

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

THURSDAY, 26 JANUARY 2012

Councillors Amin, Corrick, Rice and Stewart

Apologies Councillor Davies and Hare

Also Present: Marion Wheeler, Sylvia Chew, Iain Low, Alison Botham, Libby Blake

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
CSPAPC 36	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Davies and Cllr Hare.	
CSPAPC 37	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business.	
CSPAPC 38	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest put forward.	
CSPAPC 39	MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held on the 03 November were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. The minutes of the Joint meeting with Corporate Parenting held on the 11 October were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.	
CSPAPC 40	MATTERS ARISING The matters arising report was tabled and noted.	
CSPAPC 41	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DATA - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - DECEMBER 2011 DATA The Committee considered a report with key safeguarding performance information collated at the end of December 2011. The Committee would begin to receive this safeguarding performance data at their meetings and their role was scrutinising and challenging the information given. Further information requests on the performance data could be responded to through the process of exception reporting.	

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The Committee considered the performance relating to contacts, referrals and assessments and were advised that the Safeguarding Service were consistently monitoring re-referrals. The ideal percentage range was 10% but the service was slightly above this. Stability was a key priority for the service and tackling re-referral rates was part of this. In response to questions about the reasons for re-referrals the Committee learnt that there could be legitimate reasons for re-referrals i.e. changed family circumstances.

The Committee noted that the service was progressing well against a target of 70% for initial assessments for children in social care, to be carried out in 10 days. The service continued with their existing practice of not signing off initial assessments until the family was located and the required professionals spoken with. The Council seemed to be vindicated in this approach as Ofsted were also advocating quality of work around initial assessments instead of timescale. This was also in accordance with the Munro recommendations around quality instead of timescale.

The Committee highlighted the percentage of children subject to child protection plans in Haringey which was considerably higher than statistical neighbouring boroughs. The Committee noted that the rate of referrals to the Children's service was lower than statistical neighbours as the screening of referrals was to a high standard and this also indicated that professionals understood the thresholds of need. However of this lower number of referrals there was a higher percentage, than statistical neighbouring boroughs that were progressing to child protection plans.

The Committee asked about children on long term plans and were advised that there would need to be good evidence and reasoning behind allowing a child to remain on a plan for a long period. A good plan would have information on addressing issues and risks identified for the child and how they could be resolved. It was not appropriate to have a child, long term, on a child protection plan as he/she would be exposed to high levels of risk. Therefore either the issues would need to be addressed quite quickly or the child would need to be taken into care.

Members asked how Hackney, a statistical neighbour, were managing risks as they had a lower number of children subject to child protection plans and they would be working to the same legislation and pan London agreements for child protection as Haringey. It was pointed out that Hackney had a higher level of resources for their Children's service. This had allowed them, in the past, to work on their social work model, develop resources in the community for families to access and prevent children coming into care. The prevention model involved the service actively managing risks whereas in Haringey due to its history on child protection it was less possible currently to do this. However, the Children's service in Haringey had begun working to the prevention

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	<p>model by configuring services around the child and having a family plan with wrap around services to meet their particular needs. There were family support workers to work along side Social Workers. Only knowing, with certainty that the wrap around family services worked, could the service move to tackling the management of risk.</p> <p>In considering how the service takes forward the prevention agenda, there was a need to take account of the movement of families to the borough. In the last month, nine children with plans had moved in to the borough. Also it was found that some children moving into the borough, did not have a plan, but following investigation of their circumstances became subject to plans.</p> <p>The Safeguarding service were already beginning to see a steady trickle of families into the borough as families moved in advance of the changes to housing benefit subsidy. Enfield Council had seen an increase in families moving into the borough from Greece and Italy due to the economic crisis in Europe and Haringey saw a similar migration of families from Nigeria due to political reasons</p> <p>There was a personal concern raised by the Chair about how the service monitors children from the Roma community as they can move around family homes in the borough or from borough to borough. Also older children were seen during the day outside of school. In response the Committee noted that currently the Safeguarding Service were mapping the homes where Gypsy Roma families lived and identifying the children that were living with the families. This exercise was important to do as sometimes the children from one family were staying at another family's home. The Safeguarding Service had an officer who was able to communicate in Bulgarian and was able to visit families to ensure that children were enrolled and going to school. The Roma community officer's role also involved helping Roma families access services and working with schools where children from the community were reported absent. The Safeguarding Service also tried to monitor the overall number of children from this community and checked if young people were going back home to Bulgaria to their families. This was because in some cases, young people would come over to England, separately to their parents, to stay with extended family.</p> <p>The Chair thanked officers for the informative report</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
CSPAPC 42	<p>CAF ACTION PLAN UPDATE</p> <p>The Committee considered an update on the CAF Action Plan which was previously considered by the Committee in January 2011. The common assessment framework (CAF) was the assessment of children with a lower level of need than social care.</p>	

