

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

**TUESDAY, 10 JULY 2012**

**Councillors:** Stewart (Chair), Adamou, Allison and Davies

**Also present:** Sylvia Chew, Hilary Corrick, Iain Low, Rachel Oakley, Denise Sourris and Marion Wheeler

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>	<b>ACTION BY</b>
<b>HSP72.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  There were no apologies for absence.	
<b>HSP73.</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>  There were no items of urgent business.	
<b>HSP74.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>HSP75.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>  The minutes of the meeting held on 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2012 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting by the Committee.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>HSP76.</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>  The committee considered a proposed work plan for its meetings in 2012/13. It was noted that, under its terms of reference, the committee was required to produce a report twice a year, and the content of these reports would require consideration.  Members asked about the proposals for the future of the committee, and it was noted that the terms of reference report set out that the committee would continue as an advisory committee of the Cabinet for a further year, and that a decision would be taken subsequently as to whether it should continue to operate after April 2013, or whether its functions would be performed by the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Panel from that time onwards.  It was hoped that, in addition to the proposed work plan for the coming year, the committee would be able to continue to request reports on matters that were raised as queries or concern, and to look into these in detail.	
<b>HSP77.</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>  The committee considered the report on its terms of reference, as agreed by Cabinet on 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2012.	

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Regarding the content of the twice-yearly reports the committee was required to produce, it was suggested that these could be along the lines of the detailed analysis that Hilary Corrick had produced previously, but developed into a more formal report format. It was felt that qualitative analysis of this nature was an area where the committee was best able to add value.

**RESOLVED**

That the content of the report be noted.

**HSP78.**

**PRESENTATION ON SAFEGUARDING AND SUPPORT**

The committee received a presentation on the First Response and Safeguarding and Support services within Children and Families. Sylvia Chew outlined the team structure of the First Response Service, made up of the multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH), four duty teams, No Recourse to Public Funds team and Emergency Duty Team, and also gave details of the referral and assessment processes for the Service and relevant data and outcomes. Iain Low presented the team structure of the Safeguarding and Support Service, who the users of the Service were, and data and information relating to Children in Need, Child Protection, Haringey Contact Service and Family Intervention Project.

In response to a question from the committee, it was reported that, where a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) was completed and submitted, this was logged and uploaded onto Framework-I by the CAF Manager; this meant that if that child were to come into contact with safeguarding services in future, there would be a record of the previous CAF. It was acknowledged, however, that where a CAF was undertaken and not sent in, this would not necessarily be held by the Council. It was also reported that details may not always be available for CAFs undertaken more than two years ago.

The committee noted that the number of contacts was higher than for the previous year; it was noted that this could be as a result of new families moving into the borough, and also that the figures may reduce over the summer period.

In response to a question regarding the 33% of cases that did not proceed to a Core Assessment, it was reported for some no action would have been required, others would be referred to single agencies for monitoring and others may have moved to a Child in Need plan. Case closure letters would be sent to the family, and copied to the relevant GP, health visitor, school and the original referrer for information. The committee welcomed the confirmation that there were no longer any cases without an allocated social worker.

It was reported that the caseload for the four duty teams in First Response was approximately 500 families, which represented a caseload of around 15-19 families per social worker. It was acknowledged that this was high, and that an ideal caseload would be

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15-16 families per social worker. It was important to monitor cases to ensure that they were not being retained within First Response unnecessarily; reports were run to identify any cases that had been within the service for more than 5 months, and an account was required for each case to ensure that cases were being passed on appropriately.

Hilary Corrick noted that Haringey did tend to hold onto cases in First Response for longer than in neighbouring boroughs, and that its figures for cases closed within three months was lower than for its neighbours. This was partly because Haringey made sure that cases had been picked up by the next agency when they had been referred onward, and kept cases open until this was confirmed. Sylvia Chew advised that it was the intention to move to a model where social workers were just one part of a network of professionals working with a family, and that at the appropriate time the social worker could withdraw from that existing network, rather than 'hand over' to a new network.

In Safeguarding and Support, it was reported that the caseload was around 15-19 children per social worker, although there were a number of newly qualified staff in the service with 'protected' caseloads and a higher level of supervision.

It was confirmed that details regarding a Child Protection Plan were retained on file for 25 years after the plan ended.

The committee welcomed that the number of looked after children, including asylum seekers, had reduced to 562, as this had previously been over 600. It was acknowledged that this was a very positive trend downwards, and was a result of a combination of factors including tighter case management, co-ordination of early support and young people being discharged from care at age 18.

The committee thanked Sylvia Chew and Iain Low for the presentation.

**RESOLVED**

That the content of the presentation be noted.

**HSP79. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DATA - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
- MAY 2012 DATA**

The committee considered the report on performance management data for Children and Families. It was noted that the out-turn for 2011/12 was not yet ratified, and would be reported at the October meeting of the committee, at which point it would be possible to draw comparisons between Haringey and its statistical neighbours, as well as the rest of the country.

It was reported that it was likely that the 10- and 35- working day targets, for initial assessments and core assessments respectively, were likely to be abolished. These would, however, need to be replaced in order to ensure that assessments were being undertaken in a timely manner and there was a current discussion nationally around what the new

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requirements might consist of.

In response to queries regarding the rate of referrals to children's social care compared with the borough's statistical neighbours, it was reported that this was largely as a result of the MASH, which enabled a triage service and for cases to be directed to the relevant agency at a very early stage. It was anticipated that other authorities would catch up with Haringey's triage arrangements.

