

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2013**

Councillors Adamou, Allison, Brabazon, Browne, Hare, Reece, Scott, Solomon, Stennett, Stewart and Waters

Apologies Marion Wheeler

Also Present: Hilary Corrick, Lisa Redfern, Lisa Blundell, Chrissy Austin, Chris Chalmers, Eileen Flavin, Geoffrey Baruch, Moira Lammond

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>	<b>ACTON BY</b>
<b>TEX46.</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR</b>  Cllr Waters, Cabinet Member for Children, was elected to chair the meeting.	
<b>TEX47.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE(IF ANY]</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Marion Wheeler and apologies for lateness from Cllr Stewart.	
<b>TEX48.</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>  There were no formal items or urgent business.	
<b>TEX49.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  Cllr Brabazon declared a personal interest in item 8, North London care proceedings project (NLCPP) First quarterly report – 01/06/13-31/08/13 by virtue of her role as a magistrate in the family court.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>TEX50.</b>	<b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS</b>  There were no deputations, petitions, or questions put forward.	
<b>TEX51.</b>	<b>DELIVERING EVIDENCE-BASED SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE EDGE OF CARE OR CUSTODY AND THEIR FAMILIES.</b> Geoffrey Baruch had been invited back to the joint meeting by the Chair to talk about the progress of the Multi Systemic Treatment (MST) Programme, a DFE funded project which the council along with Waltham Forest council were participating in. Moira Lammond was also introduced to the Committee; she was working directly with council on this project which was ultimately aimed at mainstreaming MST intervention for young people on the edge of care.  MST was initially developed in the US as a treatment programme for young people displaying antisocial behaviour and aimed at reducing	

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youth criminal activity. The outcomes of the programme are cost savings by decreasing the public cost from youth criminal activity such as imprisonment, and putting young people into care.

The theoretical basis behind MST examines the factors leading to delinquent behaviour and involves a therapy team working with the families. The team target multidiscipline risks in a comprehensive yet individualised way. The caregiver's co-operation is paramount to the long term positive outcomes for the child. There will be daily activities for the parents to complete to change the system in the family and ensure the intervention successes are sustainable. The MST therapist will work around the routine of the family to endeavour get the best results for them.

Moira explained the quality assurance process which enables the project to demonstrate adherence to the MST model. The Committee noted that the therapists will need to record their one to one sessions with the parents and record work with family and align this to the MST model. The supervisor therapist and line manager will also in turn need to record their work and be subject to scrutiny. This all leads to ensuring that the Brandon centre can clearly demonstrate their adherence to the MST model and also helps make sure they are using it effectively.

There was a contractual relationship between the council and the Brandon centre, initially, for a year, for two therapists to work with 9 families. The intervention will last 5 months and there is always a therapist on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Due to the amount of contact that is needed with the families a therapist will have a case load of about 4 families.

It was noted that the therapist will work with the adults in the household as well as the young person. The therapy worked on changing the whole system in and around the family, including schools and teachers. Often the young person will have poor school attendance, or not be enrolled in mainstream schools or have a gang affiliation.

In relation to treatment for violence and gang affiliation, the MST project in Haringey and Waltham Forest was treating more girls than boys. Therefore, this was not a gender specific problem. The family may have issues with substance mis-use, depression and the therapist will also be trained to help them with these problems. The recent achievements of the project in Haringey included:

- 12 cases completed
- 2 cases terminated due to lack of engagement by the parents.
- 1 case terminated as the young person went into care.

In terms of sustaining the improvements and in response to feedback from families, there was consideration being given to having some follow up family work taken forward by assistant psychologists.

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It was noted that currently each MST case costs the council £10k and in proportion to the cost of a LAC placement (50k) and the cost of to public services of anti social behaviour or the young person going into custody, the Committee agreed that this was a cost saving project.