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	<p>Since reporting the improvements to the CAF process last year, there had been: a review of the CAF panel arrangements, piloting of a new shorter CAF form for speech and language team referrals, no backlog of cases since May 2011, and better use of Framework I data to evaluate CAF activity. There was also more flexibility of panel working with decisions on some cases being made outside of the panel, for example, if there was a risk of exclusion from school. There was improved training delivered twice a term and these sessions included between 12-15 participants. They were health visitors, school teachers and staff, with midwives also attending.</p> <p>The CAF team now included an additional 2 members of staff, transferred from the children's social care team, who had previously worked on care proceedings. These additional staff had helped build the capacity of the team and speed up processes. The CAF team had, since the last report a year ago, moved from the Children and Families service and were working as family support workers screening assessments and working jointly on some cases with the Safeguarding team to prevent the need for children to come into care.</p> <p>Committee members asked about the one in five CAFs which resulted in the decision that the child /young person was not eligible for a service. It was reported that generally these unsuccessful applications often involved schools requesting the services of an Educational Psychologist. The CAF team had tracked and were aiding the schools where there was a perceived training need for the completion of CAFs. The service were also working closely with schools and other agencies to minimise the number of CAFs. This could be achieved by the schools being supported to meet the needs of children. Schools were being encouraged to share expertise gained from accessing services without the need for a CAF.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the majority of children, for which a CAF was completed, were aged between 5 and 10 year olds. Members noted that the service would only keep a track of the CAFs that were under the review of the CAF team. It was agreed to supply Cllr Amin, after the meeting, with: a breakdown of the ages of children that a CAF was completed for, an indication on the number of cases which returned to the CAF team for consideration and how long CAF cases remained open for.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	AB
CSPAPC 43	<p>UNANNOUNCED OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT</p> <p>The Committee received a report back on the Ofsted unannounced visit of the contact, referral, and assessment arrangements on the 11th and 12th of October 2011. The inspection report was appended to the report</p>	

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	<p>for member's consideration. The Inspection report had identified the areas of strength as being the work of the Multi Agency Hub, the work of the Roma community Partnership worker and the UK border agency specialist worker. The recruitment to these two posts conveyed the Council's ability to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and young people from these communities. The inspectors found no areas for priority action.</p> <p>Inspectors found that the service responded promptly to referrals, there were good quality of assessments and analysis. Other positive findings were the ability of the service to meet the diverse needs in the community, their work with disabled children, performance monitoring and robust audits undertaken by the service.</p> <p>The areas for improvement were: in the timing of supervision of Assistant Social Workers by qualified Social Workers when completing assessments, increasing the number of cases referred to CAFCASS, up to date record keeping and protocols and assessment tools for use when a young person is reporting domestic violence from a partner. The service had taken a note of the files which had been looked at and knew the Social Workers that needed additional support in the area of record keeping. There were also plans to complete a data cleansing exercise on framework I to ensure that any surplus files were not included on the system and ensure that there was an awareness of the timescale for files remaining on the system and when they needed to be updated and reviewed. The service were already ensuring that a qualified social worker will sign off an assessment before completion, even when the work is considered to be to a high standard, and considering further referrals to CAFCASS. The service had been working on developing protocols about raising awareness of domestic violence between young people and this work would be completed in February and could be reported to the committee at a future meeting.</p> <p>Overall the Council were pleased with the inspection findings. The service was already aware of the needed areas of improvement therefore there were no new areas of concern identified by the inspection. Under new inspection arrangements the findings of this inspection would contribute to the annual review. Currently the Safeguarding Service was judged as adequate with "good prospects" for improvement.</p> <p>The Committee commended officers for their continued efforts to drive forward improvements in the Safeguarding Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
CSPAPC 44	EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC	

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	<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>CSPAPC 45</p>	<p>PROGRESSION OF CASE REFERRALS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE IN JULY 2011</p> <p>The Committee considered an update report on a sample of referrals to the Safeguarding Team in July, audited by the Independent Member of the Committee in September .The Independent Member had revisited the cases and checked on their progress in November . From the 37 families considered, thirteen cases had been closed by the end of August and a further nine cases were closed in November. The Committee considered a short update on each of the original 37 cases looked at.</p> <p>The Independent Member gave assurance to the Committee that, where Social Workers had seen evidence of risk to a child, they had been seen on the same day or 24 hours later.</p> <p>The Independent Member pointed to a case where there had been exemplary follow up work, engagement, and appropriate escalation by the assigned Social Worker. She had continued to monitor the young person's engagement with the Adolescent Team after referral. Due to the nature of the referral it would have been crucial to be able to raise concerns if she did not attend appointments and the Social worker recognised this responsibility.</p> <p>There were nine cases where the children were assessed as being in need and where the Independent Member felt that isolation factors need to be considered. These were referred to the Head of Safeguarding and her responses to these cases set out in the attached report. There were a further 4 cases, concerning children, where the Independent Member felt there was evidence of "drift" .This was where either the cases could have been closed more promptly or taken forward more expeditiously and an update was provided on these 4 cases to the Committee. Generally, the Independent member reported that there was good evidence of analysis of cases and effective liaison work.</p> <p>The Committee was concerned about the number of cases being shown as open on the framework I system . As part of the national Children in Need census the data on open cases was extracted from the Framework I system and passed to central government on an annual basis to enable compilation of comparator data. The Committee were advised that this was not a true reflection on the actual number of cases as separate audits showed that most cases were closed promptly and not held open inappropriately. Also as a comparison, neighbouring boroughs Hackney and Waltham Forrest had chosen not to</p>	

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	<p>supply this data. Officers explained that there was a lot of old data on the framework I system which needed to be removed or filed elsewhere. Once this was achieved processes and protocols on how long a case file were kept open and how frequently they were updated on the Framework I system would be put in place. Negotiations on timescales with Social Workers would be completed between April – June of this year. The committee felt that completion of actions were crucial as it was important for framework I to be depended upon as a reliable source of information.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the report be noted</p>	
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CSPAPC 46	<p>ANY NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>NONE</p>	
CSPAPC 47	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>The next joint meeting with the Corporate Parenting Committee was planned to take place on the 05 March 2012.</p> <p>The Committee were interested in taking forward the previous discussions on how the safeguarding services manages risks and officers pointed to an LSCB review named on the edge of care which could be considered to take forward this discussion. Although this was not planned for completion until the end of March. It was suggested that a later date of the Committee could be looked at to enable this report to be considered?</p> <p>A report on the Family Intervention project was also suggested.</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>AS</p>

Cllr Reg Rice

Chair