



Haringey Council

Report for:	CSPCC	Item Number:	
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Title:	Child Protection Advisors Annual Report
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Lead Officer:	Rachel Oakley: Head of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance & Practice Development
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Ward(s) affected: All	Report for Key/Non Key Decisions: non key
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1. Introduction

This report is the first annual report presented by the Children Protection Advisors in Haringey. There is no statutory requirement for the CPAs to produce a report, unlike the Independent Reviewing Officers (Looked after Children) and the Local Authority Designated Officer who are also based within the Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Practice Development Service. Producing a report of CPA related activity will, however, contribute to the broader Quality Assurance Framework. The intention of this initial report is to describe the role and responsibilities of the CPAs, provide an overview of quantitative and qualitative data captured by the service, without replicating information contained in Children and Families' Performance Reports; offer a self assessment of areas of progress, highlight issues requiring attention and make recommendations for further improvement. Finally the report will identify the overarching priorities of the Service for 2013-14.



Haringey Council

2. Roles and Responsibilities of the Child Protection Advisors

Child Protection Advisors have a number of key roles which contribute to the safety of children; all are designed to help raise standards of practice. These roles are in reality intertwined, but can be separated as follows:

- Chairing of child protection conferences, ensuring that a shared decision is reached that will safeguard and protect children.
- Making a leading contribution to Quality Assurance work in the department.
- Working alongside operational managers to raise performance standards.
- Offering advice and guidance to practitioners and managers, both within Children and Families, across the Children and Young People Service and more widely throughout the multi-agency partnership.
- Developing an internal expertise in those areas most effecting children's safety.
- Developing an overview of work with all children subject to child protection plans that can be fed back to operational managers, senior managers and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- Supporting the work of the LSCB through contributing to policy initiatives, training and membership of the various sub-groups.

3. Chairing of Conferences

3.1 CPAs are responsible for ensuring the conference system works smoothly and it is experienced as an effective and professional forum that centres on the child. Professionals will be encouraged to articulate and understand the child's experience within the family and the journey they have taken from needing, to receiving help and becoming safe. It is the CPAs job to ensure that the conference maintains a focussed and unbiased approach. Chairs meet with parents prior to the conference to explain the way the conference is organised and to ensure that they are fully aware of the reasons behind the decision to convene a conference. They will ensure that parents are supported to participate constructively and that their views are taken into account. The conference is structured in a manner which allows parents to share, both verbally and in writing, their perception of the risks and strengths within their own family.

Parental participation in conferences particularly that of mothers, has been commented positively by independent observers, during the November 2012 Safeguarding Peer Challenge and as part of the work undertaken by the Practice Development Partners, further attention is being given by the Chairs to enhancing the engagement and contribution of fathers.

3.2 The CPAs recognise that frequently the most vulnerable children have vulnerable parents and therefore CPAs will ensure that there is good representation from both Adult's and Children's Services at the conference, with a commitment to work together and provide an integrated response to children and families. The CPAs will encourage a broader 'family focus' approach rather than looking at the child and child protection issues in isolation.



Haringey Council

3.3 In every family there are strengths as well as difficulties and all families are unique. The CPAs will ensure respectful engagement with families. The religious beliefs, culture, class and ethnicity, abilities and disabilities of families and their members will be valued and respected. There will be understanding given to families in poor environments.

3.4 CPAs are responsible for the development of the outline child protection plan. The plan format is designed to focus on the risks being faced by the child and will articulate the required outcome which is needed. The plan must be proportionate to the risks. It should identify family and parental strengths and protective factors in balancing risks and should identify actions which, if successfully implemented, will make a measurable impact on the child's safety.

3.5 All participants are expected to contribute and own their assessment with the Chair responsible for leading the thinking and decision making. In the event of any disagreement, the Chair is responsible for reaching a final decision.

3.6 The Chair will confirm the allocated key worker and identify a multi agency core group. At the end of every conference the Chair completes a detailed monitoring form that captures key aspects of practice. In addition the minute takers will collate information on compliance with time scales and other quantitative indicators.

