

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 2 JULY 2013**

Councillors Adamou, Browne, Scott and Stewart (Chair)

Apologies Hilary Corrick, Cllr Alexander, Marion Wheeler

Also Present: Libby Blake, Chrissy Austin, Lisa Blundell, Lesley Kettles, Rachel Oakley, Stephen Lawrence Orumwense, Cllr Waters, Cllr Hare.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
TEX146.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Alexander; Cllr Hare would be substituting for this meeting. There were also apologies for absence from the Independent Member, Hilary Corrick and Marion Wheeler, Assistant Director of the Children and Young People's service.	Clerk
TEX147.	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business added to the agenda.	
TEX148.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest put forward.	
TEX149.	MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held on the 30 th April were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	Clerk
TEX150.	MATTERS ARISING The Committee welcomed Lisa Redfern to the meeting. Lisa would be taking up the role of Assistant Director for Commissioning in the Children and Young People's service.	
TEX151.	TERMS OF REFERENCE The Committee considered the report on its terms of reference, as agreed by Cabinet on 18 th June 2013. New members of the Committee sought clarification about the nature of the work of the Committee as from initial observations the functions of the Committee were similar to scrutiny. The Chair explained the work of the Committee which was assisted by the independent member Hilary Corrick's contribution, advice and qualitative audits. The Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice	

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Committee was constructed to work in parallel to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and had duties for overseeing the Council's responsibility for children in need, particularly focussing on safeguarding. This included children who would come into contact with safeguarding policies. The Committee would examine areas of safeguarding practice, consider issues arising from the performance reports and identify issues which required further investigation and attention. The Committee would commission the Independent Member to complete qualitative audits into specific safeguarding practices and areas where they had concerns. For example, Hilary had completed an audit on how contacts received by the First Response team (Following the Judicial Review) are screened. The Committee had also examined the findings of audit to understand how expediently referrals had progressed through safeguarding and support services, looked in particular at cases where domestic violence was a factor.

Comment was made about the Committee's prior knowledge of the complaint made against Children and Young People's Service in 2011 which culminated in the recent Judicial Review and subsequent judgement against the council for completing an unlawful section 47 investigation. It was noted that, this was a complaint that had been made against the Children and Young People's Service in 2011 and it was not usually practice, for the Committee, to be kept updated on complaints against the service. However, the judgement had implications for how contacts made with the First Response team, concerning the welfare of children, are screened and how permissions are sought for information to be shared in the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). This concerns the Committee's remit, as information sharing is a vital part of the safeguarding process because it enables a crucial understanding of the risks that the child could be subject to, in turn, informing the level of action to be taken by partners to help the family/child.

Since March, the Committee had been kept informed of the changes to the information sharing protocol between partners in the MASH. The Committee had commissioned the Independent Member to complete an audit of the contacts received by the First Response to understand if the updated information sharing protocols were being applied and appropriate parental consent was being sought (a criticism was that parental consent had not been obtained to seek information from partners in the judgement) when required to share information. They would also monitor if the information sharing protocols had an impact on safeguarding activity as the Committee were clear that there was a need to ensure that social workers and local stakeholders that are in contact with children/families are kept fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. It was agreed to supply Cllr Browne and Cllr Hare with the previous papers and minutes relating to the discussion on the Judicial Review and impact on the information sharing protocols between partners.

The Committee would further consider an exempt report on the advice of the QC on information sharing in the private part of the meeting.

