

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 28 JANUARY 2013

Members: James Stewart (Chair), Gina Adamou, Gideon Bull, Hilary Corrick, Nigel Scott

In

Attendance: Marion Wheeler, Libby Blake, Phil Di Leo, Vikki Monk, Ros Cooke, Shubhi Raymond, Chrissy Austin, Lisa Blundell.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
CSPAPC110	APOLOGIES Apologies for absence were submitted from Cllr Allison and apologies for lateness noted for Cllr Adamou.	Clerk
CSPAPC111	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business submitted.	
CSPAPC112	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest put forward.	
CSPAPC113	MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held on the 22 November were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
CSPAPC114	MATTERS ARISING None	
CSPAPC115	PRESENTATION FROM THE EARLY YEARS SERVICE ON THEIR SAFEGUARDING SUPPORT The Committee considered an overview of the provision for children's centres in Haringey. They noted that Childcare was available in 8 children's centres. The service was working on underdeveloped places and continuing work to find new places that were funded and provide a reasonable payment rate. This was to attract parents to take up these places. The Committee noted that, in order to meet government targets for 2014, the number of places will need to double in number. From September 2013 the criteria used for free school meals will replace existing criteria to allow a wider number of children to access places. With a wider eligibility for places, the Early Years' service did recognise the need to protect places for Children that are on "in need" plans or on protection plans. The Committee asked about how the service ensured that vulnerable	

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children got the right places so they were supported and monitored appropriately. The Committee learnt that vulnerable children, as all other children, access integrated provision and they will receive a regular progress review. Alongside this, there will be two weekly standing meetings at the children's centres, to examine the specific needs of children that are on : children in need plans, protection plans or have obtained a place as a result of a CAF. Managers and staff will consider how the needs are addressed and monitor how they are managed.

The reason for looking at the role of children's centres in safeguarding vulnerable children was following a past Committee member's positive experience of the difference being made, in other boroughs, by children's centres ensuring vulnerable children were prioritised for a place. The Chair was advised that there was a good working relationship between First Response and Early Years service to ensure that referrals were passed onto children's centres. There was already a contact person for the screening team in each of the children's centres cluster. To expand further the focus on vulnerable children, the two services were discussing ensuring places were available for vulnerable children at the cluster level.

Alongside accessing children's centre places, parents were offered a wide range of development and skill programmes to attend whilst their child was at the centre. Enquiry was made about the take up of parents on the programmes and any experience there was of peer support from parents. The feedback received from children centres was positive and indicated that the parent programmes had been successful. As part of the review of children's centres the service were looking at expanding the sessions and considering the amount of outreach work provided. Good positive friendships were developed as part of parents accessing children's centres.

The Committee were informed that the Children's Centre's review will analyse the impact of the restructure completed in 2011 and if any improvements need to be made. There was a good relationship with the children's centres and the associated schools. The review will check that there has been good and appropriate expenditure given the lower budget being worked to than in previous years. Members noted it is crucial that the budget available is appropriately spent. The review will initially be considered by the Director for Children's services and the Cabinet Member for Children. The Committee registered their interest in considering the recommendations of the review, if there were implications for safeguarding.

LB

Members were assured that when Children's Centres put forward their concerns, they were listened too and they will work closely with the Early Year's services to improve services to vulnerable children. There are safeguarding forums run, in term time, with children's centres to raise issue and it was by having meetings that the service ensure practice across children's centres, in relation to vulnerable children, is consistent.

In considering the high numbers of children on children in need plans and on child protection plans, understanding was sought on whether this reflected

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that more children were moving into the borough or was there a particular group of parents increasing i.e. young mums that needed to be worked more closely with. Although the borough had one of the highest number of teenage mums, no significant increase had been seen in the last couple of years and the council did work closely with Health services on sexual health education and advice. Previously, when the Committee had looked at the statistics for the number of families moving to the borough with child protection plans, they had seen roughly an equal number move in as out of the borough. However, the borough had been chosen by government to implement the Housing benefit cap 6 months earlier than other boroughs in the country. So the Director for Children's service would be monitoring the impact of the benefit cap on family's circumstances.

It was clarified that Health workers work closely with children's centres and they do make contact with the Children's services about any children they are concerned about when making their regular home visits.

