

Children and Families Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Date: Monday, 8th June, 2009
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach
CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve the minutes of the informal meeting held on 11 May 2009.

3. **Declaration of Interest/Party Whip**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests and for members to declare the existence of a party whip in relation to any item on the agenda.

4. **Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos.11 and 35 a total period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the Committee on any matter relevant to the work of the Committee.

For any apologies or requests for further information, or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

Contact: Denise French

Tel: 01270 529643

E-Mail: denise.french@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned where there are a number of speakers.

Note: In order for officers to undertake any background research it would be helpful if questions were submitted at least one working day before the meeting.

5. **Work Programme Up-date** (Pages 5 - 8)

6. **Forward Plan - Extracts** (Pages 9 - 14)

To note the current Forward Plan, identify any new items and to determine whether any further examination of new issues is appropriate

7. **Consultations from Cabinet**

To note any consultations referred to the Committee from Cabinet and to determine whether any further action is appropriate.

8. **Safeguarding Children** (Pages 15 - 44)

To up-date the Committee on matters raised in the Lord Laming Report on Child Protection, particularly in respect of how Safeguarding will operate across Cheshire East.

The report of the Services Manager, Children and Families, is attached for consideration. Members may also find it helpful to bring to the meeting their own copy of the Lord Laming Report.

NOTE: THERE ARE NO PART 2 ITEMS

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**Minutes of an informal meeting of the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee**

held on Monday, 11th May, 2009 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor R Westwood (Chairman)
Councillor D Neilson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rhoda Bailey, D Beckford, J Goddard, O Hunter, A Kolker,
G Merry, M Parsons, L Smetham and T Jackson

Apologies

Councillors D Flude, M Simon and D Thompson and C Blanchard.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/ PARTY WHIP

Councillor R Bailey declared a personal interest in the item relating to Transforming Learning Communities on the grounds that she had been involved in meetings relating to proposals for Church Lawton Primary School.

2 UPDATE ON TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

The Chairman updated Members on a Scrutiny Review proposed to be undertaken in relation to Transforming Learning Communities (TLC). Members were advised that the People Policy Panel that existed during the Council's Shadow year had agreed to set up a Task Group to look at TLC with a remit to consider the County Council's findings from its Scrutiny Review of TLC and also give consideration to school organisation in Cheshire East.

However, this Task Group had not been able to meet due to a lack of resources to support it. A consultant had since been engaged by the Head of Services for Children and Families who would be able to help support Members in undertaking a Scrutiny Review. A Scrutiny Task/Finish Panel had been established and Members had been given two briefings on the legal aspects of school organisation and the position in Cheshire East in relation to surplus places both at the present time and in the future. The Committee was now requested to formally agree the continuation of the Panel.

RESOLVED: That

(a) the proposed Scrutiny Review into Transforming Learning Communities to be undertaken by a Task/Finish Panel be agreed and the membership of the Panel be as follows:

- Councillor R Westwood (Chairman of the Panel);
- Councillor D Flude
- Councillor A Kolker;

- Councillor G Merry
- Councillor D Neilson;
- Councillor L Smetham
- Councillor D Thompson.

(b) the Terms of Reference and Scoping Report for the Scrutiny Review be agreed at a future meeting of the Panel.

3 REMIT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Members considered the remit of the Scrutiny Committee following consideration at the Scrutiny Training Day on 27 April.

RESOLVED: That the remit as set out in the report be approved.

4 DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme that had been drafted at the Scrutiny Training Day on 27 April. Members were advised that the Borough Treasurer and Head of Assets was to attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Chairmen's Group to discuss how Scrutiny could contribute to the budget process. Members also requested information on children's social care and safeguarding at an early opportunity.

It was noted that additional items may be added to the Work Programme following discussions between the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Portfolio Holders and senior officers at a meeting that was to be held shortly.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme as submitted be approved.

5 SCRUTINY UNCOVERED

The Committee watched a DVD on how Scrutiny operated at the Houses of Parliament and discussed the main points relating to the role of Scrutiny:

- Holding decision takers to account;
- Asking questions that the public wanted to know;
- Any recommendations must be evidence based;
- Mutual respect should exist between the Cabinet and Scrutiny.

RESOLVED: That the main points contained in the DVD "Scrutiny Uncovered" be noted.

6 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

The Committee was advised that the Governance and Constitution Committee had asked the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to come to a view on Public Speaking Time/Open Session at meetings. This Committee was invited to express a view prior to Corporate Scrutiny Committee giving a response on behalf of all Scrutiny Committees.

Members of the Committee felt that it was important that the public should have a mechanism of bringing to Members' attention issues of importance that was not within the formal setting of full Council. Members felt it was important for any

public speaking to be controlled but that members of the public should be able to raise any issue within the Committee's remit.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee be advised that this Committee

- supports public participation in meetings;
- thinks that the public should be able to raise items that relate to any area of work within the Committee's remit; and
- length of time for individual speakers should be at the Chairman's discretion within an overall time limit.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.00 pm

Councillor R Westwood (Chairman)

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 8 June 2009
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Title: Work Programme update

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To brief the Committee on the current position regarding the Work Programme.

2.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 2.1 None identified at the moment.

3.0 Legal Implications

- 3.1 None.

4.0 Risk Assessment

- 4.1 There are no identifiable risks.

5.0 Information

- 5.1 At the Scrutiny briefing session on 27 April, Members considered a list of potential items for the Work Programme and ordered them according to priority. That list is now attached.

- 5.2 A number of additional items have since been identified by Members:

- Children's Centres – usage, role and services;
- Costs of transport for young people;
- Provision of support to families.

- 5.3 A meeting is also planned between the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Portfolio Holder and relevant Senior Officers to discuss the remit of the Committee and further items for the Work Programme may be identified at this meeting.

6.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 6.1 It is good practice to have a Work Programme for the Committee to consider and prioritise on a regular basis.