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	<p>The Committee noted the terms of reference.</p>	
<p>TEX152.</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - END OF YEAR 2012/13</p> <p>The Committee considered the performance data and trends for measures relating to contacts, referrals and assessments and child protection. For the benefit of new Members there was added explanation of performance statistics and associated numbers. An understanding was also given of the pathway through children's social care by the ordering of the performance information which started from the initial point of contact with children's social care services, through to the child protection plan.</p> <p>OP504 (The number of child contacts received) The First Response team will receive the first indication of a concern about a child's welfare via phone call, email, letter or contact form. Around 55% of the contacts received, will have been put forward by Police and it was also clarified that some contacts received may not necessarily be the first time the service receive a concern about a child as they may already be in the social care process or have been in the past. When looking at OP410, it was ascertained that of the 501 contacts received by First Response in March 2013, 164 became referrals to children's social care. The Committee were informed that a majority of the remaining 337 contacts would have required no further action by the social work team but some may have needed additional information to establish if the threshold for a social care referral had been met.</p> <p>When looking at the 164 referrals in March, the Committee noted that 87 % (143 cases) will go onto initial assessment which was commented to be a high number of cases to receive a statutory service.</p> <p>The next performance rate considered was OP383 Re – referrals within 12 months of the previous referral) This was explained to be a critical indicator, required by the service to judge whether good practices are being followed. The low referral rate at the end of the last year of 12% indicated that First Response team were applying the thresholds for a social care referral correctly and that appropriate support was being provided.</p> <p>HY59 (percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 10 working days of referral. The Committee noted that 70% (100 cases out of 143) had received an initial assessment within 10 days of referral. New members were advised that the Committee had previously investigated the reasons behind this performance level and had been satisfied that children were being seen within 10 days. The new single assessment from would help social workers complete the assessments and write them also within this timescale. The new target for single assessments would be 95% and</p>	

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would be a 10 days (single assessment) + 35 days for core assessment.

Op388 – Children subject to a child protection plan - In March 2013 there were 275 children subject to a child protection plan. This indicator included children in need and subject to plan. New members noted that these families required the significant support of a social worker. There was a steady decrease in number of children on plans, achieved by providing co-ordinated support between the 4 safeguarding teams. The Safeguarding service had reviewed the number of children on CP plans and the service had investigated the thresholds in use, analysed how children on the plans were worked with to understand this.

HY64 Child protection plans lasting 2 years or more. This was a good indicator for the service to monitor and keep track of children that may need to come back on a child protection plan.

OP365 – Percentage of children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time. The Committee noted that this figure can fluctuate from month to month as families move in and out of the borough. It would be important to complete a learning exercise on children that are now 15-16, and have previously been through the safeguarding and support service, to understand where early help could have made a difference to their circumstances when they were aged 5-6. This learning will aid the service take forward their offer of early help. In relation to this performance indicator, the Committee asked that the Performance team includes actual numbers, when the number of children is below 100, as this will provide a better understanding of the context. This can be in addition to the percentages.

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OP367 – percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales. The performance for March 2013 stood at 95% against a target of 100%. Members noted that factors contributing to this slight underperformance related to children moving into the borough from another borough that were already on child protection plans. Although, the children may already be on existing plans, when registering on Framework I, they would be input as new case. In addition, Members noted that existing plans will be scrutinised and reviewed to ensure they meet the thresholds for social care applied by Haringey.

Op381 – Children in Need visits Although the performance was below target at 85% there was a good improvement from previous years and the service would continue working to this high percentage of 95% of visits completed.

Overall the Committee felt the performance statistics were good. The layout of the performance information provided a good understanding of how the service operated. The Director of the Children and Young People's service felt the Committee could be assured by the quality of the data and they were also able to rely on it when asking questions.

