not significant in number, as this was a qualitative audit, the impact of a first child in a relationship was noted to be a key introduction point to domestic violence. Other risk factors, seen in the cases analysed for Social Workers to be aware of, were if the mother was not in close distance to her family and if there was a significant age gap between the father and mother of the child.</p> <p>In the cases which involved unborn babies there was good evidence seen of midwives speaking with the mothers and detecting if problems in the relationship were of a violent nature. The midwives knew the appropriate services to refer the mother to.</p> <p>The Committee learnt that when the Police receive a call in Haringey reporting domestic violence notification is provided to the Domestic Violence team. When the Police are visiting the address they will check if there are children living in the home and report this to the domestic violence team. If there are no children seen at the address but there is reason to believe that there are children living there, the Domestic</p>	

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	<p>Violence team will get the address details and make a visit to the property.</p> <p>In general the quality of work on the cases was good. There were 10 cases which the Independent Member made comments on for follow up action and there would be a response provided by the Head of Safeguarding at the next meeting on the actions being taken.</p>	SC
CSPAP C33	<p>EXEMPT MINUTES</p> <p>The exempt minutes of the 13 September 2011 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	
CSPAP C34	<p>NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT BUSINESS</p> <p>None</p>	
CSPAP C35	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>The Committee agreed to cancel the next scheduled meeting on the 12th December and defer the potential items on the CAF Action Plan, progression of case referrals from the July audit to the meeting on the 26 January 2012.</p>	

Cllr Reg Rice

Chair