For further information:

Officer: Denise French

Tel No: 01270 529643

Email: denise.french@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Background Documents: None

Children and Families Scrutiny Committee

Issue	Priority
Transforming Learning Communities	High
Education Attainment – South of the Borough	High
Migrant Workers	Medium
Budget	Medium
School Closures (Key Decisions)	Low
Redsands Children's Assessment Facility (Watching Brief)	Low
Children's Health Issues (Watching Brief)	Low
Briefing on Connexions	Low

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 8 June 2009
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Title: Forward Plan

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the current Forward Plan in relation to the remit of this Committee.

2.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 2.1 None.

3.0 Legal Implications

- 3.1 None.

4.0 Risk Assessment

- 4.1 There are no identifiable risks.

5.0 Information

- 5.1 Relevant extracts from the Forward Plan are attached for the Committee to note, consider any new items and determine whether any further examination of new issues is appropriate.

6.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 6.1 None.

For further information:

Officer: Denise French
Tel No: 01270 529643
Email: denise.french@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Background Documents: None

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Forward Plan 1 June 2009 to 30 September 2009 - Extract

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made
CE68 Church Lawton Primary School	Determination of the Public Statutory Notices for the closure of Church Lawton Primary School.	School Organisation Sub Committee	Before 16 Jun 2009	Statutory notices to be issued	John Weeks, Strategic Director People
CE09/10-02 Broken Cross Community School, Macclesfield - Increase in Age Range	To increase the age range of Broken Cross Community School from 4 – 11 years to 3 – 11 years with effect from September 2009 to allow the establishment of the Maintained Nursery Unit.	School Organisation Sub Committee	16 Jun 2009	Statutory Consultation process completed by Cheshire County Council (Children and Families). Consultees include School staff, relevant Trade Unions, parents, MP and local Council Members. Statutory Notice to be published w/c 20 April 2009, representation period ends 5 June 2009.	John Weeks, Strategic Director People

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made
CE09/10-07 Free Early Years Care for Children of 3 - 4 Years of Age	To determine the form of the single funding formula mechanism to be used to fund both maintained and non-maintained childcare providers to provide the free early years entitlement to 3 and 4 year old children in line with the Authorities statutory duties. The single funding formula must be implemented for all early years childcare providers from 1 April 2010 to comply with DCSF requirements.	Cabinet	8 Sep 2009	Maintained, private and voluntary childcare providers to be consulted on an ongoing basis through the Early Years Reference Group and Schools Forum.	John Weeks, Strategic Director People
CE09/10-13 Age Fourteen to Nineteen Education Transfer Arrangements	To consider the 16-19 Transfer Arrangements – Machinery of Government, and future 14-19 Partnership and Planning.	Cabinet	16 Jun 2009	With the Cheshire East Transition Leadership Team, Officers and Members.	John Weeks, Strategic Director People
CE09/10-14 Provision of Early Learning Education and Childcare for Disadvantaged Children of 2 Years of Age	To determine arrangements for the provision of free early learning education and childcare to the most disadvantaged 2 year olds in East Cheshire from 1 September 2009.	Cabinet	Before 31 Jul 2009	With maintained, private and voluntary childcare providers on an ongoing basis through the Early Years Reference Group and schools Forum.	John Weeks, Strategic Director People

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made
CE09/10-15 Provision of Extended Flexible Early Years Free Support for Disadvantaged Children of 3 - 4 Years of Age	To determine arrangements for the provision of an extended flexible early years free entitlement to support 25% of the most disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds in east Cheshire from 1 September 2009.	Cabinet	Before 30 Jun 2009	Maintained, private and voluntary childcare providers to be consulted on an ongoing basis through the Early Years Reference Group and Schools Forum.	John Weeks, Strategic Director People

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 8th June 2009

Report of: Ruth Jenkins, Services Manager Children and Families

Title: Safeguarding Children in Cheshire East

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the issues and actions being taken to ensure that there is a comprehensive response to the issues raised by Lord Lamings report into Child Protection in England, and services are developed that ensure best quality care and protection for vulnerable children in Cheshire East.
- 1.2 This report will highlight areas identified by the Annual Performance Assessment 2008 for Cheshire County Council, the establishment of Cheshire East LSCB, an external audit and review of front line services and other priorities in relation to safeguarding.

2.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 2.1 Developments of children's services will take place within the context of the overall budget setting process, reconfiguring services to maximise efficient use of resources. Gaps in resourcing of front line children's social care have been identified in the short term and further work within the context of overall developments will identify if this remains the case.

3.0 Legal Implications

- 3.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to safeguarding and promotes the welfare of children. Failure to do so could leave the council open to legal claims and censure.

4.0 Risk Assessment

- 4.1 Safeguarding and child protection is a high risk activity. Failure to provide an effective service can lead to children being harmed, the council and councillors being criticised and the loss of public confidence.

- 4.2 The measures outlined below seek to ensure that services are developed which safeguarding children and minimise the risk to children and families and to the council

5.0 Information

- 5.1 Nationally the level of scrutiny for safeguarding is significant and Lord Laming's recent report made a series of recommendations for improvement. The accountability of the Local Authority was specific and significant in these recommendations. A detailed action plan (Appendix 1) has been developed in respect of these recommendations along with areas to improve following the Annual Performance Assessment in 2008 for Cheshire, which highlighted the following areas of work:-

- Assessment Timescales
- Securing placement stability for Looked After Children
- Adoption
- Private fostering

- 5.2 The APA will be replaced by the CAA and there will be an annual inspection on Safeguarding, which will consider the contact, referral and assessment processes of Children's Social Care. It is also likely they will focus on the above 4 areas, along with scrutiny of all local safeguarding arrangements.

- 5.3 These annual inspections will focus initially on local authorities with inadequate and adequate grades for Safeguarding. There will be no notice given, with up to 12 Inspectors involved. A Framework for these inspections has recently been published and work is under way to ensure as much as possible that the service is ready to receive the inspectors at any time, from 1 June 2009. Government Office North West advised us that we are likely to be one of the first authorities.