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	<p>There were also comparisons made with statistical neighbouring boroughs to provide an understanding of good practices and the performance levels to strive for. It had also been useful to have the performance information on children with disabilities. This was a new addition and the Committee were pleased to note the good performance in relation to the care of disabled children subject to plan.</p>	
<p>TEX153.</p>	<p>ADOPTION PERFORMANCE UPDATE</p> <p>The Committee were provided with an update in the performance of the adoption service in placing children for adoption and special guardianship since the publication of the adoption scorecard and the adoption diagnostic review in summer 2012.</p> <p>Although, over a three year period the average number of days for adopting a child in the care of the local authority was comparatively high, there had been a significant recent improvement in reducing the number of days it took to adopt a child.</p> <p>The increased management attention given to completing the stages of the adoption process appropriately and expediently had led to significant improvements. The service had already met its annual target of 20 adoptions and now expects to make 30 adoptions by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>The Committee further noted that for the 2012/13 financial year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 special guardianship orders were approved. • 26 prospective adopters approved (this was the highest number in the North London Consortium of boroughs). <p>The Committee noted that a two stage adoption process had come into effect from the 01st July, a 2 month investigation stage, followed by a 4 month process of approval. This was identified as a challenging timescale and the North London Consortium had agreed to fund a team to specifically deal with recruitment of adopters.</p> <p>The Chair had particularly wanted a report on adoption to aid the Committee's understanding on how adoption works with safeguarding process. For example the journey from safeguarding support to adoption and this was illustrated in section 6.1.2 which advised that the previous average number of days a child was in care before moving to adoption placement was 737. This had now reduced to 299 days through the improved focus on deadlines and care planning.</p> <p>The Committee were advised that as soon as it established that there are significant issues concerning the parents of a child and adoption is the best permanency option for the child, the service will instigate care proceedings. The service is aware of children, as well as newborns,</p>	

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	<p>where an early response will help them get adopted. For example, there will be indicators such as a sibling previously being adopted.</p> <p>An enquiry was made about the number of contested adoptions. It was noted that often, initially, parents will resist the intention for an adoption. The service will try to work with the family by holding a family group conference to help identify a family member willing to take on the role of special guardian. If a special guardian is identified, they will need to complete a special guardianship assessment. The service are fully transparent with parents and they are made fully aware of the process and are actively advised from an early stage about the process of adoption and are not subjected to any surprises.</p> <p>An understanding was sought on the number of adoptions in comparison to the number of children in care, to put in context the actions being taken in relation to adoption. It was noted that around 5% of children in care currently go onto adoption.</p> <p>The Committee commended the Adoption team for their significant efforts in reducing the number of days it took to adopt a child and the number of adoptions completed.</p>	
<p>TEX154.</p>	<p>UPDATE ON THE MOSAIC PROGRAMME</p> <p>The Committee received an update on the major redevelopment of the Framework I social care recording system, Mosaic. This was a new generation of network programmes which was designed to be more intuitive and user focussed. It was hoped that the new system will reduce social work recording times, improve staff experience of the system and provide long term improvements in data quality practice and performance. Haringey will be an early adopter of the new system along with 13 other boroughs. Haringey wanted to be at the fore front of the adoption of the new system to ensure it was made to work for staff in Haringey. The first release of the programme was expected in October 2013 and at the moment IT and Children and Young People's Service was involved with the conversion of data from Framework I to Mosaic.</p> <p>The current recording system captures information in 'episodes' and the new system will be a 'form' based system which will allow social workers to pass information to managers more speedily, help with work prioritisation with reminders about visits that need to be made.</p> <p>Members welcomed the developments to the system and sought assurance that data would not be misplaced in the transfer. They were assured that there had been an enormous effort to back up the data and training and testing would not take place on the live version of the system to protect data.</p> <p>In response to a question about the training of staff, there would be user acceptance training before the system went live. The Committee were</p>	

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	<p>assured that the system would not go live until the go ahead was given by staff.</p>	
<p>TEX155.</p>	<p>LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13</p> <p>The Committee were advised that the council in conjunction with the LSCB has a duty to ensure that all allegations of abuse, maltreatment of children by a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer are considered and treated in accordance with national guidance. The Committee considered a report by the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) which provided open information on the referrals of allegations against adults who work with children, including a profiling analysis of allegations made in the borough, comparative data and an update of the interventions and development work completed in 2012/13. This included staff that lived in Haringey but worked in other boroughs.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) holds a significant position in the Children's Service hierarchy and this role is taken forward by a staff member who shares their work time equally as a Child Protection Advisor. It was important to note that the LADO will be involved in the management oversight of the individual cases where allegations have been made and will not make the decisions on the outcome of the allegations as these allegations will already be being progressed through separate means i.e. prosecution or internal disciplinary proceedings.</p> <p>The Committee were informed that allegations against professionals, staff members, foster care or volunteers were previously recorded in a paper system but in the last year had begun to be recorded; confidentially, on Framework I. This had allowed the enclosed performance information to be compiled. The LSCB had provided 4 training sessions to partners about the reporting of allegations, and focused on what is an allegation, the thresholds that need to be applied and provided an explanation of the roles in the reporting process and what they do.</p> <p>The Committee were provided with a profile of adults that allegations have been made against and some examples of the varying types of allegations. Members noted that there will be around 2 calls a week making allegations of abuse and maltreatment of children. There were mainly 3 ways to deal with the allegation and the option taken forward would also depend on the seriousness of the allegation. The options were: instigation of a section 47 investigation for serious allegations, staff training or management action.</p> <p>The Committee further noted that there were 46 allegations between 2012-13, that met the updated thresholds, these were in line with number received by neighbouring boroughs, and were investigated by the LADO. A majority of the allegations came from the establishment.</p>	

