

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	Initial Action	Timescale	Risk/other Factors	Person Responsible	Action Update/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	Last update 25/11/10 <u>This update 01/02/2011</u> The new Children's Assessment Team came into being on the 15/12/2010. it replaces Access and other duty systems. The core function of the service is to manage all incoming work to Children's services, through to and including Initial Assessments; section 47/core assessments (child protection); Initial CP Conferences; First Cared for Children review prior to transfer to longer term teams/or redirection back through to agency for CAF/other non statutory services.

					<p>The implementation of the new CAT service has been designed to ensure that assessments will be consistently completed in a timely way. Evidence that we are achieving this will be reflected in reports that have been developed which will reflect 7 and 10 day working framework for Initial assessments and 35 day working framework for Core Assessments.</p>
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<p>(2) 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>With immediate effect.</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>Shirley Jordan - PM Julie Lewis – PM</p>	<p>Last update 25/11/10 <u>This update 01/02/2011</u></p> <p>The new CAT service enables a timely and responsive action to any contacts/referrals coming into Social Care.</p> <p>Practice Consultants have now assumed their new role, which has allowed Group manager's to take up their strategic/QA role of which auditing has been a key development and is</p>
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	Weekly reporting card per team required to identify Initial and Core Assessments progress.	Linked to ICS/ICT programme – ongoing.	Change request likely to be delay to ICT services to enable such information to be available.	Mark Bayley/Bev Harding	<p>reflected in a team action plan.</p> <p>All Group Manager's have been provided with guidance which enables them to download and access weekly reporting cards as part of their management responsibility/overview of service delivery. Principal Manager's ensure through supervision and team meetings that such reports are being accessed and challenging where needed re delays in completing.</p> <p>Evidence that manager's are undertaking such audits will be through a regular report into the Integrated Delivery Team Meeting and the Senior Manager Team Meeting. In addition through supervision with Group Managers and Principal Managers</p>
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<p>(3) 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 around risk, decision making and care planning.</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>Last update 25/11/10</p> <p><u>This update 1/2/2011</u></p> <p>Training programme is ongoing and being delivered. In addition Action learning sets have been agreed and are due to commence within the next month with frontline teams.</p> <p>'Work has also begun to develop and/or commission bespoke support to establish a multi agency risk assessment tool, informed in part by learning from serious case reviews, to enhance the quality of assessment and analysis'. It is anticipated that this training programme will be delivered within the next three months</p> <p>In addition and within the same timeframe as above bespoke training is also being commissioned in relation to effective minute</p>
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	Quality assess via auditing programme by Safeguarding QA to measure quality of assessments ensuring they are linked to need and are child focused	With immediate effect		Safeguarding Unit	<p>taking. This will cover child protection conferences/Reviews and Strategy Meetings and will include IROs/Practice Consultants chairing meeting skills as well as Unit Coordinators/Administrators taking minutes. Further audits will assess impact.'</p> <p>This action has now been merged into Area development number 4 see below for further information</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</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</p>	With immediate effect – need to ensure ongoing timetabling of dates throughout the year.		Principal Manager Safeguarding unit, In conjunction with Principal Managers Integrated Delivery, Group Managers, Annas Feeny workforce development.	<p>Last update 25/11/10 <u>This update 1/2/2011</u></p> <p>Please find attached report following outcome of first audit undertaken by the safeguarding unit.</p>  <p>C:\Documents and Settings\ar513s\My C</p> <p>Further audits are currently</p>

children had not been adequately assessed. The quality of recording of these enquiries also varied.	standards in practice and back to basics training.				<p>being undertaken these include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audits of Social care Supervision files 2. Case File audits with a specific focus on Child in need cases. <p>Outcome of these audits will be reported at next quarterly update of this action plan</p> <p>In addition following the appointment of the new Principal manager of Safeguarding the QA programme is being further developed to ensure a more robust auditing process.</p>
(5) The quality of child protection strategy meeting minutes is inconsistent. In some cases, inspectors saw brief and superficial records which lacked	<p>Linked to action 4, implement auditing programme.</p> <p>Also linked to action 3, development of</p>	With immediate effect.		Safeguarding unit, Principal Managers Integrated Delivery, Group Managers, Annas Feeny workforce development.	<p>Last update 25/11/10</p> <p><u>This update 1/2/2011</u></p> <p>Please refer to area development no 4 for progress update</p>

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.	standards in practice and back to basics training.				
(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 been secured to purchase a new system.	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	<p>Last update 25/11/10 <u>This update 1/2/2011</u> The local Authority are taking the following steps to secure improvement in the management information drawn from the system:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The completion of a business objects reporting environment which draws on all the data relating to Child Protection cases – this complements the suite of data relating to Cared for children. There are a range of readily accessible reports that cover all children who have/are subject to a Child Protection plan 2. The development of reports relating to the number of initial and core assessments completed and the timescales for

					<p>completion by social worker and sign off by manager. These are to be monitored on a 7 and 10 working day timeframe.</p> <p>3. Implementation of a CIN census reporting module which will improve the delivery of the statutory returns</p> <p>4. Mapping of all existing business processes to ensure training reflects current practice and regular revision as appropriate</p> <p>5. Testing and implementation of PARIS 4.4 upgrade which provides some new functionality to ICS, rectifies some existing systems bugs and offers some cosmetic changes which will make the system easier to navigate</p> <p>6. Investigation into current referral practice and identification of changes and new reports to support better referral information base</p>
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					<p>Additionally further investment is being made to support staff in their use of PARIS and ability to navigate it effectively.</p> <p>It should also be noted that Eileen Munro's interim report again makes significant reference relating to ICS:</p> <p>"ICS she states remains a very poor tool for mapping a child's journey, research shows that the current documentation makes it difficult to 'see the child'</p> <p>Feedback to the review shows considerable enthusiasm for rediscovering family based recording, whilst preserving the child's unique record within the family. Some suppliers are working on this, but it is a challenge when they have designed the system to a rigid specification which precludes family records.</p> <p>There is a consensus that genograms and</p>
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					<p>chronologies are crucial, but as yet there has been limited success in providing these within the current packages.</p> <p>It is important to that even optimally – designed ICT cannot replace human effort in the crafting of meaningful chronologies. It can only search for incidents and present them in a list it cannot interpret these. This attention to human factors is essential in any subsequent systems. In the future , ICT design should make full use of mixed media”</p> <p>Professor Munro confirms in her executive summary:-</p> <p>“The review is considering how user centred design of assessment and decision making tools can provide better aids to professional reasoning. The review is working in particular with practitioners on how the design of Integrated Children’s System (ICS) software can be made</p>
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					<p>more user friendly and efficient”</p> <p>The decision for Cheshire East not to commission a new ICS system has been based on the view that Professor Munro in her final report will be making clear recommendations that sees a more supportive and meaningful process of case. This will help inform any future system Cheshire East will want to consider.</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</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>Last update 25/11/2010 <u>This update 1/2/2011</u></p> <p>This section has been merged under area development no 4 Please refer above for full update</p>

reported to Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Board to drive improvement.					
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Catherine Knowles

Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services

01/02/2011