4. Escalation process

4.1 In addition to the day to day case discussion and advice provided to social workers by CPAs there is a formal escalation process. Where a CPA is concerned about the immediate safety of a child or failure to implement key aspects of the child protection plan the concerns are dealt with immediately. The CPA will speak in the first instance to the relevant manager to outline their concerns.

4.2 The issues and agreed action will then be confirmed in writing by the CPA and copied to the Head of Service for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance & Practice Development as well as the respective operational Head of Service.

4.3 If the concerns are not dealt with as agreed, the CPA will request the Head of Service for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance & Practice Development to take up the matter directly with the relevant Head of Service. Both Heads of Service will agree on what needs to happen and by when. In the unlikely event of continuing unresolved problems, the Assistant Director is informed.

4.4 Between December 2012 and March 2013 escalations were centrally monitored, on average 4/5 cases a month were formally reported upwards. Analysis of the information would suggest a need for greater consistency in the way the escalation process was used. To address this, a centralised system for capturing and monitoring information about escalations and their outcomes has been put in place, with a greater emphasis on



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consistency of approach across CPAs. Escalations fell into five main categories – see below.

Categories of Concern for Escalation 2012/13

Child's safety in family	Delay	Quality of social work input around conference	Quality of practice	Thresholds for CP plan or proceedings
5	3	2	3	3

4.5 Whilst concerns can be categorised as above, a key feature across a significant number of escalations was the difficulty and challenge experienced by practitioners in engaging families in understanding the need for change. The issue of parental mental health, both diagnosed and undiagnosed, was also identified as a theme within cases requiring escalation.

5 Peer Practice Challenge - November 2012

5.1 During the Safeguarding Practice Peer Challenge in November 2012 the child protection conference process was observed and commented on. The processes and arrangements for conference were found to be well organised. The conference agenda was well structured and the Chair ensured that discussions were appropriately focussed on issues of concern with appropriate decision making partner agencies understood their role, were well prepared and made informed contributions to the discussion. The children's views were well represented and the parents were included throughout (see 3.1); attention was given to the family's cultural and linguistic needs.

5.2 However, the observer recommended that initial outcomes with timescales should be agreed at the end of the conference, which would assist in making expectations clear for the parent and identifying the role of partner agencies.

5.3 In addition to the case observed a number of child protection files were read and discussed in the course of the visit, a view was given that some children might be seen as in need and preventative, early help services may have been able to provide an effective alternative way to support families and minimise risk.

6. Evaluation of CP Conferences

6.1 Chair feedback



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From December 2012 Chairs completed a Quality Assurance form after each conference. The forms provide feedback on key elements of the conference process e.g. the pre-meeting, receiving the report, who attended and how the children's views are represented.

6.2 Parent feedback

6.2.1 In December 2012 routine parent feedback forms were introduced to seek parents' views on the CP Conference process and the input of social workers and CPAs. In total 79 forms were completed; 98% of parents stated that the social workers had explained why the CP Conference had been convened. This was a significant improvement on the 80% recorded in a one off survey of parent's views undertaken in 2011. In addition, 91% of parents met the Chair before the conference; an increase from 57% in the previous year's survey. Every area measured showed an improvement.

6.2.2 Parent comments have included that the social worker had been "extremely professional, caring, respectful and I felt so safe and acknowledged throughout" and "[the CPA] put me at ease and she made me very involved". The limitation of this methodology of feedback is recognised as participation with the feedback mechanism is more likely to come from parents who experience the intervention of social workers and CPAs favourably.

6.2.3 Further improvements have been made to the forms for 2013/14, to include questions on the families' understanding of the decision made at the conference, whether they felt supported in terms of their language and protected characteristics and whether they felt that their views were listened to and included in the CP Plan.

6.5 Reports

6.5.1 The feedback forms are collated monthly and used to produce high level evaluative reports of conferences during each period and of parent views. Chair reports focus on specific themes. In January 2013 the report focused upon multi-agency working, in particular partner agencies involvement in strategy meetings held before ICPCs. In February and March the focus shifted to multi-agency attendance at Core Group meetings and how the child's story is presented to the conference including children and young people's attendance at case conferences.