5.4 Assessment Timescales

A key focus for improved performance over the last year has been assessment timescales. Assessment performance in terms of the rate of completion within timescale continues to be the subject of monthly monitoring through performance clinics, chaired by the Principal Manager for Assessment and Care. The performance of social work teams in Cheshire East, in both initial and core assessments has exceeded the target of 75% with initial assessments at 77.6% and core assessments at 77.2%. There are however, 2 teams in Crewe, that continue to evidence difficulty in their completion rates and these teams are subject to ongoing focus and support.

The number of children subject to a child protection plan in Cheshire East has risen considerably to 146. This increase is being monitored

closely by senior managers, both with regard to the impact upon team and staff caseloads and to ensure compliance with statutory duties.

Additionally, the LSCB has commissioned an external audit of all children under 5 with a child protection plan. This audit will be completed by end of May and will provide a useful tool, in assessing current quality of assessment and intervention, as well as identifying key actions required.

5.5 Securing Placement Stability for Looked After Children

The Looked After Children population has risen considerably over the last 2 years and is currently 368 children. The numbers continue to escalate in spite of stringent gatekeeping and reviews of all admissions. This obviously places great pressure on placement choice and stability.

The percentage of Looked After Children who are fostered by relatives and friends is significantly higher than average and this contributes to stability of placements, which in turn supports positive outcomes for children.

5.6 Residential Provision

Cheshire East currently still provides residential care in community based children's homes. Concerns about the quality of care have emerged recently following 2 OFSTED Inspections of 2 of these homes. As well as individual action plans, there is also a plan to review and modernise residential provision, along with a plan to implement "safer recruitment policy" for all residential care staff. The planned closure of one of these children's homes was brought forward the establishment closed.

5.7 Adoption

The adoption rates remain low, however, the number of children subject to placement orders has increased considerably and the number of children placed for adoption but not yet adopted has also increased by 20%. This should result in higher rates of adoption in the next financial year.

5.8 Private Fostering

There are currently 6 private fostering arrangements in Cheshire East. Private fostering procedures are being reviewed and updated and a private fostering champion has been identified.

5.9 Review of Services in Context of the Laming Report

A key aspect of Lord Laming Report is on ensuring that children in need have early access to effective specialists service and support and

that more needs to be done regarding safeguarding and child protection across all front line services.

An experienced social work practitioner has been commissioned by both East and West Councils to undertake a review of front line services to ensure there is sufficient capacity and that referral and assessments are timely and appropriate. The report is near completion.

Some key features to highlight in the social work teams are as follows:-

- 5.10 Staffing – there is a very stable and overall committed staff group. There is a relatively low turnover in staff and there have been exceptionally few permanent vacancies and this is highly unusual in children's social care services and needs to be carefully nurtured and sustained.
- 5.11 Management – some teams are extremely large and there is a clear need to introduce the role of deputy/practice manager, to assist managers in their role and ensure tighter oversight of child protection cases and Looked After Children.
- 5.12 Caseloads – the number of cases managed by social workers is large and is currently being reviewed. Some caseloads have on average some 20 to 30/40 cases. Often, caseloads in other local authorities would be a mix of 12-15 case. A case being one individual child.
- 5.13 Generic teams – most front line teams have generic caseloads (e.g., a mix of duty, child protection, looked after children and children in need). Although this can provide variety for staff, it can be difficult for managers to oversee if there are competing priorities. This is currently being addressed by the proposed new structure for Integrated Services in Cheshire East.
- 5.14 Integrated Children's System (ICS) – this is a key area also identified in the Laming Report and is being reviewed nationally. There have been a range of difficulties in the implementation of ICS through PARIS and frustrations for staff. These continue to be addressed through the appropriate forums and channels.
- 5.15 Early Intervention

Another key area identified by Laming to develop and strengthen service is to ensure children and young people get support as soon as possible to prevent problems escalating and creating a risk of serious harm. The tool to assist this is Common Assessment Framework (CVF), which is in its early stages in Cheshire East.

All of the above are part of an overall improvement plan.

6.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 6.1 The actions that are to be taken this year are attached as an action plan at appendix A

For further information:

Officer: Jane Brooks

Tel No: 01260 375420

Email: Jane.brooks@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Background Documents:

The Protection of Children in England: A progress Report. Lord Laming March 2009

The Protection of Children in England: Action Plan. The Government's response to Lord Laming May 2009

Framework for Unannounced Inspections.

Documents are available for inspection at:

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ISSUE/ACTION/MON

Ref no.	ISSUES	Area of Responsibility	Lead Manager	Lead Officer	Action	Milestone Date	Progress Against Action	Risk/ RAG	Completion date
A	Effective Front Line support to Social workers and those receiving and dealing with children's referrals (key Haringey finding and Laming Recommendation 11,15,16,18,24,26,29,31)								
A1	Data and Information	DCS	Director Children's Services (JW)	Head of Children and Families (BH)	Contribute to National debate regarding ICS and its use and effectiveness and the Laming recommendation for a National system	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09
		ICT	Head of Children and Families (BH)	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (R.J)	Develop the functionality of the PARIS system to make it support the business needs of Children's services and ICS.	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09
		ICT	Head of Children and Families (BH)	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (R.J)	Amend ICS exemplars that are causing the most difficulty in line with other authorities, sanctioned by DCSF/GO	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09
A2	Professional development, training and staff retention	Workforce	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (R.J)	Senior Workforce Development Manager (AF)	Review and revise supervision policy to better reflect performance management and professional practice	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09
4		Workforce	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (R.J)	Senior Workforce Development Manager (AF)	Establish action learning sets for social workers across team boundaries to improve communication and shared learning	01/09/09	On Target		01/12/09
		Workforce	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (R.J)	Senior Workforce Development Manager (AF)	Revise training programme for "Adult Services" in relation to child protection and children's needs	01/09/09	On Target		01/12/09
		Assessment and Care Management	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (R.J)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Review and revise caseload weighting system .	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09
		Assessment and Care Management	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (R.J)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Put a training and development plan in place for each social worker in line with grade, linked to annual appraisal, task setting and supervision..	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09