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	<p>The Chair asked a question about the revisions to the thresholds and sought assurance that these had not been made more lenient. The Committee noted that the thresholds, following a review, were more correctly aligned to the criteria for statutory interventions. The LADO contributed to the dialogue with schools and smaller organisations so they were aware of the statutory criteria and when they needed to make referrals the service. The Committee were further assured that the LADO will not automatically discard the allegations that do not make the threshold and will advise the appropriate organisation how to take forward the complaint about their staff through their internal management or HR process.</p> <p>The Chair felt the committee would need more understanding of the performance information and recommended that there be a report back to either the September or January meeting when there will have been data collected for the first quarter of the 2013/14 year. This will enable some comparisons to be made with the data.</p> <p>The report referred to the profile of adults that allegations had been made against and within the process for data collection it was feasible for information on the ethnicity, gender and age on to be extrapolated. Noted that if persons are made identifiable, in the forthcoming report, this information would need to be considered in the private part of the meeting as it would be exempt information likely to reveal an individual and they maybe going through a disciplinary or court process where the outcome of the allegations is not yet decided.</p> <p>A question was asked about how a sense of proportion is developed on how to take forward an allegation and the links made with other agencies to get the level of intervention right. In response, an example was given of how a more serious allegation which meets the threshold can be taken forward, starting with a strategy meeting with the Police.</p> <p>The Committee noted the importance of clear communications and transparency around the process as this will provide the confidence that there is an applied process. This will, in turn, create trust in the process for all parties concerned.</p> <p>Agreed a report back to the September or January meeting with comparison data.</p>	<p>RO</p> <p>RO</p>
<p>TEX156.</p>	<p>REPORT FROM INDEPENDENT MEMBER</p> <p>Following changes to the screening of cases referred to the Children and Young People's service, as a result of the Judicial Review in March, there had been a change to information sharing protocols. Training had been provided to staff within the service and guidance to agencies on the new protocols. The Independent Member of the Committee had completed an audit of a sample of new referrals to provide the</p>	

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	<p>Committee with a further understanding of how the changes were being implemented.</p> <p>The Committee considered the results of the audit and were advised by the Acting Head of First Response that of the 23 contacts which had been examined, previously half of these would likely have gone through to the MASH for additional information. Staff were more confident about requesting further quality information from the referrer and checking if information can be shared. However, it was also reported that in some cases social workers were going out to addresses with less information than previously held to investigate some contacts further.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	
TEX157.	NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
	There were no items of urgent business put forward.	
TEX158.	EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC	
	The press and public were excluded from the meeting by virtue of paragraph 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains information classified as exempt under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.	
TEX159.	CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING AND INFORMATION SHARING - LEGAL ADVICE	
	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The Committee agreed that there be a further report back to the next meeting on the progress of implementing the advice of the QC and updating relevant documents and guidance.</p>	Dir CYPS
TEX160.	NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS	
	There were no new items of urgent exempt information.	
TEX161.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<p>The next meeting would take place on 17 September 2013.</p> <p>The following items were added to the agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing on the progress of updating the information sharing advice 	Dir CYPS

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LADO update if information is available.	RO
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Cllr James Stewart

Chair