In response to questions the Committee learnt that:

- There is follow up of cases by the MST project to understand that the changes made have been sustained and the model is effective.
- Although the families will have the support of the MST therapist, it was clarified that the Safeguarding and Support team will not dis-engage with the family but continue working with the therapist and MST project to develop sustainability plans for them. When the 5 month intensive intervention is over they are still being supported for a period by Safeguarding and Support. It was clarified that social workers will not discontinue their work with the family during the MST intervention
- The Therapists will not predominately work with the young person but with the family as a whole. They will help identify the drivers for conflict in the home and work with all the family Members to eliminate them.
- Haringey currently had three therapists, two that are shared with Waltham Forest and 1 which had been contracted by the council to work solely on Haringey cases. It was felt that the current support provided was about right and no additional therapists were needed. However, this was not a quantitative issue and it was about having the right cases that will benefit from MST intervention.
- In terms of taking the project forward, the next steps would be the mainstreaming MST intervention and having a council based team to deliver this. This would need to be considered by the council going forward and as part of their plans for the Children's service.
- Examples of the type of work carried out with families included; family therapy, substance mis-use treatment, individual work on problem solving, safety planning for young people that will be going out at night, identifying situations which lead to escalation of conflict and finding ways to stop this. All methods used will be evidenced based.
- The Chair thanked Geoffrey Baruch and Moira Lammond on their insightful presentation and invited them back to the next joint meeting on March 06<sup>th</sup> to provide a further report back on the Haringey cases they have been working on.

**Clerk**

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<p><b>TEX52.</b></p>	<p><b>HALF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS ON SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN</b></p> <p>Before considering the Performance report, Committee Members raised concerns about the findings of the recent Serious Case Review Overview Report on Child T published by the LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board) and sought assurance that lessons were being learnt by the Children's services from this, and previous Serious Case Reviews. The Chair asked Members to note that the Serious Case Review Overview report on Child T related to the period between mid 2010 and early 2011 and there have been major changes in the way in which Children services have been configured both locally and nationally.</p> <p>Committee Members further expressed disquiet at the lack of information provided to them about the case, prior to the publication of the Serious Case Review Overview report. They were also concerned about their apparent separation from the LSCB process, as elected Members, because this affected the level of knowledge they had about issues in the Children's service. Members were advised, by the Chair, that the LSCB have criteria for taking forward a Serious Case Review, which is governed by separate legal rules, and provide the reasons for completing the SCR and publication. The Chair shared the Committee's frustration about the apparent isolation of elected Members from the LSCB process and explained that the LSCB is a statutory partnership body, required by law, separate to the council and not part of the council's decision making structure. The Membership of the board is made up partner agencies and only includes senior officer representatives from agencies working with children. Serious Case Reviews can only be completed by the LSCB and are studies into partner failings and the lessons that have to be learned.</p> <p>Committee Members felt the Serious Case Review overview report provides a salient reminder that there is always a need, as Members, to continually question and evaluate whether the Children's services is adhering to core safeguarding responsibilities. In response, it was noted that the service was focused on learning the lessons from this period and regular performance reports provided to both Cabinet Advisory Committees provided councillors with a continual daily insight of how the service worked and if they were meeting the needs for safeguarding children and acting as good corporate parents for looked after children. These were the reports to rely on, in relation to how the service worked.</p> <p>The Chair explained that the Serious Case Review overview report had not been put forward to the joint meeting as it did not meet the purpose of these meetings which is to look at policies and work areas relating to both safeguarding and looked after children. The Children's and Young People's Scrutiny Panel was due to raise issues concerning the SCR overview report at their meeting next week. However, it was accepted that the SCR overview report raised issues pertaining to the Children's</p>	



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**Performance**

**HY650/OP660 – Children and Families Assessments carried out within 45 working days.** This stood at 67% against a target of 80%. There had been some challenging staffing issues during this period which had led to this performance figure. The Head of First Response was now reviewing all assessments at 5 days to ascertain if the child has been visited or is likely to be seen before the end of the 10 days.