Safeguarding Action Plan

Ref no.	ISSUES	Area of Responsibility	Lead Manager	Lead Officer	Action	Milestone Date	Progress Against Action	Risk/ RAG	Completion date
		Assessment and Care Management	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Implement a system and approach which ensures that Induction and protected caseloads for newly qualified social workers are in place	01/06/09	On Target		01/07/09
5		Safeguarding	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Safeguarding (JB)	Undertake Quarterly practice meetings to focus on learning from cases (identified through audit)	01/09/09	On Target		01/12/09
A3	Audit	Assessment and Care Management	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Undertake Audit of those cases where a child is under 5 and subject to a multi agency child protection plan.	01/06/09			Action Completed
		Assessment and Care Management	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Undertake Audit of "front door" duty and assessment teams and workloads and thresholds	01/05/09			Action Completed
A4	Delivery Structures		Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Transformation Manager (CH)	Structure Access services to ensure that sufficient trained childcare social workers are available.	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09
		Assessment and Care Management	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Review children's field social work structure, resourcing and resource allocation so that sufficient focus is maintained in each of the areas of looked after children ,child protection and children in need.	01/06/09	On Target		01/12/09
B	Leadership, Accountability and Performance Management (key Haringey finding and Laming recommendations 4,6,8,43,44,45,53)								
B1	Business processes	Children's Trust	Chair of Children's Trust (JW)	Children's Services Development Manager (RH)	Undertake a robust needs analysis to inform the development of the Children and young people's plan.	Jan-10	On Target		01/04/10
		Children's Trust	Chair of Children's Trust (JW)	Children's Services Development Manager (RH)	Establish a system for reviewing needs analysis				

Safeguarding Action Plan

Ref no.	ISSUES	Area of Responsibility	Lead Manager	Lead Officer	Action	Milestone Date	Progress Against Action	Risk/ RAG	Completion date
		Children's Trust	Chair of Children's Trust (JW)	Children's Services Development Manager (RH)	Pending further guidance from government , establish a written protocol outlining the relationships between the LSCB, the Children's Trust and the LSP	01/05/09	On Target		Action Completed
		LSCB	Head of Children and Families (BH)	Principal Manager Sa	Commission the development of an audit tool and process for scrutinising the point of referral for children in need and child protection cases...	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09
		LSCB	Head of Children and Families (BH)	Principal Manager Safeguarding (JB)	Within the context of the relationships between the Trust/LSCB/LSP , Establish an agreement as to the role of Lead Member within the LSCB (await further guidance from government)		On Target		01/12/09
		LSCB	Head of Children and Families (BH)	LSCB Business Manager (BJ)	Revise procedures and practice on Serious Case Reviews to include information on the skill, knowledge and independence required in the system and that an executive summary is published on the LSCB website	01/05/09	On Target		01/06/09
B2	Member and Senior officer training	Workforce	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Senior Workforce Development Manager (AF)	Deliver training sessions on safeguarding issues for (i) all councillors, (ii) councillors in children's committees and scrutiny and (iii) lead members in line with role.	01/09/09	On Target		01/09/10
		DCS	Chair of Children's Trust (JW)	Senior Workforce Development Manager (AF)	Ensure that there is sufficient knowledge and skill regarding safeguarding and child protection within the senior manager workforce through accessing training as appropriate through national initiative.		On Target		01/09/10
B3	Information and Performance Management	ICT	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Performance Improvement Manager (JF)	Develop an information reporting suite to deliver on government and local requirements. Ensure effective ICT system to support delivery.	01/09/09	On Target		01/04/10
		Assessment and Care Management	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Maintain monitoring performance clinics within the Assessment and Care Management service on a team basis	01/06/09			Action completed
		Looked After Children	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Establish a Corporate Parenting Board to ensure the delivery of the Children Pledge	01/05/09	On Target		01/09/09
		Safeguarding	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Safeguarding (JB)	Establish quarterly audits of files using a "diagonal slice" of staff to undertake audits (linked to quarterly review seminars focusing on lessons from audits)	01/09/09	On Target		01/12/09

Safeguarding Action Plan

Ref no.	ISSUES	Area of Responsibility	Lead Manager	Lead Officer	Action	Milestone Date	Progress Against Action	Risk/ RAG	Completion date
		Safeguarding	Head of Children and Families (BH)	Principal Manager Safeguarding (JB)	Develop and gain approval for a reporting framework (timing and content) to lead Member/Scrutiny/Children's committee	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09
		Safeguarding	Head of Children and Families (BH)	Principal Manager Safeguarding (JB)	Develop a system with the PCT (A&E) about how information is gained out of hours about children who are subject to a child protection plan.	01/09/09	On Target		01/12/09
C	Effective Partnership Working (key Haringey finding and Laming Recommendation 12,13,19,20,21,23, 25,29, 30)								
C1	Multi agency Training	LSCB	Head of Children and Families (BH)	LSCB Training Manager (MJ)	Multi agency training programme to be revised to ensure that adult issues such as drug and alcohol mis use, and mental health issues receive sufficient attention given to child development and the impact of such behaviours on normal child development	01/09/09	On Target		01/04/10
		LSCB	Head of Children and Families (BH)	LSCB Training Manager (MJ)	Organise a training event/workshop on the use and applicability of Strategy meetings for multiagency staff	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09
		LSCB	Head of Children and Families (BH)	LSCB Training Manager (MJ)	Obtain agreement for the LSCB conference for 2010 to be concerned with adult issues that impact on parenting.	01/06/09	On target		01/04/10
C2	Business relationships	LSCB	Head of Children and Families (BH)	LSCB Business Manager (BJ)	Revised the membership of the LSCB to insure the inclusion of schools, adult mental health and drug and alcohol services	01/05/09	On Target		01/06/09
		Children's Trust	Chair of Children's Trust (JW)	Principal Manager Safeguarding (JB)	Update information sharing protocol in line with government guidance and re issue it through the Children's Trust and the LSCB.	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09
		Children's Trust	Chair of Children's Trust (JW)	Manager Children's Socioal Care and Children's Centre (RJ)	Formalise arrangements so that named health and police personnel link with particular social work teams to ensure more effective joint working and information sharing and a positive understanding of role and responsibilities.	01/07/09	On Target		01/12/09

