

### **ACTION PLAN – Unannounced inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment Arrangements.**

On the 20/21 July 2010 OFSTED conducted an inspection of the Contact, referral and assessment arrangements within Cheshire East Children Services. The inspection identified areas of satisfactory practice, with some areas for development. It should be noted that the areas for development that have been identified will be specifically considered in future inspection of services to safeguard children with our area.


The inspectors identified seven (7) areas for development which have been addressed accordingly in the plan outlined below:

Area for Development	Action	Timescale	Risk/other Factors	Person Responsible	Notes/Outcomes
(1) Timeliness in completing initial and core assessments varies, and in some cases results in delays in meeting children's needs	Interim Changes within Access service involving splitting into two service areas 1) contact and referral 2) duty and initial assessment team (DIAT). This to ensure that all referrals coming into access are assessed in a timely way on the safety, need and wellbeing of child/YP.	12 August 2010 ongoing until further notice	Changes are interim whilst a review undertaken by Elaine Peace is completed.  Review is looking at threshold model, interagency working and understanding and viability of a permanent duty and initial assessment service which will undertake all IA and S47 work up within an eight week period.  Changes are in line with the redesign of services.	Integrated Delivery Team comprising of: Cath Knowles Dave Richards Shirley Jordan Julie Lewis  Elaine Peace - consultant	<b><u>25/11/10 update</u></b> Immediate action undertaken following the inspection has continued. Review of Elaine Peace has been completed and the recommendations approved and agreed at SMT. Changes are in line with restructure and will include a new Children's Assessment Team that will absorb and develop the former Access service. The Children's Assessment team will undertake all short term work within a timeframe of 8 to 12 weeks maximum. The change within the service enables key

					<p>resources to target our most vulnerable/potentially at risk children and young people in a timely and effective manner.</p> <p>New service to be introduced and will commence mid December 2010.</p>
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<p>(2)</p> <p>The management oversight of core assessments is inconsistent and so does not always ensure their timeliness, or that risks to children are sufficiently monitored when there are delays</p>	<p>Routine audits of Core Assessments to be undertaken.</p> <p>Weekly reporting card per team required to identify Initial and Core Assessments progress.</p>	<p>With immediate effect.</p> <p>Linked to ICS/ICT programme – ongoing.</p>	<p>Group Manager's continue to manage day to day work which remains high in volume. Need to move to unit structure and practice consultants this should reduce inconsistency.</p> <p>Change request likely to be delay to ICT services to enable such information to be available.</p>	<p>Shirley Jordan - PM Julie Lewis – PM</p> <p>Mark Bayley/Bev Harding</p>	<p>25/11/2010</p> <p>Alongside the new Children's assessment service being introduced mid December, the new structure in terms of long-term teams of Child Protection and Child in Need (CP/CIN) and Cared for Children/Care Planning will also become effective. Structure changes significantly moving from more traditional social care to small social care units that are headed by an experienced Practice Consultant, managing</p>
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					<p>no more than 4 staff members. Such a structure will enable assessments to be monitored by the Group Managers responsible for units to implement an audit programme.</p> <p>Group Managers are currently undertaking case file audits that include core assessments as part of supervision sessions, this allows for continuing reflective practice and professional challenge.</p> <p>Alongside this, an independent audit programme undertaken by the Safeguarding Unit has now begun with the first audit completed in October 2010. Such Audits will be undertaken on a quarterly basis. It is envisaged that any recommendations will be put into an action plan.</p>
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					Weekly reporting card has been initially developed , however needs further work, this will be provided to Group Managers, who will be expected to provide an exception report where there are identified concerns relating to core assessments being achieved within a timely manner.
<p>(3)</p> <p>The quality of core assessments is not consistent. Although some are satisfactory, others are too brief and lack analysis of risk or protective factors. Inadequate assessments are being seen and signed off without challenge by first line managers, which is unsatisfactory.</p>	<p>Back to Basics training to be undertaken by all managers/ practice consultants and social workers as per workforce development proposal of February 2010.</p>  <p>CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL workforce c</p> <p>Development of standards in practice which is linked to evidence based practice particularly</p>	<p>With immediate effect, this training is mandatory and needs to be implemented asap.</p> <p>Within next 3 months</p>	<p>Timetable needs to be agreed for roll out of workforce development programme and linked to CPD of staff.</p> <p>Standards will enable a more effective quality assurance and should be linked to CPD of social work profession.</p>	<p>Annas Feeney</p> <p>Annas Feeny/Shirley Jordan/Julie Lewis/Sue Atkinson</p>	<p>25/11/10</p> <p>Training programme has begun; staff have been nominated, with new courses scheduled in Dec/Jan and April 11.</p> <p>Future dates within 2011 have been identified as part of a rolling programme.</p> <p>Work has begun in developing action learning sets that will enable practitioners to develop their skills further around</p>