Committee Members questioned the drop in numbers of children becoming subject to a child protection plan. This was occurring at the same time children were ceasing to come into care. Committee Members were asked to note the combination of actions and successes that were leading to both these figures reducing to where they should be, in line with statistical comparator boroughs. These actions included an increase in Adoptions, Special Guardianships, and also enabling children to go home and not be subject to care.

**OP148 – Care Leavers in Education/ OP147 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation.** Noted that both these performance figures were much lower than the target being worked to. The Head of Children in Care reported that they were putting in place monthly workshops on employability and these sessions will be put in place to engage as many young people as possible. There is also a determination by the service to ensure that every young person is involved in employment, training or education. Committee Members were asked to not assume that a young person has been in care from an early a young age and were provided with some different examples of how a young person leaving care or in care will become NEET. It was also important to keep in mind the positive experience of education with over 40 care leavers in University.

**Social worker vacancy rates**

The turnover in social workers and managers was referred to and clarification sought on the number of permanent staff in place and if there was a core group of staff, particularly in safeguarding, that remained in place and provided stability. The Committee were assured that there was a core team of staff in place which had remained constant. It was acknowledged that the recruiting to social work positions in Haringey and in London was generally harder. There was particular media focus on this profession making it a more difficult career choice. The interim Director explained that to mitigate against the everyday difficulties faced by social workers there was a need to have in place good leadership, strong management and a supportive culture around them. The Head of Safeguarding and Support explained that the service had worked hard to achieve a stable core team of staff in safeguarding that could provide stability for social workers. Social workers in Haringey were under more pressure and there were ways of working and support to help social workers manage the everyday risks or their job. This included support to social care staff in Children's services at every level. However, despite the pressures people did want to work for Haringey.

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	<p>The government had chosen Haringey to be the recipient of 8 new social workers who had recently completed the national training programme. This demonstrated the confidence in the borough and the systems in place to take on these new trainees. The Children's service needed to make the most of this by continuing to provide the strong leadership, coaching to staff, and working closely with new social workers to provide them with the confidence to do their job.</p> <p>Members accepted the principles outlined of good management but also wanted to make sure that basic activities were in place such as consistent supervision meetings and performance appraisals as these were fundamental daily priorities to get right. This was accepted by the service as a high priority and performance managed internally.</p> <p><b>Children missing from care at any time in the month – OP419.</b> Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee particularly noted the Cabinet Member for Children gets a weekly update in her meeting with the Directorate team on the children missing from care. This involves quite detailed feedback on the efforts being made to find them. It was pleasing to note that there were currently, as of last week, no children missing from care. The performance comments were felt to be a little misleading as they did not clarify if it was the same 15 children missing at one time or 15 occurrences of young people absconding from care? Also they did not provide an indication of how long they had been missing from care and if any were frequent absconders. Agreed that the phrasing of the comments address the above comments made. Members were further assured that once the young person is back in their placement there will be follow up interviews taken forward by an independent advocate to understand the reasons for them going missing.</p>	<p><b>MG</b></p>
<p><b>TEX53.</b></p>	<p><b>NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT (NLCPP):FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT - 01/06/13 - 31/08/13</b></p> <p>Barnet, Enfield and Haringey boroughs have agreed to work together as the North London Care Proceedings Project (NLCPP) to reduce avoidable delay and to improve decision making for children subject to care proceedings.</p> <p>An earlier partnership project had been taken forward by Hammersmith &amp; Fulham, Kensington &amp; Chelsea and Ealing councils to look at the whole care proceedings process, starting from the child becoming known to social care. The findings had been analysed by UCL and recommendations put forward for other boroughs to consider. The findings included streamlining how services work together and anticipating the assessments likely to be asked for by the court and completing these in advance.</p> <p>The revised Public Law Outline (PLO) also now helped with a significant change in the emphasis given to evidence provided by social workers to the Court. The recommendation was that the social worker's evidence and the children's guardian's evidence is the 'expert' evidence on which</p>	

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the court will determine the case. The Committee also noted the requirement for court reports, from social workers, to be succinct summaries with good supporting evidence.