Safeguarding Action Plan

Ref no.	ISSUES	Area of Responsibility	Lead Manager	Lead Officer	Action	Milestone Date	Progress Against Action	Risk/ RAG	Completion date
		People	Director Children's Services (JW)	Head of Children and Families (BH)	Establish formal links at strategic and practitioner level between children and adult workers.	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09
D	Early intervention and Assessment (key Haringey finding, Laming recommendations 13,14,25, and APA area for improvement)								
D1	Referrals and Re referrals to children's social care.	Children's Trust	Chair of Children's Trust (JW)	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centre (RJ)	Ensure that the Children's Trust commissions and leads the development and coordination of tier 2/3 through the establishment of multi agency teams to (i) reduce demand for tier 3/4 services, (ii) increase the number of appropriate referrals which lead to initial assessments and (iii) increases the likelihood of effectively targeted services and reduces the likelihood of re referrals.	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09
D2	Common Assessment Framework	Children's Trust	Chair of Children's Trust (JW)	Principal Manager integrated services (JT)	Ensure that compliance with CAF is written into all commissioning arrangements and Service Level Agreements	01/09/09	On Target		
		Integrated Services	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager integrated services (JT)	Review that arrangements to deliver common assessment framework (CAF) training to ensure all appropriate staff within the children's workforce are trained to undertake CAF and then supported and monitored by their managers to put their training in to practice.	01/06/09	On Target		01/09/09
		Integrated Services	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager integrated services (JT)	Audit the current non statutory assessment procedures across Trust partners to ensure that they are either replaced or fully aligned with CAF so that CAF is embedded within all Trust partners procedures, working practices and are used consistently.	01/07/09	On Target		31/03/10
		Integrated Services	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager integrated services (JT)	Review arrangements to support the children's workforces to implement CAF through a CAF Implementation and support strategy to include e.g. CAF surgeries.	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09

Safeguarding Action Plan

Ref no.	ISSUES	Area of Responsibility	Lead Manager	Lead Officer	Action	Milestone Date	Progress Against Action	Risk/ RAG	Completion date
E	low rate of initial and core assessments and low rate of those completed within government required timescales (2007/8 APA area for improvement, links with performance management and support to front line services above))								
		Assessment and Care Management	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Ensure the continuation of monthly performance clinics which have contributed to recent improvement in performance	01/06/09	On Target		
		Assessment and Care Management	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Revise supervision policy to include a more explicit focus on performance, and that compliance with timescales is monitored through supervision.	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09
		Workforce	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Senior Workforce Development Manager (AF)	Develop a costed proposal for the creation of the role of Deputy Team Manager to increase capacity for monitoring compliance and sign off of work.	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09
F	Private Fostering Arrangements (2007/8 APA area for improvement)								
		Private Fostering	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Revise current procedures to ensure that they reflect current best practise and government requirements, including promotion of service.	01/05/09	On Target		01/09/09
		Private Fostering	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Assessment and Care Management (SL)	Identify two social workers to be responsible for the Children's assessments in private fostering arrangements within the authority	01/06/09	On Target		01/07/09
		Safeguarding	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager Safeguarding (JB)	Bring the review of the child's plan in private fostering into the remit of the independent reviewing service within Safeguarding, to bring increased scrutiny to the arrangements and compliance with procedures.	01/05/09	On Target		01/09/09

Safeguarding Action Plan

Ref no.	ISSUES	Area of Responsibility	Lead Manager	Lead Officer	Action	Milestone Date	Progress Against Action	Risk/ RAG	Completion date
G	Low Adoption rates (2007/8 APA area for improvement)								
		Adoption	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Finalise procedure on payments and processes for Special guardianship and ensure that it is issued through E Mail and direct delivery at Team meetings	01/05/09			Action completed
		Adoption	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Review permanency policy to better reflect government guidance and changing practice. Ensure a robust application of the permanency policy considering adoption and special guardianship as first choices when rehabilitation home is not an option	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09
H	Residential Children's Care Service (Redsands and Priors Hill judged inadequate in recent Ofsted inspection)								
		Residential Care	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Review current residential strategy to ensure it takes account of changing and predicted demand, and the need to deliver integrated care within provision which is safe and fit for purpose.	01/09/09	On Target		01/12/09
		Residential Care	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Review safe recruitment and employment practice in the residential network to bring it into line with LSCB standards.	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09
		Residential Care, Redsands and Priors Hill	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Review and amend complaints processes including recording and monitoring	01/06/09	On Target		01/07/09
H1	Processes and Recording	Residential Care, Redsands	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Review Anti bullying policy in line with standards in Anti Bullying Strategy, and new government guidance on anti bullying in Children's homes.	01/06/09	On Target		01/07/09
		Residential Care, Redsands	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	All children's placement plans to be updated covering all aspects of National Minimum standard 2.1	01/05/09	On Target		01/07/09
		Residential Care, Priors Hill	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Individual to be appointed as the registered manager	01/05/09	on Target		01/07/09

