

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – update for CYP Select Committee 18th September 2013

Recommendation No. 1 - for immediate improvement

Strengthen management oversight, in the referral and assessment team, including regular audit of cases, to ensure that the system for risk assessment is embedded and effective.

Outcome: what difference will these actions make?

- Children's needs will be identified and assessed in a more timely manner.

... and how will we know?

- The quality of social work intervention and management oversight will be monitored through monthly case file audits.

What we will do	By when	Lead	Update September 2013
1. Interim Manager to be put in place, pending fuller review of workloads and staffing levels across Referral & Assessment, Fieldwork and Family Support Teams.	February 2013.	SMcL	Completed.
2. Introduce a robust risk assessment.	February 2013.	SMcL	Completed.
3. Undertake a review of the Referral & Assessment Team (RAT).	Report to CMT in April 2013.	SMcL	Completed.
4. Implement the review of the RAT structure.	Timescale to be determined following CMT discussion.	SMcL	Implementation planned for Nov 2013.
5. Report to CMT and Cabinet on wider service pressures, including future implications of the Early Help Strategy, and associated staffing requirements.	June 2013.	SMcL	Completed.
6. DCS and HoS to undertake monthly audits of RAT cases (in addition to existing monthly audit programme).	To commence wef April 2013.	JH SMcL	Completed.
7. Peer Review of RAT to take place, as part of regional sector led improvement programme.	December 2013.	SMcL	Timescale likely now to be March 2014.

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Recommendation No. 2 - for immediate improvement			
Ensure that performance on the timely completion of initial and core assessments is subject to a robust review and action taken to drive improvements in performance.			
<p>Outcome: what difference will these actions make?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments will be completed to a higher standard and in a timely fashion. <p>... and how will we know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case file audits will evidence improved quality of assessments. Timeliness of assessments will improve in line with a target to be confirmed when arrangements for a single assessment process are confirmed, in line with new Working Together guidance. 			
What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Review current format for reporting of timeliness of assessments.	Completed.	SW	Completed
2. Introduce revised weekly, monthly and quarterly reporting.	Completed – first weekly report wef 11/03/13.	SW	Completed
3. Monitor and challenge performance through the CYP Social Care monthly Performance Clinic.	Revised Clinic in place wef March 2013.	JH	Completed
4. Independent internal scrutiny of the revised monitoring arrangements to be put in place via Resources Service Grouping on behalf of the Chief Executive.	To be in place wef May 2013.	LK	Scoping document produced - revised timescale September 2013.

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Recommendation No. 3 – for immediate improvement			
Ensure that children and young people are always seen as part of an assessment of their needs.			
<p>Outcome: what difference will these actions make?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of assessments will be improved because the needs of the child / young person have been taken into account. <p>... and how will we know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly case file audit monitoring reports to CYPMT will highlight any instances where a child / young person has not been seen as part of the assessment. The cases where this arises will be expected to be zero for any assessment commenced after 1st April 2013. 			
What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. All Managers to be briefed about the importance of seeing the child or young person when undertaking assessments.	Completed.	SMcL	Completed
2. Review Supervision guidance / checklist to ensure that this issue is covered.	May 2013.	KS	Completed
3. Ensure that this practice is monitored via the programme of monthly case file audits, and is reported to CYPMT on a quarterly basis.	In place already as part of existing case file audit tool and reporting process.	MG	Completed
4. Implement new item in national Children's Safeguarding Performance Information framework, regarding proportion of cases where the lead social worker has seen the child in accordance with the timescales specified in the CP plan.	To be confirmed - dependent on new national data collection arrangements via the CIN Census.	SW	To be incorporated within RAISE (Information System) as part of upgrade to v7 (expected end of 2013) – interim solution put in place to report wef October 2013.

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Recommendation No. 4 - for improvement within 3 months			
Review the screening of domestic abuse referrals to children’s social care to ensure that there is effective risk assessment to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals.			
Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be improved targeting of social care assessment and support for children at risk from domestic violence. 			
... and how will we know?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in domestic abuse referrals to Children’s Social Care which result in ‘no further action required’. 			
What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Review current risk assessment procedures with the Police, including screening arrangements.	End of April 2013.	SMcL	Completed.
2. Recommend revised approach to SLSCB.	July 2013	SMcL	Completed.