The Court manager provided some information about her role. This included tracking care proceedings on a daily basis to stop delays, supporting social workers with the new requirements for reports and making sure that compilation of their evidence is succinct and clear.

So far the project had been successful in instigating extended family assessments to allow a member of the family, where applicable, to take on parental responsibility for the child, enabling a child to stay in their family and not be subjected to extended court proceedings. The group was also looking at family group conferences to consider how these can be further improved. From looking at the cases issued in the last three months, there was a need to take forward an analysis of ethnicity and understand if this has an impact.

The report provided information about the emphasis on continuity and how this was to make a difference. There was an in house team to draw advice from across teams and continue working with social workers to get timely decisions for children

In response to questions the Committee learned that:

- There is a positive reaction by social workers to the support that is given by the Court manager.
- The current transfer of cases from First Response through to Safeguarding and Support and finally to Children in Care did not impact on case progression as there was good cross team working. It was explained that delays begin once the care proceedings have started and this can be caused by solicitors for the parents requesting additional information or additional assessments being requested by the judge.
- It was clarified that Barnet and Enfield had the same Children's social care structures in place and were suited to working jointly with this project.
- The average duration of care proceedings in Haringey in comparison to the national average were markedly higher and the reason for this was due to two long running cases which were exceptionally long in their duration. With the changed basis in the law, judges will be starting to accept social workers accounts and evidence and this was also likely to increase the number of care proceedings being completed in a timely way and this will have a future impact on the figures.
- The single assessment process will help with identifying and understanding the assessments that need to be completed

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	<p>quickly and put forward as part of care proceedings and will mitigate against the delays occurring in starting care proceedings. It was commented that the delays in care proceedings further compounded the need to consider permanency options as soon as children meet the threshold for social care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When there were emergency care orders to be taken forward, there may not be the time to complete all the early work required and Committee Members were asked to take account of this in terms of preparation for the case, gathering evidence and being able to quickly summarise the important issues for consideration. There will always be a need to train social workers in the writing of reports and this is not associated with poor skill but making sure newly qualified social workers and experienced social workers joining the team are aware of the court report requirements. The Committee were asked to note that there had been complimentary feedback by a judge about the quality of the social work reports from Haringey. The Head of Children in Care felt feedback on reports was consistent enough to signal that there is good work being achieved by social workers in this field.</li> </ul> <p>The Joint Committee were pleased that this project was being taken forward. Corporate Parenting Members had, in previous years, raised concern about the length of court proceedings and there was a need to ensure that all agencies work together effectively to get through the court proceedings and ensure better outcomes for the child. Committee Members accepted the anecdotal evidence put forward about the quality of court reports but wanted further assurance. Therefore, it was agreed that the Court manager undertake some quality assurance activity in relation to the compilation of reports and report back findings to the next meeting of <b>Corporate Parenting on the 19<sup>th</sup> December</b>. It would also be useful to get a further update on the performance of care proceedings at the meeting in December to understand the progress being made.</p> <p>It was further agreed to have a further quarterly report back to the next joint meeting, on 06<sup>th</sup> March, to enable both Committees to understand the progress being made.</p>	<p>Court Manager</p> <p>Court Manager</p> <p>Court Manager</p>
<p><b>TEX54.</b></p>	<p><b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>NONE</p>	
<p><b>TEX55.</b></p>	<p><b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b></p>	
<p><b>TEX56.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed to locate guidance relating to criteria for conducting a Serious Case Review overview report and its location with the LSCB.</li> </ul>	<p>Interim Dir CS</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed there is further guidance provided to Committee Members about how the LSCB works its role in the borough and in relation to the council.</li> <li>• Agreed there is a legal clarification on whether elected Members can be notified of the commissioning of serious case reviews and have involvement of their consideration when complete.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Interim Dir CS</b></p> <p><b>Assistant Head of Legal</b></p>
<b>TEX57.</b>	<p><b>NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014</p>	

Cllr Ann Waters  
Chair

Signed.....  
19.12.2013