Safeguarding Action Plan

Ref no.	ISSUES	Area of Responsibility	Lead Manager	Lead Officer	Action	Milestone Date	Progress Against Action	Risk/ RAG	Completion date
H2	Staff Training	Residential Care	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Review and update staff training and development plans to ensure that all essential training is identified and delivered within agreed timescales. Including Training on the administration of medication and restraint	01/05/09	On Target		01/07/09
		Residential Care, Priors Hill	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Measures and Training in place to ensure Staff follow legislation and government guidance in relation to restricting childrens' liberty.	01/05/09	On Target		01/09/09
H3	Risk Management	Residential Care, Redsands	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	All children to have new individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans. Staffs adherence to plans to be rigorously monitored by registered manager.	01/05/09	On Target		01/08/09
H4	Repair of Buildings	Residential Care, Priors Hill	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Redecoraion and refurbishment of current presmises whilst awaiting outcome of Residential review	01/07/09	On Target		01/09/09
H5	Health and Safety	Residential Care, Priors Hill	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Health and Safety Assessment on each child's file	01/04/09			Action completed
		Residential Care, Priors Hill	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Fire Safety procedures reviewed to ensure compliance with legal and procedural requirements	01/04/09			Action completed
		Residential Care, Priors Hill	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Safety Certificates to be localted in accessible central file	01/04/09			Action completed
		Residential Care, Priors Hill	Manager Children's Social Care and Children's Centres (RJ)	Principal Manager, Fostering and Adoption (PM)	Staff files to contain Regualtion 24 information	01/04/09			Action completed

Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment

Framework for inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection and guidance for local authorities and partners

The new inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection take effect from 1 April 2009.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects registered childcare and children's social care, including adoption and fostering agencies, residential schools, family centres and homes for children. It also inspects all state-maintained schools, non-association independent schools, pupil referral units, further education, initial teacher education, and publicly funded adult skills and employment-based training, the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), and the overall level of services for children in local authority areas.

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

1. This paper sets out the framework and guidance for the new unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children and young people in need and children and young people who may be in need of protection.
2. The unannounced inspections are not a full inspection of safeguarding. They are an inspection of front-line practice in relation to contact, referral and assessment processes for children in need and children who may be in need of protection and an assessment of how well practice helps to manage risk of harm to children and young people and minimise the incidence of child abuse and neglect.
3. These short inspections will focus on the local authority as the lead agency for child protection. However, the contribution of partners to achieving good or better outcomes for children through effective multi-agency working will be evaluated also as an integral part of the inspections.
4. The inspections will commence from April 2009 and will be carried out by two suitably experienced Her Majesty's Inspectors from Ofsted.
5. The inspections will be carried out under Section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. They will contribute to Ofsted's annual review of the performance of each local authority's children's services functions and will be taken into account in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's statutory annual performance rating of the authority and in the wider Comprehensive Area Assessment.¹ They do not preclude other inspections of safeguarding and services for looked after children arising out of joint inspectorate Comprehensive Area Assessments, as set out in the Comprehensive Area Assessments joint inspection framework.
6. Effective contact, referral and assessment arrangements are important in ensuring that the needs of children, young people and their parents and carers are accurately identified and that services are appropriately provided so that good or better safeguarding outcomes are achieved and sustained.
7. Ofsted recognises that the quality of assessments, and the services that are commissioned as a result of good or better assessments, are key in helping to protect children. Inspectors will use the scrutiny of case files with staff to assess the quality of assessment practice and the impact of multi-agency prevention and support for safeguarding those children and young people who are or may be in need.

¹ For further information, see: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=63FF7DFA-D1DB-46D0-B72E-39DA12AEF9E1>.

8. Pilot inspections in March 2009 helped to shape the final framework and guidance for these inspections. The framework and guidance have also been reviewed in light of the recently published report on the protection of children in England.²
9. This framework and guidance should be read alongside the accompanying framework and guidance for the joint inspection of safeguarding and looked after children.³ The findings of unannounced inspections will help determine the timing of the wider inspections of safeguarding and looked after children.
10. This framework and guidance are subject to periodic review.

Ofsted inspects

11. Ofsted has published an overarching framework for inspection, which informs all of Ofsted's inspection and regulatory activity, including the new inspections of safeguarding and looked after children.⁴
12. This overarching framework guides the general scope and methods of inspection, but it does not determine the targeted inspection activity necessary for the unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements that is set out in this framework and guidance.

Frequency of inspection

13. All local authority areas will have an unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in any one 12-month period. The scheduling of these inspections will draw on evidence from other inspection and regulatory work such as evaluations of the quality of serious case reviews and evidence from annual questionnaires of users and stakeholders and the new Ofsted whistleblower hotline. Where the inspection has raised serious concerns, the lead inspector may recommend that a follow-up inspection is carried out, including a full safeguarding inspection either undertaken separately or combined with an inspection of services for looked after children.

Notice period

14. No period of notice will be given for the annual unannounced inspection of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children and young people in need and children and young people who may be in need of protection. In

² *The protection of children in England: a progress report*, The Lord Laming, March 2009.

³ *Inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services: framework for inspection and guidance for local authorities and partners*, Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090027.

⁴ *Ofsted inspects: a framework for all Ofsted inspection and regulation* (080121), Ofsted, 2009; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Ofsted-inspects>.

these inspections, the council will be notified immediately before the inspection (on the same day) that inspectors will carry out the inspection at one or more of their offices. Ofsted will maintain a list of the number and location of office addresses where arrangements for dealing with contacts, referrals and assessments are undertaken in order to plan inspections. Ofsted will write to local authorities setting out the arrangements for this.

15. Inspections will not normally be deferred because of staff absence or staff shortages in the local authority.

Inspection team

16. Two suitably experienced Her Majesty's Inspectors from Ofsted will carry out the annual unannounced inspection and they will normally be on site for up to two days.

