



Briefing for:	Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee
Title:	First Response
Lead Officer:	Sylvia Chew, Head of Service, First Response
Date:	29 th June 2010

1. Introduction

This report aims to inform the panel 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 the appropriate action taken.

2. Team Structure

First Response consists of 7 social work teams:

The Screening Team is a multi agency triage service consisting of a core team of Metropolitan Police Officers, Health Visitors and Social Work staff. Aligned with this is an extended team including part-time support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health, the Youth Offending Service and the Police Child Abuse and Investigation Team. The role of the team is to screen all contacts and ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner.

The 4 Duty Teams work on a rota basis to provide social work assessment and support to the 60 cases per week which meet the threshold for children's social care. The cases of families that require long term social work intervention transfer to the long term social work teams.

The No Recourse to Public Funds Team (NRPF) is a bespoke service for families with children who are destitute and unable to access public funding support. Many of these are single parent families with a history of domestic violence. The team works closely with the Home Office and Border Agency.



The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) provides an out-of-hours service to both adults and children outside office hours including weekends and Bank Holidays.

3. Process

3.1

In keeping with the current computerised data system (FWI) information, queries and referrals into the service are all designated as a '**contact**'. This typically includes notifications from the Police Public Protection Unit that a child has come to their notice (known as P78's or Merlin's), information from the out of hours Emergency Duty Team (EDT), requests for information from other agencies and expressions of concern from members of the public or other professionals bodies inside and outside the service , typically schools, health and adult social services.

3.2

Contacts come into the service either electronically, by post or by fax. All contacts are considered by a manager and are logged onto FWI. The latter process includes ensuring all personal details are recorded and family records are linked together to give an accurate picture. The number of contacts per week varies enormously from 190 – 281 per week (average 235 per week)

3.3

Consideration of each contact will lead to a variety of outcomes. These are made in keeping with Haringey's Threshold guidance. Some contacts will be designated for No Further Action. These would include police notifications relating to older Young People reported missing but who have returned home at a reasonable hour or Young People victims to petty crime.

3.4

At times the information received on the contact are insufficient to enable decision making. In this case the dedicated screening officers, al social workers , will ring the referrer for more information and to offer information and advice. This will include recommending assessment via the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in some cases.

3.5

Contact's which require further action are designated as a '**referral**' on the FWI system. Currently this constitutes an average of 25% of all contacts.

3.6

Referrals of an urgent nature, such as those relating to Child Protection concerns (between 6 – 10 referrals per week) are dealt with immediately via a referral to the Police Child Abuse and Investigation team (CAIT) and a Strategy Meeting is convened. These referrals are actioned as part of our statutory responsibilities under S47 of The 1989 Children's Act. This relates to children and young people at risk of significant harm.

3.7



Referrals of a less urgent nature are designated as child In need cases and will be actioned for Initial Assessments, and should be completed in 10 working days. Work on these cases is undertaken under S17 of The 1989 Children Act, which relates to children and young people who may not reach their developmental potential without a service being provided by the Local Authority.

Subject to parental consent being given, other agencies including GP's, health, schools and other agencies as appropriate are contacted. The family home is visited, parents interviewed and the child seen alone if age appropriate.

In the rare circumstances where parents do not agree to an Initial Assessment being completed, the case is reviewed by a manager and the referrer contacted again. At this stage, a decision is made whether the concerns are such that the matter needs to be escalated to a Child Protection Investigation, in which case other agencies can be contacted without parental consent in order to safeguard the child, or whether no further action will be taken. In the latter instance, the referrer will be advised and asked to contact the service if they have any further concerns.

3.8

Complex cases are subject to a Core Assessment, a more detailed piece of work taking 35 days.

Contacts regarding children or young people known to other parts of the service such as Children in Care or Safeguarding and Support are passed to the named service. Information about children known to other Local Authorities are passed to their allocated social worker.

4. Current referral rates and workload

Comparison with three other inner London boroughs is as follows: Compared with our statistical neighbours Haringey receives a high number of contacts into the service. The relatively low percentage that move to referral relates to high number of police reports received which do not meet the threshold for children's social care.

2009/10

Borough	Number	of	% which became	% of referrals
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Haringey Council

	contacts into the service	referrals	that moved to assessment
Haringey	14,355	23.8%	54.3%
Borough 1	11,000	51%	51%
Borough 2	12,500	32%	75%
Borough 3	14,700	27%	NK

The low annual conversion rate from referral to assessment reflects the significant amount of backlog work undertaken in 2009/10. The table below demonstrates the sustained improvement in the service over the year with the conversion rate from referral to assessment now standing at 61.2%.