

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

22ND JANUARY 2014

SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN REPORT

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Corporate Parenting Board of progress made in respect of the Children's Services Safeguarding Action Plan (SAP).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Corporate Parenting Board notes the progress report .

2.2 That the Corporate Parenting Board receives a further progress report in 12 months.

3. BACKGROUND

As members will be aware from previous reports; following the publication of the Serious Case Review regarding the death of baby Peter in Haringey at the end of 2008, CSSIW required a series of actions from all Local Authorities (LAs) and Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), to be satisfied about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Wales.

Children's Services were therefore required to carry out an audit of the Council's compliance at that time with the recommendations from the Victoria Climbié inquiry report, published in 2003.

Subsequently Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) inspectors visited RCT in April 2009 to conduct an inspection to verify the reviews of effectiveness undertaken by both Children's Services and the then RCT LSCB. The final inspection reports were received at the end of October 2009.

Furthermore RCT LSCB was subject of a multi inspectorate inspection during February 2011 the resulting report was published in October 2011 and was subject of a report to CPB in November 2011.

In addition during the latter part of 2011, RCT LSCB published an executive summary of the Serious Case Review (SCR) for Child MM and a combined executive summary for the SCRs for Child K, Child N and Child R.

Subsequently Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board (RCT LSCB successor body) has been involved in piloting Child Practice Reviews (CPR) the arrangements which replace Serious Case Reviews; and published individual reports in both January and December 2013

A looked after children safeguarding report has also been produced and reported to CPB in May 2013.

4. CHILDREN'S SERVICES SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN (SAP)

Members will appreciate that the actions that are required to ensure effective safeguarding, stem not only from external inspection processes but also from internal reviews and audits, from Serious Case Reviews/Child Practice Reviews, from national reports, from national policy shifts and from collaborative developments with partners. Actively progressing, integrating and monitoring the actions required is therefore both a highly complex undertaking and subject to change over time.

The Head of Safeguarding and Standards therefore, developed a Safeguarding Action Plan (SAP) as a management tool to enable managers across the service to sustain the process of improvement and review progress regularly.

This current SAP incorporates all of the relevant actions stemming from the CSSIW Inspection; those remaining that were identified as part of the audit of compliance with the requirements of the Victoria Climbié Report 2003; and those resulting from Serious Case Reviews/Child Practice Review reports and the looked after children safeguarding report.

Progress against the SAP is reported to Corporate Parenting Board annually as previously agreed.

5. CURRENT POSITION

The established SAP review group which has representation from across Children's Services continues to meet on a quarterly basis to monitor progress. Representation from Residential Care Services and Complaints has been added in 2013. The SAP is a regular agenda item for the Children's Services Management Team meetings. Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board (CTSCB) also monitors implementation of the Children's Services SCR/CPR action plans. The SAP is therefore the vehicle for ensuring such reports are available.

The main area where progress has been problematic continues to be the implementation of the electronic Integrated Childrens System. The service has achieved much in terms of implementing Phase I, essentially providing an effective recording, data capture and information system for all children 'in need' as defined by the Children Act 1989.

The second implementation phase was due to introduce the 'child protection module' but fundamental concerns identified by RCTCBC practitioners led managers and consortium partners in other local authorities to review whether this module was robust and safe.

Since that time, many authorities in England and Wales have considered the findings of the England 'Munro Review' which looked at key factors, in light of the death of 'Baby Peter' that affected the ability of social workers to do their job effectively. Key among these factors is the time that social workers were found to be spending supporting electronic recording systems as opposed to engaging directly with families in their communities.

In Wales meanwhile, the emergent direction consequent on the implementation of the Social Care and Well Being Bill, has been to promote a rationalisation of ICS. In RCT, as in some other Welsh authorities, the Director of Community and Children's Services has authorised a fundamental review of ICS, initiated by the Service Director, with a view to retaining those elements that add value and enhance safe and effective practice and jettisoning those that are an impediment.

