

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 24 JANUARY 2011**

Councillors Amin, Davies, Hare and Rice

Apologies Councillor McNamara

Also Present: Councillor Stewart, Hilary Corrick(Independent Member) Marion Wheeler, Alison Botham and Sylvia Chew.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
CSPAPC 30	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor McNamara. Councillor James Stewart attended in his place.	
CSPAPC 31	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business submitted.	
CSPAPC 32	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest submitted.	
CSPAPC 33	MINUTES The minutes of the 06 th December 2010 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
CSPAPC 34	MATTERS ARISING Members noted that the report on the reconstitution of the committee was complete and scheduled to be considered at the Cabinet on the 08 February 2011. The draft report was tabled and members of the committee asked to provide any final comments to the clerk as soon as possible. The report further recommended annual joint meetings with the Corporate Parenting Committee and it was agreed to suggest a joint meeting be held in March or April. There was discussion around the terms of reference of the committee and the areas where there could be a cross over with the Corporate Parenting Committee. It was understood that the Corporate Parenting Committee had responsibility for Looked after Children but there could be a connection between the safeguarding aspects of children missing in care or the safeguarding aspects around the accommodation of Looked	All to note Clerk

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	<p>after Children. The committee's responsibility for Looked after Children living at home was queried and it was explained that there was unlikely to be looked after Children living at home in the borough. This highlighted the need to ensure that Members of each of the children's committees had a firm understanding of the groups of children in need for whom they were concerned. Members suggested that a matrix was compiled which would set out the category and number of children in need. It could further include the committee the children were allocated to as part of the council's corporate responsibility. This information would further assist the children's committees in understanding the numbers of different children classed as in need and focussing their work around the interests of these children.</p> <p>In considering the committee work plan and noting a paper on the future of Children's Trusts, Members were advised that there was ongoing work to establish a Shadow Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board. This would in time take on responsibility for safeguarding of children. It was agreed that a report on this subject be considered at a future meeting of the committee when there were definite proposals to consider.</p> <p>The training item proposed on child protection plans: challenges and issues for the March 7 2011 meeting was agreed. In the event that this was a joint meeting with the Corporate Parenting Committee, it was agreed that this training item be proposed as a joint item for consideration.</p> <p>The committee agreed that an audit of child protection cases was presented to the April 11th meeting.</p>	<p>MW</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>HC</p> <p>HC</p>
<p>CSPAPC 35</p>	<p>CAF ACTION PLAN UPDATE</p> <p>Members were reminded that the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was an assessment tool used by agencies to assess a child's additional needs. The committee was provided with information on the activity undertaken to address the issues raised in the two audits of CAF practice.</p> <p>The key areas looked at were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How closely a case had been examined before a decision had been made that no additional service was required. ➤ Concerns about the Framework I data base and whether reports provided the required information about CAF activity. ➤ The back log of CAF cases in consideration by the CAF manager and the delays in a number of CAFs proceeding to the CAF panel for consideration. 	

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	<p>We noted that since the audit exercise in June 2010, 227 CAFs had been assessed between September and December. There were only 20 (10%) cases found to require no additional service for the child. This was an improvement on the previous results and showed that the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was being used correctly, where needed, and there was more effective decision making as a result of this. We were advised that the Framework I data was under constant review to ensure it was accessible and could be reliably called upon to provide information when making assessments. We were pleased to note that the backlog of CAF cases, awaiting assessment by the panel, had been cleared. There had been extra panels convened in December and January to consider the outstanding applications. Members sought an understanding on the affect the delays would have had on clients awaiting decisions from the CAF panel and they noted the few cases where a decision would have been unduly delayed. Members were assured that the number of CAFs requiring consideration by the panel would be tracked and extra panels convened to respond to future peaks in demand as experienced in June when the audits were undertaken. We further learned about the working arrangements in the First Response team where Social Workers were having more immediate discussions with Teachers and Health visitors on CAF applications and also supporting their completion where needed.</p>	
<p>CSPAPC 36</p>	<p>FIRST RESPONSE PROCESSES AND PLANNING</p> <p>The committee considered detailed information about the service provided by First Response and the process by which referrals relating to Children and Young People living in Haringey and believed to either be in need of support or at risk of harm are managed and appropriate action taken.</p> <p>Members noted that the First Response department consists of 6 social work teams. This included the screening team, the first in the country of its kind, a multi agency triage service consisting of a core team of Metropolitan Police, Health Visitors and Social Work staff. This team has responsibility for screening contacts, made by fax and post with the First Response service about children and ensuring that appropriate action is undertaken according to the issue. There was extended support to this team from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health, the Youth Offending Service, Education Welfare and the Police Child abuse Investigation team. The duties of the remaining four teams: Social Work Team, the No Recourse to Public Funds team, the Emergency Duty Team and Local Authority Designated Officer, were also explained to the committee.</p> <p>The process for logging, processing and evaluating contacts about children was set out. It was noted that this collection of information was consistently monitored by a manager and where there was insufficient information supplied there would be proactive contact with the referrer to gather necessary additional information about the issues around the</p>	

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child. The committee noted that, due to the collated multi agency experience of the screening team, they were able to provide advice and information without the need for social work intervention when required. Examples of this provided were mothers with acute post natal depression, who could be supported by GP and health visitor and parenting advice for parents with adolescent children.