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Recommendation No. 5 - for improvement within 3 months			
<p>Ensure that:</p> <p>a. all assessments of children, including the common assessment framework (CAF), give effective consideration to a child or young person’s ethnicity, culture and religion, in order to inform planning and interventions; and</p> <p>b. children’s views inform assessments and planning.</p>			
<p>Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of assessments will be improved because the views of the child / young person have been taken into account. Planned interventions for children will be more effective as they will reflect any particular needs arising from their ethnicity, culture and religion. <p>... and how will we know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through quarterly case file audit monitoring reports to CYPMT. Feedback from CAF quality assurance reports. 			
What we will do (5a)	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Review current procedures for assessments, including CAF, to identify any revision required, or to reaffirm and relaunch relevant aspects.	End of April 2013.	RB	Revised timescale of January 2014, to meet new national Single Assessment guidance. Single assessment document drafted. Stockton Framework for Assessment being developed, which includes Child’s Views and Child Impact as distinct sub-domains.
2. Review training needs and current training available .	End of April 2013.	KS	Completed.
3. Use best practice in other services (e.g Schools; SACRE; Complex Needs Team) to inform learning and development in social care.	End of April 2013.	KS	Completed.

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What we will do (5b)	By when	Lead	
4. Review current procedures regarding the seeking of children's views, and update if required.	May 2013.	RB	Revised timescale of January 2014, to meet new national Single Assessment guidance. Single assessment document drafted. Stockton Framework for Assessment being developed, which includes Child's Views and Child Impact as distinct sub-domains. Consultation booklet developed for children who are going to be the subject of a Child Protection Conference.
5. Undertake a thematic case file audit 3 months following the review of procedures, to assess impact of revised approach.	September 2013 (end of Q2 reporting period).	All Case File Auditors	Timescale needs to be reviewed, once revised procedures (as above) are implemented.

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Recommendation No. 6 – for improvement within 3 months			
Ensure the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) effectively challenges the council and partner agencies and addresses issues identified about the performance of services.			
Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a culture of greater openness and challenge at Board & Executive Group meetings. 			
... and how will we know?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation of meetings, feedback from Board and Executive Group members, and minutes of meetings, will indicate greater levels of challenge and subsequent impact on practice. 			
What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Each agency represented on the Executive Group to identify the 'top 6' issues which impact on effective partnership working.	For SLSCB Development Day in June 2013.	CM	Completed.
2. Future Executive Group meetings to include consideration of the above issues as a standing agenda item.	August 2013 onwards.	PB	Completed.
3. Through the above process, single key themes to be identified for subsequent in-depth investigation and problem solving by the Board.	July 2013 onwards.	CM	Completed.
4. Management of Board and Executive Group agendas and meetings will ensure that opportunity is provided for full participation and robust challenge by all agencies.	May 2013 onwards.	CM	Completed.

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Recommendation No. 7 - for improvement within 3 months			
Improve the quality, timeliness and recording of supervision to ensure consistent standards of practice across all teams in accordance with the authority's policy.			
Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision will be more consistent, leading to improved practice standards. 			
... and how will we know?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from staff survey. Through results of the thematic audit in Q3 2013~14. 			
What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Review current supervision arrangements with the Children's Social Care Management Team.	March 2013.	SMcL	Completed.
2. Commission any training required to meet needs identified from the above review.	May 2013.	KS	Completed.
3. Service Managers to monitor supervision practice as a regular supervision item with Team Managers.	April 2013.	All Service Managers	Completed.
4. Consider if any changes to procedures/documents are required (including frequency of supervision)	April 2013	All Service Managers	Completed.
5. Undertake a thematic audit of this area of practice.	During Q3 (by end of December 2013).	All Case File Auditors	Arrangements for thematic audit to be determined.

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Recommendation No. 8 - for improvement within 6 months			
<p>a. Improve the quality of case recording; and b. Ensure that chronologies are present on all cases.</p>			
<p>Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of case recording, including chronologies, will improve. <p>... and how will we know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through quarterly case file audit monitoring reports to CYPMT. 			
What we will do (8a)	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Review current case recording arrangements with the Children's Social Care Management Team, taking account of 'What Good Looks Like'.	March 2013.	SMcL	Completed.
2. Identify any training and support needs and consider an 'amnesty' approach.	June 2013	SMcL	Completed.
3. Examine feasibility of any further streamlining of documents and case management system (RAISE).	July 2013.	RB	A 'Streamlining Group' has been developed to consider all RAISE documentation. A proposal has been developed for redesigned and streamlined child protection documentation. Other areas i.e. LAC will be considered within this group.
What we will do (8b)	By when	Lead	
4. Clear guidance on chronologies to be put in place for all staff.	Completed.	RB	Completed.
5. Ensure compliance with new guidance through existing case file audit process and quarterly monitoring reports to CYPMT.	Quarterly reports.	All Case File Auditors	Completed.

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Recommendation No. 9 – for improvement within 6 months

Ensure that the format for recording child protection plans is simplified so the key areas of risk are prioritised and parents and carers can understand what needs to happen to ensure that children are protected, and that outcomes and timescales are clearly set out within plans.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- CP plans will be more effectively targeted on needs.
- There will be more effective monitoring of interventions for children with a CP plan.
- There will be improved information about outcomes of CP plans.

... and how will we know?

- Feedback from Peer Review.
- Through results of case file audits.

