



Haringey Council

Briefing for:	Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee
Title:	Safeguarding and Support
Purpose of briefing:	Response to audit of children subject to child protection planning presented to the Committee on 19 th April 2012
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This report is a discussion paper for the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee, following on from the audit carried out by the Independent Member Hilary Corrick and presented on the 19th April 2012.

1.0 Children and Young People subject to Child Protection (CP) Plans

1.1 Child Protection Conferences

A child protection conference is a multi-agency meeting. It is held when practitioners' assess that a child is suffering harm because of abuse or neglect. At the meeting all the workers who know the child and their family share information, hear from the parents or carers and recommend whether the child needs a child protection plan

1.2 What is a child protection plan?

When a child protection case conference decides a child or a young person is at risk of abuse they are known as a 'child subject of a child protection plan'.

A child protection plan is a working tool that should enable the family and professionals to understand what is expected of them and what they can expect of others. The aims of the plan are:

- To keep the child safe
- To promote their welfare
- To support their wider family to care for them if it can be done safely



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1.3 Effective plans set out

- The cause of harm to the child
- The practical long and short term goals
- What the family and workers involved need to do to meet the goals
- Who will be checking the child is safe and well on a day to day basis
- The contingency plan - what should be done if the child protection plan is not working.

1.4 Core Groups

A Core Group is the group of professionals and family members who meet regularly if the Child Protection Conference makes a child the subject of a Child Protection Plan.

The Core Group is responsible for the implementation and review of the Child Protection Plan with the ultimate aim of making sure that the Child Protection Plan is keeping the child safe.

Core Group membership can be amended as appropriate but should include parent(s) nor carer(s), child (if appropriate), other relevant family members, the allocated social worker and professionals in direct regular contact with the child.

1.5 The Core Group Meetings

The date of the first Core Group is set at the Initial Child Protection Conference and subsequent Core Group meetings must take place at least every 6 weeks until the child is no longer subject to a Child Protection Plan. Every Core Group meeting must always review and where necessary modify the child's protection plan based on the ongoing assessment of the plan.

1.6 Review Child Protection Case Conferences

The purpose of Review Child Protection Case Conferences is to review within three months of the initial child protection case conference, and to further review at intervals of not more than six months for as long as the child remains the subject of a child protection plan. This is to ensure that momentum is maintained in the process of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child/children

2.0 *National and Local Data for Children and Young People subject to Child Protection (CP) Plans*



2.1 The number of children and young people subject to CP Plans in England from the 31st March 2007 to the 31st March 2011 is detailed below: ¹

Category of Abuse	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Neglect	12,500	13,400	15,800	17,200	18,700
Physical Abuse	3,500	3,400	4,400	4,700	4,500
Sexual Abuse	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,200	2,300
Emotional abuse	7,100	7,900	9,100	11,400	12,100
Multiple	2,700	2,500	2,900	3,400	5,000
Total	27,900	29,200	34,100	39,100	42,700

2.2 The number of children and young people subject to a CP Plan in Haringey from the 31st March 2007 to the 31st March 2012 is detailed below:

Category of Abuse	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Neglect	77	86	37	69	89
Physical Abuse	21	27	13	11	13
Sexual Abuse	17	9	0	17	8
Emotional abuse	32	73	48	49	56
Multiply	9	55	158	150	154
Total	156	250	256	296	320

As at the end of May 2012 there were 284 children and young people subject to CP plans in Haringey.

2.3 The rate of children and young people subject to a CP Plan per 10,000 population in Haringey is 57.84.

2.4 In May 2012, 91% of all children and young people subject to a CP Plan were visited in the month by their allocated worker.

2.5 In May 2012, there were 2 children moving into Haringey on a CP Plan.

2.6 As at 31st May 2012, 10% of the children and young people subject to CP Plans had been subject to plans for more than two years.

2.7 As at the 31st May 2012 23.1% of all children and young people becoming looked after had been subject to a CP Plan.

¹ NSPCC inform, 2012



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3.0 Practice and audit

- 3.1 An initial child protection conference must be convened when it is believed that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The conference must consider all the children in the household, even if concerns are only being expressed about one child.

For all cases going to conference there will have been a multi-agency strategy meeting.

- 3.2 The Team Manager and their Deputy Head of Service are responsible for making the decision to convene a child protection conference and the reasons for calling the conference (or not calling a conference following completion of a S47 enquiry) must be recorded.
- 3.3 As detailed above children and young people subject to CP Plans are reviewed on a regular basis, three monthly and then six monthly by the independent Child Protection Advisors (CPAs) at the multi-agency Review Child Protection Conferences.