	<p>around risk, decision making and care planning.</p> <p>Quality assess via auditing programme via safeguarding unit to measure quality of assessments ensuring they are linked to need and are child focused.</p>	With immediate effect		Safeguarding Unit	<p>assessment and risk analysis. Such work will be linked and build upon the back to basics training.</p> <p>Ongoing auditing by safeguarding unit will identify effectiveness of such training programmes and action learning sets.</p>
<p>(4)</p> <p>Although no children were found to be at risk, the quality of child protection enquiries is variable and some were inadequate. Inspectors found cases where not all of the factors which had led to the referral had been sufficiently addressed and potential risks to children had not been adequately assessed. The quality of recording of these enquiries also varied.</p>	<p>Implement proposed auditing programme as outlined in report of Paul Jackson Safeguarding Manager</p> <p>Also linked to action 1 changes within Access service</p> <p>Also linked with action 3 development of standards in practice and back to basics training.</p>	With immediate effect – need to ensure ongoing timetabling of dates throughout the year.		Safeguarding unit, Principal Managers Integrated Delivery, Group Managers, Annas Feeny workforce development.	<p>Auditing programme has begun with the first audits having now been undertaken, a report will be presented to SMT confirming initial findings</p> <p>Access service will be restructured into a Children's Assessment team, scheduled to formally move to new team in December 2010. New team will enable a more consistent and where needed challenge in respect of all referrals</p>

					that come into the team  Back to basic training has begun with scheduled programmes planned into 2011.
(5) The quality of child protection strategy meeting minutes is inconsistent. In some cases, inspectors saw brief and superficial records which lacked sufficiently detailed or clear plans about how the child protection enquiries would be carried out. Similarly, they lacked necessary information about how criminal investigations would proceed.	Linked to action 4, implement auditing programme.  Also linked to action 3, development of standards in practice and back to basics training.	With immediate effect.		Safeguarding unit, Principal Managers Integrated Delivery, Group Managers, Annas Feeny workforce development.	First programme of audits have been completed, SMT awaiting report regarding findings and any further actions that may be needed.
(6) The council's electronic system does not deliver sufficient management information or support managers at all levels in the effective management of performance. The impact of this is recognised by the council and funds have	Linked to ICT/ICS shared service redesign.	Ongoing	Issue of separating shared system from CWAC and then CE Adults, cost implications of whether this can be achieved.	Cath Knowles/Mark Bayley/Bev Harding/Peter Thorley	ICT/ICS Children and Families Board has been established to enable a strategic focus approach to electronic recording. Corporate ICT Strategy has been working closely with key children's personnel to address inefficiencies within the system. Due to the Munro review , a

been secured to purchase a new system.					<p>decision to defer changing system has been made, however upgrades with testing to 4.4 of Paris system is currently in progress, along with potential for implementation and upgrade to 5.1 of the Paris system which may address issues within the electronic recording.</p> <p>Alongside this, all staff have been provided with clear expectation of ensuring the case management system of Paris (ICS) is fully complied with, guidance on expectations for ensuring records are up to date has been provided.</p> <p>Funds secured for new system are being realigned to support changes and provide support in developing more effective data reporting and analysis of team performance that can/will be provided to all levels within the</p>
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					<p>service for information and action where needed.</p> <p>Eileen Munro's review due in April may result in significant changes to the ICS system hence the rationale for continuing to work with Paris and implementing the 4.4 upgrade and initial data reporting.</p>
<p>(7)</p> <p>Although policies to quality assure and audit social work practices have been developed recently, the inspection did not find evidence of effective implementation or impact. Consequently, strengths and areas for development are not systematically identified and analysed by managers, or reported to Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Board to drive improvement.</p>	<p>Implement proposed auditing programme as outlined in report from Paul Jackson, Safeguarding Manager.</p> <p>Ensure progress reporting to LSCB of all audits and this action plan.</p>	<p>With immediate effect.</p>		<p>Safeguarding Unit/ Tim Newton (LSCB)</p>	<p>Auditing programme has begun, this has been led by the safeguarding unit, report of findings is due to be presented to SMT. This updated action plan, together with outcome of audits will be shared with LSCB following presentation at SMT.</p>