

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	

(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	Routine audits of Core Assessments to be undertaken. Weekly reporting card per team required to identify Initial and core assessments progress.	With immediate effect Linked to ICS/ICT programme - ongoing	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. Change request likely to be delay to ICT services to enable such information to be available.	Shirley Jordan - PM Julie Lewis – PM Mark Bayley/ Bev Harding	
(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.	Back to Basics training to be undertaken by all managers/ practice consultants and social workers as per workforce development proposal of February 2010.  CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL workforce c Development of standards in practice	With immediate effect, this training is mandatory and needs to be implemented asap Within next 3 months	Timetable needs to be agreed for roll out of workforce development programme and linked to CPD of staff Standards will enable a more effective quality	Annas Feeney Annas Feeny/Shirley Jordan/Julie Lewis/Sue	

	which is linked to evidence based practice particularly around risk, decision making and care planning Quality assess via auditing programme via safeguarding unit to measure quality of assessments ensuring they are linked to need and are child focused	With immediate effect	assurance and should be linked to CPD of social work profession	Atkinson Safeguarding Unit	
(4) 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.	Implement proposed auditing programme as outlined in report of Paul Jackson Safeguarding Manager Also linked to action 1 changes within Access service Also linked with action 3 development of standards in practice and back to basics training	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.	
(5) The quality of child	Linked to action 4	With immediate effect		Safeguarding unit,	

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. Similar, they lacked necessary information about how criminal investigations would proceed.	implement auditing programme Also linked to action 3 development of standards in practice and back to basics training			Principal Managers Integrated Delivery, Group Managers, Annas Feeny workforce development.	
(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	
(7) Although policies to quality assure and audit social work practices	Implement proposed auditing programme as outlined in report from	With immediate effect		Safeguarding Unit/ Tim Newton (LSCB)	

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.	Paul Jackson safeguarding manager Ensure progress reporting to LSCB of all audits and this action plan				
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Catherine Knowles Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services (Interim)