What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Review CP Plan formats from other LAs and identify best practice, in conjunction with IROs and Social Care Managers.	May 2013.	MG	Completed.
2. Draft of a revised CP Plan format to be submitted to CYPMT.	June 2013.	MG	Completed.
3. Consult with a sample of parents / carers.	July 2013	MG	Completed.
4. Agree final version of revised format, along with any required guidance or training for implementation.	August 2013.	MG.	Revised CP plan format agreed with CYPMT; to be submitted to SLSCB in September 2013.

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Recommendation No. 10 - for improvement within 6 months			
Improve children and young people's access to advocacy services			
<p>Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The voice of the child will be represented more effectively. <p>... and how will we know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of service take-up and feedback from children and young people using the service. 			
What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Ensure an Advocacy Service is in place.	Completed.	MG	Completed.
2. Make staff aware of the service.	Completed.	MG	Completed.
3. Review current procedures to identify any updating required.	July 2013.	RB / KS / MG	Completed.
4. Monitor take-up of the service through contract monitoring arrangements (both LAC and non-LAC).	Quarterly contract monitoring, wef August 2013 onwards.	KS	Completed.

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Recommendation No.11 - for improvement within 6 months			
Support and improve children's attendance at child protection conferences and core groups.			
Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The views of the child will be taken into account more effectively in decisions regarding child protection plans. 			
... and how will we know?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through quarterly reports on attendance at CP Conferences / Reviews, to SLSCB P&P Task Group and CYPMT. Feedback from Conference Chairs on children's participation in the meetings. 			
What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Clarify guidance regarding age of children invited to CP conferences (all 8yrs+) and support available to them.	May 2013.	RB / MG	Current guidance clarified. Report to SLSCB in September 2013 to seek confirmation of this guidance.
2. Review training for Chairs regarding engagement of children in CP conferences.	June 2013.	MG	Training providers being identified. Aim to agree requirements in Sept / Oct.
3. Monitor attendance and participation of children at CP conferences as part of quarterly reports on CP Conferences / Reviews to SLSCB P&P Task Group and CYPMT.	July 2013 onwards.	MG	Completed.
4. Discussion paper to be taken to SLSCB on issues regarding children attending core groups.	August 2013.	MG	Completed.
5. Seek the views of children subject to a CP plan on this recommendation and advise SLSCB.	August 2013.	MG	Completed.

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Recommendation No. 12 – for improvement within 6 months			
Ensure that children and young people’s views are sought and responded to in developing strategic plans and service improvements.			
Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic developments in Child Protection services will better reflect the needs of children and young people. 			
... and how will we know?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the group of children and young people themselves. 			
What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Establish a group of children who are / have recently been the subject of a child protection plan, to provide a forum for consultation and advice regarding service developments.	June 2013.	MG	Completed.
2. Above group to report to SLSCB with recommendations for a sustainable future model of engaging with children subject to CP plans.	August 2013.	MG	Report to SLSCB, September 2013.
3. Work with the CYP Consortium to identify ways in which the VCS can support engagement with vulnerable children.	July 2013.	JH	Planning in place for event in September, building on earlier work with the sector in January 2013.

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Recommendation No. 13 - for improvement within 6 months			
Ensure a multi-agency early intervention strategy is in place to coordinate preventative services.			
Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be improved targeting of resources using evidence-based, outcome focused commissioning. 			
... and how will we know?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of the Early Help Strategy by the Health & Wellbeing Board and Partnership, along with contract monitoring results, will indicate positive outcomes from commissioned provision. 			
What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Hold Accelerated Learning Event to engage stakeholders in identifying key issues, challenges and best practice.	March 2013.	PK	Completed.
2. Prepare draft Early Help Strategy, focused on preventing vulnerable children falling in to the criteria for statutory social care support.	Draft for Health & Wellbeing Board July 2013.	PK	Completed – draft prepared; further work in place to finalise.

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Recommendation No. 14 - for improvement within 6 months

Ensure that strategic plans identify the improvements in outcomes expected to be achieved and the timescales for these to be accomplished.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- There will be clearer evidence of outcomes, leading to improved commissioning decisions and value for money.

... and how will we know?

- Monitoring of Action Plans and performance will give a clearer picture of the impact of activity.

What we will do	By when	Lead	Update August 2013
1. Develop a model for outcomes focused planning, taking account of national / regional best practice linked to sector led improvement work.	August 2013.	SW	Review with Council's Policy Officer Group, September 2013.
2. Revise and update the strategic planning framework for children's health and wellbeing (linked to the new CYPHWG).	June 2013.	PK	Completed.
3. Use this CP Inspection action plan as a model for developing an outcome focused approach.	April 2013.	SW	Completed.
4. LGA Peer Review to incorporate a review of this Action Plan.	Review dates to be confirmed.	JH	Still to be confirmed, taking account of revised national Sector Led Improvement arrangements.