The CPAs, as independent chairs of conferences, will contact managers and practitioners outside of the review conferences where they have any concerns about the management or direction of the case or to share good practice.

- 3.4 Social workers receive regular supervision and it is through supervision that Managers review CP Plans with practitioners to identify outstanding actions, identify any drift and the general progression of the plan.
- 3.5 Monthly listings of children and young people subject to CP Plans for more than 18 and 24 months are reviewed by the Head of Service and where there are issues these are passed to the practitioner's managers for action.

There is no right time for a child or young person to be subject to a CP Plan. CP Plans must be purposeful and focused on change for a child or young person.

Assertive review child protection case conferences, regular professional supervision and audit will identify any drift for children or young people subject to CP Plans

- 3.6 The Safeguarding Panel is a multi-agency forum where practitioners can take complex cases for discussion, ideas and recommendations to support their decision making. Managers attend with practitioners and this has proved to be a useful resource for children and young people who have been subject to a CP Plans for over 18 months.



- 3.7 Within the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) there are officers who work specifically with children and young people subject to CP Plans and ensure timely sharing of information with the allocated social workers.

4.0 Care Proceedings

- 4.1 When it is clear that the protection or welfare of a child cannot be achieved by agreement with the parents or the security of a legal order is necessary to ensure the viability of a plan for a child, a Legal Planning Meeting should be convened. Legal Planning Meetings may also be convened where it is being considered that a child should be reunited within their family. It is an opportunity to discuss a case fully, and to consult with solicitor colleagues from Child Care Legal to ensure that children are the subject of active case management.

- 4.2 The role of the legal representative is to advise about the legal possibilities for achieving the desired aim and to give a view about the quality of the evidence available.

Recommendations from lawyers at Legal Planning Meetings can range from the need to issue proceedings to ongoing support to the family through a CP or CiN Plan.

- 4.3 There are currently 100 sets of Care proceedings in the courts as of the 20th June 2012.
- 4.4 Recent research from the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) *'Three weeks in November....three years on Cafcass care application study 2012'*², shows that Guardians believe that care applications were more appropriately timed than in 2009. In 67.1% of cases Guardians felt that local authority's care application was timed appropriately which is a marked increase from the 53.7% recorded on the 2009 survey.

In the vast majority of cases (85.4%), Guardians felt that that the Local Authority's application was the only viable action and there was no other alternative. In just 36 cases (14.6%) they identified a possible alternative to care proceedings and where this was suggested, a robust

² *'Three weeks in November....three years on Cafcass care application study 2012'* – this report gauged the views CAFCASS Children's Guardians in relation to care applications in a three week period in November 2011



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child protection plan; family group conference and parenting education programmes were the most frequently mentioned alternatives.

It is worth noting the research also found that local authorities were making applications at an earlier stage of their involvement with families. In the research 19.8% of children had not been previously involved with children's services at the time of application, almost double the 11.5% seen in the 2009 study.

Applications where the children had a briefer length of involvement with the local authority prior to the application were much more likely to be considered appropriately timed than those with longer involvement. Applications for 88.5% children with no prior involvement were considered appropriately timed, as were applications for 73.3% of children with less than one year's involvement, 66.6% of applications with three or more years of involvement were considered late.

The research is at

http://www.cafcass.gov.uk/news/2012/cafcass_care_study_2012.aspx

5.0 *The timeliness of interventions*

5.1 The timeliness of interventions for children and young people is key to their safety and wellbeing and our practitioners aim to intervene sooner rather than later. Working with children and young people and their families when things first start to go wrong through our universal services, children's centres, youth service and our family support will allow families to get the correct sign-posting to the right services delivering the right interventions to ensure the Borough's children are health, safe and achieving.

The time from a child or young person being first known to the department and the decision to have an initial child protection case conference will depend on the presenting needs. Our target for Initial Child Protection Case Conferences is 15 days from the strategy meeting. In cases where it is unclear at the point of referral or at the initial strategy meeting whether or not concerns will lead to an Initial Child Protection Case Conference the 15 days is taken from the review strategy meeting.

Where a decision has been made that a child or young person needs a period of social work involvement managed through a child in need plan, it may only be a change in circumstances or a particular incident that prompts the decision to take the case to an initial child protection case conference. This can mean that a child or young person has been



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known to the service for weeks or months, before an initial case conference.

Professional, regular and challenging supervision will identify where there is drift in such cases and ensure that where appropriate cases are taken to initial case conference.