Scope of inspection

17. These inspections will look at practice in relation to contact, assessment and referral processes for children in need and children who may be in need of protection and consider how well practice supports the effective management of risk and minimises the incidence of child abuse and neglect.
18. Inspectors will focus their activity on analysing and discussing case files so as to assess the quality of practice and actions taken to ensure good or better outcomes for children and their families. Inspectors will consider any evidence as to how well initial assessment informs case planning.
19. Although the main focus of the inspection will be on the local authority services, any findings about partners' contributions and the quality of multi-agency prevention and support for safeguarding children and young people, including the impact of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust Board, will be reported on also.
20. Inspections will usually include an evaluation of:
 - the quality and timeliness of referrals and assessments, including:
 - the extent and quality of partner agency involvement
 - the involvement of children and their families
 - how this impacts on the services offered to children and their families
 - the quality of management oversight and decision-making, including:
 - senior management audit of how well workers manage risk of harm through effective referral and assessment
 - case allocation and caseload management
 - the quality of direct supervision and support

- the quality of case-file recording and arrangements for informing and involving senior managers in decision-making
 - the application of thresholds, their clarity and consistency and how these impact on outcomes for children
 - the impact of strategy discussions and enquiries in protecting children and young people
 - the effectiveness of communication, liaison and joint working between agencies
 - the effectiveness of out-of-hours provision, including accident and emergency health services, in managing risk of harm through effective information sharing, referral and assessment
 - the effectiveness of the service in meeting the needs of children from particular groups
 - how well services act on users' views
 - the role and responsibilities of support staff, level of training and support received and how this impacts on the quality of service delivery
 - the effectiveness of social workers and unqualified staff, including family support and social work assistants, in identifying, assessing and managing risk of harm for children and their families.
21. Guidance on identified features of effective practice in relation to contact, assessment and referral arrangements is set out at the end of this document.

Documentation before inspection

22. No documents need to be provided in advance for the annual unannounced inspection of contact, assessment and referral arrangements.
23. Inspectors will have access to information already held by Ofsted before the inspection such as:
- the new Ofsted performance profile, which will include findings from other relevant Ofsted inspections and regulatory activity
 - relevant performance indicators from the National Indicator Set
 - a summary of judgements made in serious case review evaluations
 - Ofsted's fostering and adoption datasets

- views of users, staff and third sector organisations gathered through three new sets of questionnaires,⁵ and evidence from a new Ofsted whistleblower hotline
- a summary of substantiated complaints about the council and its partners made to Ofsted that relate to safeguarding and looked after children
- the local area agreement and other related published documentation.

Documentation during inspection

24. During the inspection, inspectors will require access to the performance information that managers routinely use to inform themselves of the activity and effectiveness of the work of the teams, including any available self-evaluation. Inspectors will need to know the number of referrals awaiting action and/or the number of individual cases awaiting transfer to other teams.
25. Inspectors will focus on a random sample of case files for examination and for their discussions with available social workers and other key staff.

Views of users, staff and stakeholders

26. In this context, users are the children, young people and their families or carers who are supported or who make use of these important services.
27. Inspectors will take into account any available evidence that demonstrates how the views of children, young people and families or carers have been taken into account to secure improved services and outcomes.
28. Inspectors will speak to staff to gather evidence about the overall quality of services and the support they receive, including that provided by managers.
29. Where it is possible, inspectors will always seek to speak to children, young people and their families or carers.
30. Inspectors will also take account of Ofsted annual surveys of the views of looked after children and care leavers⁶, a new annual survey of the views of social workers and other safeguarding professionals and a new annual survey of the third sector.

⁵ These new questionnaires are to be used in these inspections from September 2009. See paragraph 31 also.

⁶ Ofsted is considering extending these surveys to include children who have a child in need or child protection plan.

Random sampling of cases

31. Inspectors will examine a sample of case files, wherever possible with social workers or other key workers who are available at the time of the inspection. The samples will be selected at random from both current cases and cases that have been closed in the previous six months.
32. Cases will be sampled from among the following:

Common Assessment Framework	That proceeded/did not proceed to referral
Contacts	That proceeded/did not proceed to referral
Referrals	That proceeded/did not proceed to initial assessment
Re-referrals	That proceeded/did not proceed to initial assessment
Initial assessments	That proceeded/did not proceed to further service or to core assessment
Core assessments	That proceeded/did not proceed to further service
Section 47 enquiries	That proceeded/did not proceed to an initial child protection conference

Meetings

33. Inspectors will meet with the manager on arrival at the contact, referral and assessment site and make arrangements to meet with individual workers to read their case files and discuss their caseload. On arrival, inspectors will explain that the inspection will be carried out in a way that will seek to minimise disruption to the service.
34. Inspectors will usually discuss with the relevant manager:
 - outcomes achieved for children and young people
 - information about the team composition, including staffing establishment, the number of qualified social workers and their relevant experience, the number of vacancies for permanent staff, the number of locum/agency staff and sickness levels and individual caseloads of staff
 - analysis of Common Assessment Framework activity over the last 12 months
 - analysis of the numbers of referrals

- analysis of referrals by referrer, the number of initial assessments, core assessments, Section 47 enquiries,⁷ and number of open cases
 - number of referrals awaiting action and/or allocation to a social worker, and number of cases waiting for transfer
 - arrangements for transfer of cases between different teams
 - arrangements for the quality assurance and monitoring of contact, referral and assessment procedures
 - self-evaluation of the effectiveness of contact, referral and assessment arrangements
 - the latest audits and action plans relating to contact, referral and assessment arrangements
 - any available evaluation of users' views of the service.
35. Inspectors will not expect the manager to produce additional information specifically for the inspection. Inspectors will use the information that managers use routinely to inform themselves of the activity and effectiveness of the work of the team.
36. Should any unresolved issues of significant risk of harm to a child be identified during the inspection, inspectors will immediately inform the relevant senior manager and confirm this in writing at the earliest opportunity.

Communication and feedback

37. Inspectors will ensure managers have opportunities to provide any relevant information that informs judgements, especially where there are emerging concerns. Oral feedback about draft findings, including an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in practice, will normally be given to the Director of Children's Services and/or the Head of Service before the inspectors leave at the end of the inspection. Where available, the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board will attend. In their absence, feedback will be provided to the most senior manager who is available.

Reporting inspection findings

38. Following the site visit, inspectors will report on findings by letter, indicating the strengths of the service and any areas for development in observed practice. The letter will always identify any serious concerns identified during the inspection. These inspections will not receive a grade using the Ofsted four-point scale.