Further to the discussion in January around unclosed Child in Need cases, it was reported that work was still ongoing to close these outstanding cases, although the number had now greatly reduced. It was reported that Framework-I had permitted work to be captured as open when it was in fact closed, and the current clean-up work was to address this issue in order to ensure that the figures reported were accurate.

The committee asked about the percentage of initial assessments being carried out within 10 working days, and how long it was taking for those where this timescale was not met. It was reported that most of those initial assessments not carried out within 10 working days would have been completed within 15 working days, but that there were some cases where it could take up to 30 days in situations where it was not possible to locate the family. It was also reported that there could be some slippage in writing up assessments that had been undertaken, and that this was an issue where caseloads were high.

It was confirmed that, other than in exceptional circumstances, it was not possible to progress to a core assessment without an initial assessment having been undertaken. If it took longer than 10 days to undertake the initial assessment, this would not necessarily have an impact on the target of completing a core assessment within 35 working days, as this was taken from a different starting date.

The committee noted the figure for Child Protection Plans lasting 2 years or more, and felt that this needed to be monitored closely. It was noted that this figure did vary, and included a number of children who were undergoing care proceedings.

In response to a query regarding the higher rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan than Haringey's statistical neighbours, it was reported that this was something the service had been looking at, and the level of confidence in managing children via Child in Need plans may be a factor in this percentage. It was also noted that this data was 12 to 15 months old, at which time there was still a level of instability in the staffing for this service, which may have contributed. It was acknowledged that this was a complex area, and also that there was no definite answer as to what the 'right' level should be.

With regard to the rate of children becoming subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time, it was reported that this was often as a result of the resumption of relationships that had previously ended, or of new relationships starting which brought risk to children in the

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	<p>family. It was confirmed that, whenever a child ceased to be subject of a Child Protection Plan, the reasons for this were documented and kept on record.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>That the content of the report be noted.</p>	
<p><b>HSP80.</b></p>	<p><b>SERVICE RESPONSE TO RECENT AUDIT ON CHILDREN WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO PLANNING FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME.</b></p> <p>The committee considered the report on the response to the audit of children subject to child protection plans, presented to the committee on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012.</p> <p>The committee asked how the number of sets of care proceedings in the courts as of June 2012 compared with the previous year, and it was reported that it was lower than the previous year. This had reduced in line with the number of children in care. The committee was asked to note the findings of the CAFCASS report, which indicated that in 85.4% of cases, Guardians felt that the Local Authority's care application was the only viable action.</p> <p>The committee asked about the format of the report, as in other committees audit responses would be expected to incorporate the original audit alongside an action plan, in order that progress could be monitored. It was reported that the audit had not made recommendations as such, but there were some qualitative issues that the committee had wanted to explore further with officers, as set out in the report, with a view to developing models of best practice.</p> <p>It was agreed that a copy of the original audit report would be provided to Cllrs Adamou and Allison.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>That the content of the report be noted.</p>	<p><b>HC</b></p>
<p><b>HSP81.</b></p>	<p><b>PRESENTATION ON CHILD PROTECTION EVALUATION PILOT</b></p> <p>It was reported that this piece of work, looking at how families viewed the Child Protection process, tied in with work that Hilary Corrick was undertaking in respect of parents' views of the process, as reported later on the agenda. Rachel Oakley introduced the work undertaken, and Denise Sourris gave a presentation on this work and the findings.</p> <p>Feedback had been sought, by means of questionnaires and interviews, from families who had attended a child protection conference from October 2011; 35 responses had been received from a mixture of parents and other family members, and from a diverse range of backgrounds. Four key findings had been around people feeling overwhelmed, feeling unheard, services/housing issues and</p>	

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	<p>understanding risk, and a number of more detailed points arose within each of these areas. It was reported that the findings of this study reflected national research findings, and that the responses had acknowledged positive aspects as well as areas for improvement. It was intended that the findings now be used to feed into service delivery, and this process had already started.</p> <p>The committee noted with interest the comment in the presentation that there can be a conflict of interest between professionals and families, and that, while encouraging participation, there was a need to recognise the risk of over-identifying with the parents involved. It was noted that nobody was involved with social services out of choice, although they were generally in situations where help was required, and this contributed to contradictory and complex nature of some of the feedback received. In general, however, the feedback had been less negative than might have been expected.</p> <p>The committee remarked that there was also an issue of false compliance, and families learning to say the 'right' things; professionals needed to be aware of this, although where there was a positive relationship with a good social worker, this was less likely to be an issue.</p> <p>In response to a question from the committee, it was reported that there did not appear to be a correlation between the respondents and who their social workers were.</p> <p>It was agreed that the copy of the presentation would be circulated to the committee.</p> <p>The Committee thanked Denise Sourris and Rachel Oakley for the presentation.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>That the content of the presentation be noted.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>HSP82.</b></p>	<p><b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b></p> <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) paragraphs 1&amp;2, namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p>	
<p><b>HSP83.</b></p>	<p><b>PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCESS</b></p> <p>The committee considered a report on parent's views of the child protection process, and Hilary Corrick advised that there was little to add to the previous presentation on the same topic. It was agreed that getting people's personal views on what was a difficult process helped to</p>	

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	<p>bring the issues to life.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>That the content of the report be noted.</p>	
<b>HSP84.</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>The committee was asked to advise the Chair if they had any suggestions for future areas for audit and analysis.</p> <p>It was agreed that a decision would be made at the next meeting as to the subject of the first of the two committee reports for the year to Cabinet and Full Council.</p>	<b>All</b>
<b>HSP85.</b>	<p><b>DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>17 September 2012.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 21:20hrs.</p>	