In terms of communicating with mothers, where English was not the first language, there were a range of community languages spoken by staff that worked in children's centres and in Early Years and they could be called upon to help with communications as well as interpreters that worked for the council. There were also outreach workers that spoke common community languages that worked from children centres that were able to visit mums where English was not the first language. Language help would be part of the issues looked at in the review of children's centres.

CSPAPC116

CHILD PROTECTION VISITS COMPLETED BY THE DISABLED CHILDREN'S TEAM

At the previous meeting the Committee had considered the findings of an audit into the quality of recordings of child protection visits which had covered all teams that were responsible for child protection visits. This had included the disabled children's team. The Committee had requested further information on the number of visits completed by the Disabled Children's team, the frequency of visits, and if the visit included the assessment of a sibling group. They further requested an update on the measures to be taken to improve the timescales for visiting families.

The report put forward, by the Head of the Disabilities Team, indicated that there were 11 children subject to child protection plans and ten of the cases were subject to fortnightly visits and one to weekly visits. The Committee had previously asked whether any were part of a sibling group and it was noted that there were seven children with disabilities and three of these children have siblings, totalling five children.

The Committee received information about the frequency of visits made over a 6 month period and an analysis of the child protection recording for January showed that this was appropriate.

Although the Disabilities Team were only responsible for a small number of children subject to child protection plans, assurance was given that all social

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	<p>workers in the team were fully aware of the importance of seeing children within timescales . Collectively, as a team, they made sure that there was cover for these visits if, for any reason, a social worker was unable to make a visit. All staff had been made aware that when visiting a sibling group there needed to be a separate case note for each child. A recent supervision meeting had highlighted the need to induct new or temporary members of staff working in the Disabled Children’s team on completing the template for CP visits and this would be taken forward.</p> <p>In response to Committee questions about managers ensuring visits were undertaken, it was noted that managers were able to view diaries of all their staff to ensure visits were being completed.</p> <p>The Committee remarked on the small proportion of disabled children subject to CP plans in proportion to the number of children on plans. Members would receive a later presentation about the work to ensure that the Health service and partners were picking up on children that were known to social care and ensuring that their needs were assessed.</p> <p>In terms of recording of visits, a wider question was put forward to the Director of Children’s services about whether there was the right proportion of administrative staff in place to support social workers to ensure they were not spending valuable time on completing paper work instead of meeting with families. It would also be important for the Director of Children’s service to point out to Members, when they are asked to make any budget reductions, any knock on effects in the reduction of staff so that they are clear on the merits and drawback to what they were approving. The Director would be making an assessment in the coming year about the proportion of administrative staff working in the service.</p>
<p>CSPAPC117</p>	<p>SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES</p> <p>The Committee had heard in September that the Disabled Children’s Policy and Practice Review Group would examine children with special educational needs which are met at school action or School Action Plus. As the local authority did not hold this information, it was agreed to identify children and young people that are known to social care but not subject to Child Protection Plans. This group may have an additional need such as Speech and language therapy and are known to the First Response service.</p> <p>Vikki Monk, the borough lead for therapies and specialist nursing in Haringey Whittington Health provided the Committee with a presentation of the key findings of the review.</p> <p>The Committee were provided information on the therapy audit tool used in the analysis, the number of children chosen and understood that the audit had concerned the Health service records (RIO).</p> <p>The file audit had concerned contact with the child, assessment, review, inter agency involvement, examined the decision making at meetings, therapy assessments and interventions and information sharing.</p>

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	<p>The Committee were advised about areas of good practice seen and where improvements were needed. They learnt about how the language used in recording cases, sharing of information by therapist in the Health service was crucial in understanding whether issues were long running and needed more immediate attention and referral to safeguarding. Also, where there could be more proactive communication to quicken the pace of the decision making.</p> <p>Training was suggested on how therapists in the health service could describe risks as this was important in gaining an understanding of a wider problem.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Policy Review Group, a sub group of the LSCB consisting of 6 agencies, would conduct a specific case review by examining their files in the same environment and discussing any required learning points on the care provided to the child. They would be looking at the health case recordings, and assessments to choose one case which would be subject to this collective examination of their work. The Independent member suggested that this review could include the parent of the child. The results would be reported back to the LSCB (Local Children's Safeguarding Board).</p> <p>A Committee Member queried how easily health information could be passed from agency to agency, borough to borough, or region to region when a family moved given that the RIO system was not a commonly used data base and does not easily communicate with other systems. It was noted that, when a child moved to another borough, there was an active transfer of data and it was a requirement to go and visit the child. It was vital to ensure that any required context about the case was added to the file so that there was a good understanding of the child's health and safeguarding situation.</p> <p>The audit had demonstrated the willingness of the council and Health services to work together to ensure a child's needs are picked up in the assessment process and that there is good information on both the RIO and Framework I systems.</p> <p>Following the audit an action plan had been devised which would be monitored by LSCB and there would be focus on the areas such as making sure that therapists contact and speak with social workers about cases.</p>	VM/PL
CSPAPC 118	<p>DRAFT COUNCIL REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE</p> <p>The Committee agreed to note the report and send any comments to Ayshe Simsek before Monday 04th February.</p>	All to note
CSPAC119	<p>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>No items of new business were put forward.</p>	
CSPAPC120	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>RESOLVED</p>	