A workshop was consequently held with staff during 2013 which identified referrals, assessments and plans as key areas that required particular attention. The newly named Children's Case Management system (CCM) is now a key priority in Children's Services Business Plan for 2014/5. This will be a challenging proposition given the fundamental changes required and the technical support required to achieve it.

In light of these national and local shifts therefore, the SAP action plan has been appropriately revised.

SAP update

Listed below are the key achievements and difficulties associated with actions contained within the SAP for 2013:-

- Children's Services has worked with partners to lead the production and trialling of a CTSCB endorsed assessment tool and accompanying guidance for use when children are neglected. This has also included delivery of 10 ½ day training workshops to multi

agency audiences across Cwm Taf as part of its implementation. Child Protection Core group guidance is now being revised by the Safeguarding Board incorporating the learning from the trial.

- Children's Services training matrix has been formally "adopted" this sets out mandatory and desirable training for staff across Children's Services depending on individual roles and responsibilities CSMT will now need to take forward the next phase of the work which makes this a reality for all staff
- The Statutory Director of Social Services in accordance with guidance required reports from each directorate within RCT about the discharge of safeguarding responsibilities. Consequently the Safeguarding Board Co-ordinator worked with senior managers from Environmental Services to develop and implement a training strategy for its workforce. The purpose is to ensure staff are equipped to deliver their safeguarding responsibilities. This has now been agreed by CTSCB and initial trainings sessions have commenced and been very well received.
- Children's Services has produced and implemented guidance to ensure that when staff are absent from work, systems are in place to ensure that post, emails and telephone contacts are checked and actioned as necessary.
- Children's Services is currently in the process of working with partners to develop and implement a multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH). Both Cwm Taf Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards have endorsed the model under development. In essence the purpose of the MASH is to risk assess all safeguarding contacts for children and adults on a multi agency basis and decide upon the required response. This is done by sharing information from all key agencies that are based together or linked virtually. Its aim is to make better informed decisions in a more timely way and therefore improve outcomes for vulnerable children and adults.
- Further work is required on a single recommendation remaining in both the Child H and Child R SCR action plans for Children's Services. The former related to the review of Child In Need cases open for a year and the latter to safe care arrangements over public holiday periods. Arrangements have now been made to ensure progress on these outstanding matters so that both action plans can be completed. CTSCB monitors performance on a quarterly basis.
- Children's Services commissioned and received reports about the operation of its assessment and care planning services and also participated in research commissioned by ADSS into looked after children. CSMT is now considering the options for future delivery of these services particularly given the development of MASH

- Children's Services established a multi agency task group which has developed a draft strategy to meet the needs of young people 16+. The work has addressed new WG initiatives such as 'When I'm ready' both housing and welfare reform, as well as legislative changes regarding responsibilities for assessment and service provision for young people of this age group.
- Progress has been made with the LAC Safeguarding report actions; this has been influenced by the change of key personnel. However arrangements are in hand for the work identified with the Multi Agency Placement Panel to be taken forward. This relates to children placed from other LAs and also children placed in long term education or health settings. In addition a task group has been working on the recommendations related particularly to external placement providers, about complaints, accreditation and placement visiting requirements. A report to CSMT is scheduled for the new year so that decisions can be made on future arrangements
- In addition the EDT review phase1 has been implemented and work begun on phase 2, particularly the availability of placements outside office hours.
- Work has begun on an identified a cohort of young people who are placed at risk for example through going missing, being sexually exploited, and displaying sexually harmful behaviour. This is being led by a CTSCB task group of which Children Services are a key part. The aim being to safeguard and protect young people by ensuring risk is assessed and managed as effectively as possible on a multi agency basis. This will include streamlining the existing guidance documents.

The SAP has been amended to reflect the progress outlined above and completed actions removed. The existing SAP group will continue to monitor the completion of work associated with the SAP and report to CPB and CSMT at the agreed frequency.

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