6.5.2 The reports highlight good practice and also areas for improvement. Examples of good practice include creative methods of representing the views of non or pre-verbal children. The CPAs' findings were fed back to Heads and Deputy Heads of Service at the Monthly joint meetings between First Response, Safeguarding and Support and the CPAs.

7. Number of Conferences Held



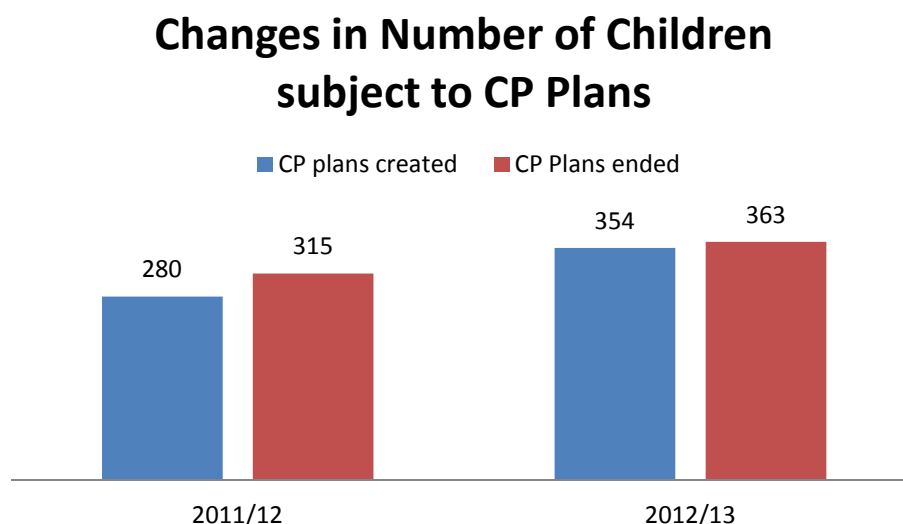
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7.1 During 2012-13, 695 conferences were held in total, 212 Initial Conferences and 483 Review Conferences. Reviews must take place within 6 months of the previous conference; for school age children conferences are convened during the school term to allow for the attendance of teachers, so the majority of conferences take place across 39 weeks of the year. The number of conferences and children on child protection plans in Haringey during this period was known to be significantly higher than these of our statistical neighbours. This prompted a review of practice and in conjunction with operational managers in First Response and Safeguarding and Support, additional scrutiny actions were put in place to ensure that thresholds were being applied consistently and early help options used appropriately. For on-going cases joint reviews explored whether sufficient progress was being made in implementing the plan and securing the necessary safeguarding outcomes and whether children could be safeguarded through alternative means.

8. Profile of Children and their Families who are subject to CP Plan

8.1 Changes in Numbers of Children subject to Child Protection Plans:

During 2012/13 the number of children being coming subject to a CP Plans was approximately 25% higher than in the previous year. Whilst 15% more CP Plans ended during the year, over a fifth of these ending in February and March 2013 (which was the start of a sharp reduction in the numbers of children subject to a plan).