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	<p>The press and public were excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following items as they 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&2 namely information relating to an individual and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p>	
<p>CSPAPC121</p>	<p>AUDIT ON NEW REFERRALS</p> <p>The Independent member had examined a particular week in December 2012 where there had been a higher than average number of referrals. A sample of 25 cases had been audited using the Framework I system. The Independent Member explained to the Committee that she was withdrawing her comment on the “culture of close working” as this was included as a result of looking at the number of visits made. However, there was a section on the Framework I system which displayed this but was not accessed by the Independent Member at the time of the audit.</p> <p>Initial observation were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There seemed to be more resources to signpost children to services from the ages of 0-5 in comparison to resources available for 5-9 year olds. In response to this, it was expected that once the 54000 programme was embedded, there would be an increase in resources available through the Early Help strategy. • In terms of the source of referral, a high proportion came from health, and the Police. A good indicator, next year, on how the help strategy was progressing, was to see if there were increased referrals from other sources such as neighbours and community organisations. <p>There was discussion about the whether the service was treating contacts as referrals too often as in this sample of cases looked at there was a case for more referrals to be treated as contacts. To explore this further, there was a need to consider, when assessing contacts, if they are subject to a higher threshold when this was not needed. This could lead to a higher level of assessments when this was not needed. This was a complex area to investigate as you would need to take account of the thresholds that partners were following and consider the behaviour of the service which was understandably risk averse. In terms of holding risk this was mostly done by the First Response Team who had responsibility for finding and completing early information on a contact before passing this onto a social worker.</p> <p>There was a good level of recording seen on cases looked by the Independent member. It could be worthwhile for the Committee to gain a further understanding of how the screening team work. A report was due at the next meeting on the operation of the MASH, a year after establishment, and the Committee could discuss at this meeting the scope for an audit to test the work of the screening team and look further at the thresholds being</p>	<p>HC</p>

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	<p>applied.</p> <p>The Deputy Service Head for First Response provided some further context to the period in which the audit was undertaken. It was important to note that the rate of referrals for December 2012 was considerably lower than compared to December 2011.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Independent Member whether there were any circumstances seen where cases were allowed to 'drift'. The Committee were assured that all urgent cases were addressed in good time but the service could not be complacent on this issue. The Assistant Director advised that the service were continuing to look at the 'Front door' to the service as currently there were possibly too many cases through the social work pathway, which is a high threshold intervention and there were opportunities to offer help to families at an earlier stage which the Children's Service as a whole would be involved in making decisions alongside partner agencies.</p>	
CSPAPC122	<p>NUMBERS OF CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS COMPLETED BY THE BOROUGH IN COMPARISON TO STATISTICAL NEIGHBOURING BOROUGH</p> <p>At the previous meeting the Committee had asked the number of section 47's (child protection investigations) completed in comparison to statistical neighbouring boroughs. This was now enclosed and showed that there were no real significant differences, between boroughs, and the number completed. The Committee queried why this information was exempt. It was explained that the data had been collated locally (by the council) from other local authority contacts as this data is not available from public performance reports. When providing this data, the other local authorities were not under the impression that the data would be published in an open report and therefore had not given their permission for the figures to be publically available. Therefore, this would make the information exempt, under paragraph 3, as the information is relating to the business affairs of another local authority. The Independent Member and Director for Children's service were not certain if this information was generally publicly available. It was agreed that the Head of Performance looks into this. The information could be made open, after the meeting, if it was publicly available.</p>	MG
CSPAPC123	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>None.</p>	