The committee were advised that contacts about children resulting in a referral to the social work teams were on average 20%. This was explained to be a good rate as it indicated that the initial contacts with the service were being dealt with effectively and only those requiring an initial assessment were being passed onto a social worker. When the committee enquired about monitoring the quality of decision making at this stage, they were advised that there was an audit exercise undertaken every six weeks to ensure that thresholds of need (agreements about levels of need and risk which will trigger referrals to universal or targeted services) were being correctly adhered to. The committee particularly noted that referrals of an urgent nature, such as those relating to child protection concerns, were dealt with immediately via a referral to the police (Child Abuse Investigation Team) and a strategy meeting.

The committee sought an understanding of the mechanisms in place to detect whether contacts were continuously being dealt with effectively. In response a number of conditions and indicators were outlined which would provide an awareness to managers of any issues and delays.

The committee continued to consider information on the initial and core assessments and discussed the complexities of dealing with cases of neglect. The committee noted that contacts regarding children or young people known to other parts of the service were passed to the named service. Similarly information on children known to other local authorities was passed to their allocated social worker. This was also the case with Looked after Children who were placed from outside the borough in the borough's 17 private children's homes. The committee noted that the Council held a general corporate parenting role for these 300 children and for children on child protection plans, living in temporary accommodation in the borough, but registered with other boroughs. The committee also noted the overriding responsibility that local services in the borough would have for these children.

An outline of the current referral rates and workload of the service was illustrated. The committee learned that families with multiple needs would require a team response. This was where the live partnership working of the screening team was invaluable. Clarification was sought and information provided on current social workloads and the committee noted the improvements made to the Framework I computer system to ensure it was user friendly.

RESOLVED

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	That the report be noted	
CSPAPC 37	<p>UPDATE ON JANUARY ASSESSMENTS</p> <p>The committee considered an update on performance data for initial assessments. The data used to inform the report was available nationally and was submitted each year in May to the Department of Education. Haringey's performance on initial assessments was compared to other comparator boroughs.</p> <p>The committee was provided with the statutory context for safeguarding which local authorities had responsibility for. The two elements of safeguarding included: preventing a child from harm and promoting a child's welfare by maximising a child's opportunity for development. It was commented that there was significant focus nationally by social workers on preventing harm to a child but there was the overall question of how much social workers were promoting a child's welfare and understanding the key learning milestones of children as part of this safeguarding duty.</p> <p>The committee obtained information on the key areas looked at when completing an initial assessment which was completed within 10 working days of a referral being received. It was noted that, further to an initial assessment being completed, it could be decided that a core assessment will be required. This was a more in-depth assessment which would take 35 days to complete. Members sought assurances on the contingencies in place to prevent harm coming to a child within the 35 days that a core assessment will take to complete. In response, it was noted that, following any significant concerns about a child's welfare, proceedings would hastened significantly with court orders for taking the child into care sought before the completion of the core assessment. There was, in exceptional circumstances, available an emergency court order which could be obtained at very short notice if the situation was deemed urgent.</p> <p>The committee referred to the data on initial and core assessment and examined the rate of referrals and completion of assessments in comparison to other comparator boroughs. It was noted that the rate of completion of initial assessments had improved significantly by 2010/11. Previously performance had been lower in comparison to other comparator boroughs as it was affected by the need to complete and clear the backlog of cases. The timescale for completing initial assessments had been 7 days and this had been increased to 10 working days in 2010/2011. Other local authorities had also been using the 10 day timescale in 2010. The focus by the service had been on quality and ensuring that assessments were completed fully and correctly. The independent member of the committee suggested that the timeliness of completing assessment may be a future issue for the committee to commission work on and explore further. There was a</p>	

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	<p>balance in ensuring the quality of assessments but also allowing required action to be taken in the interest of the child by completing a timely initial assessment.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the report be noted</p>	
CSPAPC 38	EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC	
CSPAPC 39	<p>FEEDBACK ON CORE AND INITIAL ASSESSMENTS</p> <p>The information in the example initial and core assessments provided to committee members was noted .Members were advised that conclusions and actions of the initial and core assessments were discussed with relevant agencies. Officers were working on producing new terms to aid the interpretation of information in these assessments and provide a fuller understanding on what impact the conclusions and actions will have.</p>	
CSPAPC 40	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Agreed that it be proposed to the Corporate Parenting Committee to meet jointly in March and to begin the meeting at 7.00pm.</p>	Clerk

Cllr Reg Rice

Chair