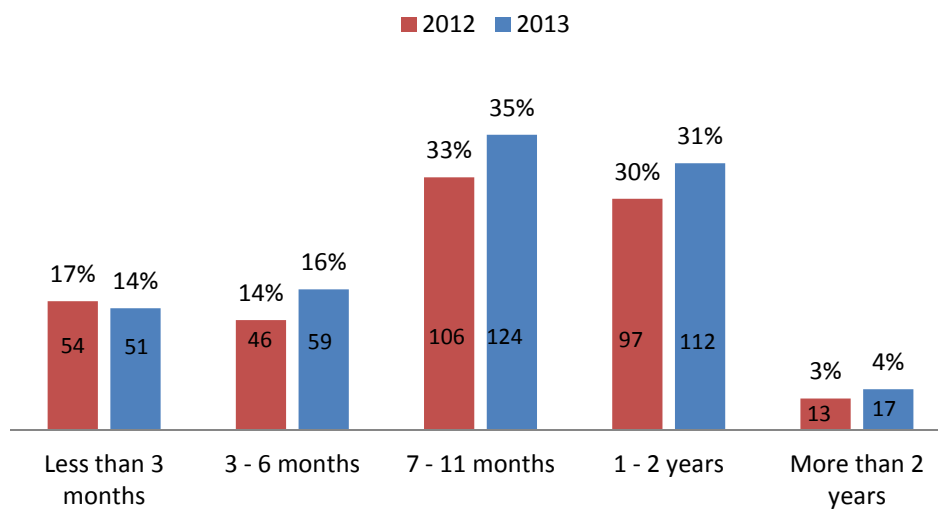
8.2 Changes in the duration of Child Protection Plans



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The data shows an increase between 2011 and 2013 in the length of time that the majority of children remain on CP plans. The consequence of understanding these trends resulted in a targeted review of all long standing plans (explained above), which has resulted in a reduction in children with plans longer than 18 months. CPAs and the Head of Service in Safeguarding & Support now routinely review all cases where children have been subject to plans between 12 and 18 months, those approaching and remaining on plans for two years and over. One of the factors contributing to the length of time children remain on plans was found to be the delay inherent in case transfer. From April 2013 new arrangements for transfer between First Response and Safeguarding & Support have been put in place, the impact of this on the duration of children on CP plans is being monitored.

Changes in Duration of CP Plans



8.3 Age and Gender

A roughly proportionate number of male and female children became subject to a CP plan in 2012/13. Nationally a slightly higher percentage of boys were the subject of a plan.

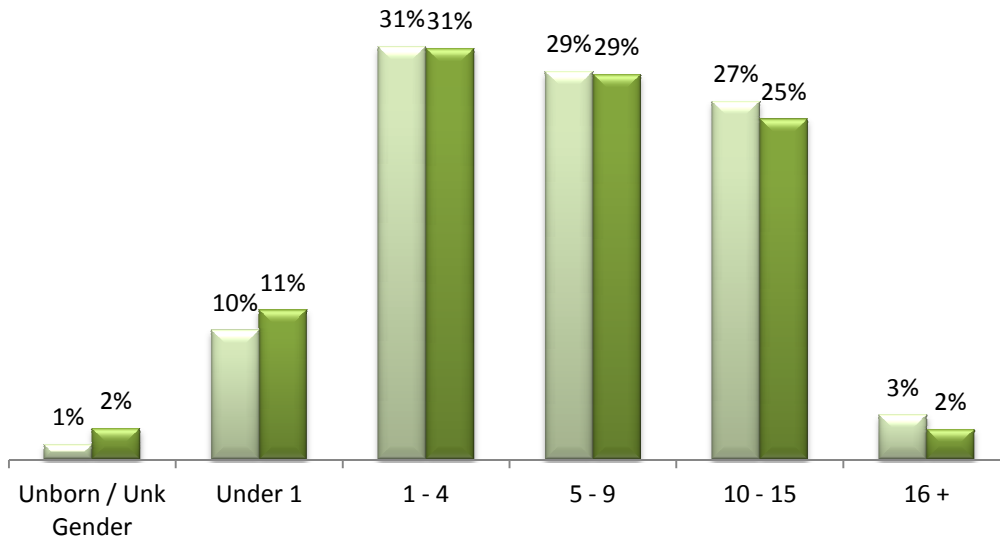
Despite higher numbers of children on CP plans than in comparator authorities The age spread of children on plans reflects the pattern found across the country, with just a slightly higher number of pre-birth plan and lower number 16 years and over.