⁷ Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

39. However, the letter will make clear where the inspection raises concerns. In such instances, the lead inspector may recommend that a follow-up inspection is carried out, including a full inspection of safeguarding.
40. The draft letter will be sent to the Director of Children's Services within five working days of the end of the inspection for a factual accuracy check.
41. The Director of Children's Services or representatives must return the draft letter with any comments on factual accuracy within five days (within 10 working days of the end of the inspection).
42. Following this, the final letter setting out the inspection findings will be sent to the Director of Children's Services within five days (within 15 working days of the end of the inspection) copied to the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the chief executive of the local authority.
43. The final letter will be published on the Ofsted website within 20 days of the end of the inspection.

Confidentiality

44. Ofsted will take all appropriate steps to ensure that information provided to inspectors remains confidential, as required by statute. However, evidence gathered during inspections may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, although individuals will not be identified by name.

Quality assurance

45. Quality assurance is the action taken to provide confidence that an inspection is of the quality needed and expected by users and providers and, indeed, Ofsted itself. As part of this, Ofsted will ensure inspections are conducted by inspectors who are suitably experienced in the areas they are inspecting.
46. During inspection, the lead inspector has responsibility for testing and evaluating the quality of the evidence-gathering process and the way in which judgements are formed.
47. To ensure national consistency, some inspections will be visited by an inspector from Ofsted. During these visits, this inspector will speak to the lead and team inspector, managers and other staff, and if possible users and other stakeholders. They will also attend any inspection team meetings taking place during their visit. This inspector will always seek views from the council and/or partners on the conduct of the inspection and sample the way evidence is being gathered and used.
48. Ofsted will also ask the council to complete a short evaluation form following each inspection, which will be used to improve the quality of inspections.

49. All inspection reports will be subject to Ofsted's internal quality assurance procedures.

Conduct during the inspection⁸

50. Inspectors must uphold the highest professional standards in their work, and ensure that everyone they encounter during inspections is treated fairly and with respect. The code of conduct set out in *Ofsted inspects* requires inspectors to:
- evaluate objectively, be impartial and inspect without fear or favour
 - evaluate provision in line with frameworks, national standards or requirements
 - base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence
 - have no connection with the provider which could undermine their objectivity
 - report honestly and clearly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
 - carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
 - endeavour to minimise the stress on those involved in the inspection
 - act in the best interests and promote the well-being of service users
 - maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly
 - respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
 - respond appropriately to reasonable requests
 - take prompt and appropriate action on any safeguarding or health and safety issues.

Expectations of providers

51. In order that inspection and regulation are productive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and providers establish and maintain a professional working environment based on courtesy and professional behaviour. Inspectors are expected to uphold the code of conduct but Ofsted also expects providers to:
- be courteous and professional

⁸ See *Ofsted inspects*, 2009.

- apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors
- enable inspectors to conduct their visit in an open and honest way
- enable inspectors to evaluate the provision objectively against the standards/framework
- provide evidence that will enable the inspector to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their provision
- work with inspectors to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
- ensure the health and safety of inspectors while on their premises
- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the inspector or the inspection team
- draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of inspectors promptly and in a suitable manner
- respect that inspectors will need to observe practice and talk to staff and users without the presence of a manager or registered person.

Complaints

52. We anticipate that the great majority of our work will be carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise during an inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector immediately so that they can be resolved while the inspection is taking place. A complaint about any aspect of the inspection can be made at any stage during or after the inspection and up to 30 calendar days from the date of publication of any report or letter. Lodging a complaint will not normally delay publication of the letter.
53. All complaints will be initially assessed by a designated Ofsted representative and contact will be made with the complainant in order to seek resolution at the earliest stage. Where this is not possible, complaints will be investigated in accordance with Ofsted's complaints procedure. The complaints procedure, which sets out how providers or users can complain about their inspection and what will happen to their complaint, is available at: www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070080.
54. Complaints should be made in writing (including by email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) to:

David Williams
Ofsted National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Further information

55. We hope that you find this document useful in helping you understand the nature of this inspection.
56. If you have any queries about the unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children in need or who may be in need of protection, please contact Sue Leaver on 020 7421 6666 or sue.leaver@ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Guidance on effective practice (unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children and young people in need and children and young people)

- Practice and procedures manage risk of harm and ensure best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- Practice and procedures comply with statutory requirements and associated guidance. They are implemented efficiently and effectively and ensure that referrals are responded to promptly.
- Decisions are made in accordance with statutory timescales. Children suffering or at significant risk of harm are identified and receive a prompt and appropriate response.
- Agreed inter-agency thresholds (or arrangements for access to services), and responsibilities for safeguarding children are applied and regularly reviewed.
- Assessments are clear and analytical. Risk and protective factors that impact on children's safety and welfare are identified. Conclusions flow logically from analysis and include judgements about standards of care, allowing assessments to be translated into effective plans.
- Section 47 enquiries are thorough and timely and always carried out by a qualified and suitable experienced social worker. Findings in relation to significant harm are clear. Action needed to ensure children's safety is identified and implemented promptly.
- Record keeping is up to date and demonstrates effective management of risk of harm, sound decision-making and effective planning.
- There is evidence of focused multi-agency and partnership working, led by the Children's Trust Board and Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- Communication and liaison with relevant agencies is established and effective.
- There is evidence that the Local Safeguarding Children Board has a robust approach to quality assurance and audit.
- Monitoring and evaluation are helping to ensure that practice across all partner agencies is improving or sustained at a high level and meeting the needs of particular groups of vulnerable children.
- Senior managers take appropriate measures to assure themselves that referral and assessment processes in their area are effective at identifying, assessing and managing risk of harm.
- There is evidence that senior managers effectively challenge casework and decision-making.

- The experiences and views of children and parents are gathered and used to influence service delivery and development.
- Children and family members are involved in assessment or planning to meet the child's needs, and the views and feelings of children and the views of family members are taken into account.
- Critically reflective supervision, management audit and oversight are provided to all staff, and are resulting in improving practice. Suitable training for staff is available and is improving practice.
- The service is resourced sufficiently to meet identified needs.
- Performance indicators reflect good and sustained and/or improving practice.