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Children Subject of a CP plan by age as of 31st March 2013*

KEY	National	Haringey
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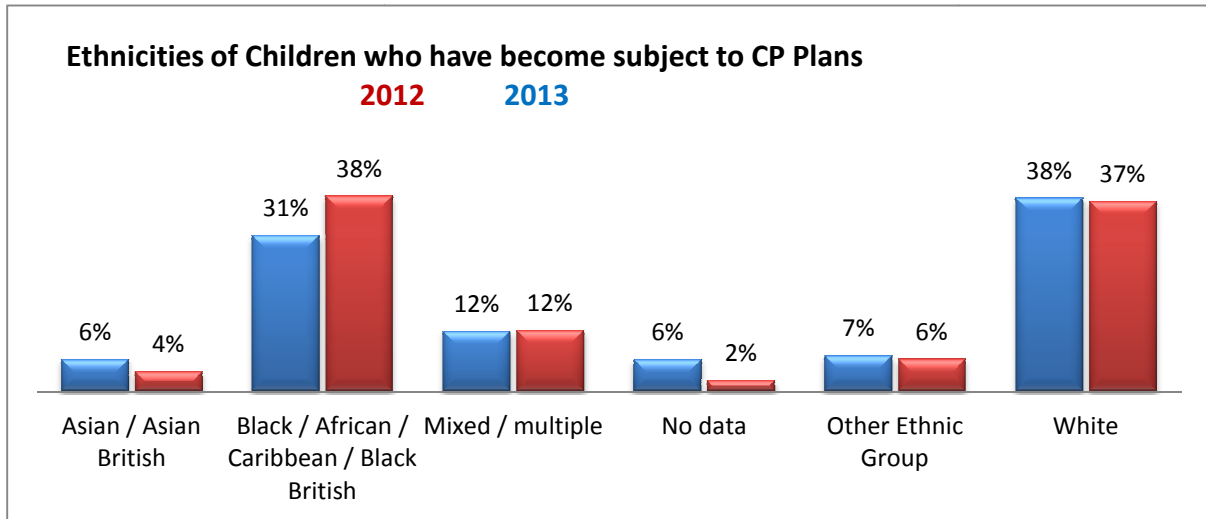
* National data from Department for Education (2012) Characteristics of children in need in England, 2011-12,

8.4 Size of Families

The large majority of children subject to a CP Plan come from one and two child households, however the number of large families, five children and above where all the children are subject to a plan have increasing over the last 5 years, for example sibling groups of 5 have increase from one family to five, and sibling groups of eight from zero in 2007 to two in 2012.

8.5 Ethnicity

Over the last 5 years, the number of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British children becoming subject to CP Plans has increased. The highest users of the interpretation service from October 2012-March 2013 were Polish, followed by Turkish speakers – these groups are included in the White category.



9. Circulation of reports

9.1 Good practice supported by the London Child Protection Procedures requires adequate and timely sharing of information by all agencies who have had a significant involvement with the child and family so that a well-informed and evidenced decision can be reached at CP Conference, procedures state that the social worker's report should be available for the:

- CPA at least one working day prior to the Initial CPC and five working days prior to the RCPC; and
- Parents and older children at least two working days prior to ICPC and at least five working days before the Review CPC to enable any factual errors to be corrected and to obtain the family's comments on the content.

9.2 Over 2012/13 there has been an improvement in the availability of social worker reports approved by their manager, with March 2013 being particularly impressive for the First Response Service which provided 100% reports for ICPC within timescale. The Safeguarding and Support service have also shown improvements over the last three months with late reports coming down from 60% to 29%. Heads of Service are routinely made aware of shortfalls and have put in place mechanisms to ensure the timeliness sharing information with the family and CPAs prior to a conference.

10. Circulation of Child Protection Plans and Conference minutes



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10.1 The London Child Protection Procedures require that Child Protection Plans should be circulated within 24 hours and the minutes of the conference within 15 days. For efficiency our system combines the child protection plan and minutes in one document. The aim of chairs and administrators is to approve and circulate all plans and minutes within 24 hours with priority given to Initial Child Protection Conferences. The 2013-14 target is for 95% of ICPC and 70% of RCPC reports be circulated in 24 hours with no report taking longer than 7 days (delays are primarily as a result of large family groups and high volumes of conferences in a week). The conference schedule is arranged to facilitate circulation of minutes. A report to monitor this is in process of being finalised.

11. Auditing activity – Pre-birth Audit August 2012

11.1 CPAs undertook an audit of 29 cases where pregnant mothers were referred to First Response because of concerns about the future of the unborn child. The audit was undertaken in advance of the launch of the LSCB pre-birth protocol and will provide a bench mark for future quality assurance activity in this area. Issues of concern included the delay in undertaking pre-birth assessments and the lack of focus on potential parenting capacity including that of fathers. Too frequently families were worked with using child protection processes without first accessing “early help” provision, including family group conferences. A multi-agency audit of pre-birth work is planned for November 2013 to assess the impact of the protocol.

12. Child Protection Advisors

12.1 There are 5 CPAs, two of whom are full-time with three working in this role on a part-time basis. One of the part-time CPAs also works as the co-ordinator of the new programme for newly qualified social workers (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) – this link with learning and development, social workers and their managers has had a positive impact increasing understanding of job roles and respective responsibilities. The other part-time CPA works as the Local Authority Designated Officer overseeing allegations against professionals working with children.

12.2 The high number of Child Protection Conferences during the year meant that the focus of the CPAs activity was the conference process. However, with the decrease in the number of children on plans towards the end of the year, the CPAs have started to have the opportunity to work on other areas of their remit.

12.3 Each of the Services within Children and Families have a dedicated link to a CPA who is the main contact point, this approach has now been extended and CPAs are linked with services across the Children and Young Peoples Service and the wider multi-agency partnership. The benefit of the linking arrangement is that distinct and separate areas of service are provided with an open channel of communication and support on issues related to child protection work. Particular areas of activity include links with adult services regarding domestic violence, drug, alcohol abuse and mental health, plus work with early years



Haringey Council

provision to ensure that early intervention and prevention initiatives are joined up with child protection work.

12.4 Additionally, one of the CPAs has taken the lead in developing and co-ordinating the audit process across Children and Families, one is the key contact point for Child Sexual Exploitation and has led on drafting the LSCB protocol, with another acting as the link between children's social care and MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Agency), this involves researching the cases being presented and liaising with the relevant social work teams.

12.5 CPA's are trainers for the LSCB and have run multi-agency training on improving working together, preparing for and participating in conferences and core groups.

13. Key Priorities for the CPA Service for 2013 -14 are

The action plan below (Appendix one) sets out planned service improvement for the next year, this builds this year achievements and addresses the areas identified for development.



CHILD PROTECTION ADVISORS ACTION PLAN - 2013 / 2014

Appendix 1

No	Action	Responsibility	By
1.	Confirm data set for CPA activity – which will be reported on a quarterly basis as part of the QA Framework	Head of Service Safeguarding QA & PD	September 2013
2.	Quarterly/Bi Annual report format to be finalised and agreed	Head of Service/Business and Quality Assurance Manager	September 2013
3.	Escalations to senior managers are systematically collated, outcomes recorded with times taken to resolve, analysis forms part of the quarterly reports.	Head of Service	System in place April, reporting beginning July, Oct, Jan 14.
4.	Review CP conference process and responsibilities, agree approach to Child Protection /Child in Need Plans – including initial outcomes with timescales	CPAs and Practice Development Partners	September 2013
5.	Increase children and young people’s participation throughout the child protection conference process and evidence influence.	Head of Service/Procurement	September – November 2013
6.	Build CPA links with partner agencies to improve multi-agency working with a particular focus on adult services and early years provision.	Allocated CPA	April 2013 – March 2014
7.	Co-ordinate the monthly “process” audits, including the training of auditors	Allocated CPA	April 2013 – March 2014



Haringey Council

	and collation of data. Developing skills in audit design and analysis.		
8.	To put in place administrative strategies for ensuring minutes are circulated within required timescales.	Business and Quality Assurance Manager	August 2013
9.	To contribute as appropriate to the Tri-borough Court 26 week pilot	CPAs	As and when