

Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

30 January 2013

Safeguarding Improvement Task & Finish Group Report of the Chair

Recommendations

1. To endorse the overall conclusion of the Task & Finish Group that the Safeguarding Action Plan is being implemented and monitored in a satisfactory manner
2. To encourage the children's services teams from Warwickshire and Coventry to work towards a common approach to sharing child protection information with University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire
3. To consider and agree any actions that might be necessary as a result of the observations outlined in section 3 of the report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The report of the Chair of the Task & Finish Group is enclosed.

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Richard Maybey	richardmaybey@warwickshire.gov.uk Tel: 01926 476876



SAFEGUARDING IMPROVEMENT TASK & FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT

*Working for
Warwickshire*

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Executive Summary**
- 1.2 Members and Contributors**
- 1.3 Evidence**
- 1.4 Dates and Timescales**
- 1.5 Recommendations**

2.0 History of the Review

3.0 Recommendations

4.0 Acknowledgements

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

In November 2011, Ofsted undertook a statutory inspection of Warwickshire County Council's safeguarding and looked after children (LAC) services. The inspectors made a judgement of "good" for the effectiveness of service, with capacity to improve.

Specifically, 20 areas for improvement were identified. Officers from the service formulated an Action Plan to address these, identifying the actions required, the agency responsible, a timescale for completion and how the improvement would be measured.

In March 2012, the Overview & Scrutiny Board commissioned a Task & Finish Group to monitor the progress of this Action Plan to ensure it was being implemented in a timely and suitable manner.

1.2 Members and Contributors

Cllr Bob Hicks (Chair)
Cllr Peter Balaam
Cllr Carolyn Robbins
Cllr June Tandy
Cllr Sid Tooth

Kim Brandrick, Carer, Warwickshire Fostering Service
Judy Dyson, Carer, Warwickshire Fostering Service
Elaine Finnerty, Carer, Warwickshire Fostering Service

Jenny Butlin-Moran, Service Manager, Safeguarding, WCC
Phil Sawbridge, Head of Service, Safeguarding, WCC
Billy Webster, HR Service Centre Manager, WCC
Brenda Vincent, Service Manager, Safeguarding, WCC
Jacqueline Barnes, Director of Nursing, Arden Cluster
Jackie Channell, Designated Nurse for Child Protection, Arden Cluster
Richard Maybey, Democratic Services Officer, WCC

1.3 Evidence Used

- Practical demonstration of case-file recording system
- Practical demonstration of case-file audit procedure
- Case-file audit checklists used by managers
- Senior Leadership Team report: "Case File Recording Audits, July-December 2010"
- Verbal evidence on matters relating to:
 - HR procedures
 - Child protection
 - Health provision
 - Support for LAC

1.4 Dates and Timescales

5 April – scoping meeting

8 May – evidence gathering for Safeguarding-related actions

14 May – evidence for Health-related actions

21 May – evidence for LAC-related actions

30 May – agreement of content for interim report

6 December – final evidence gathering for outstanding actions and update on overall progress

1.5 Recommendations

- 1. To endorse the overall conclusion of the Task & Finish Group that the Safeguarding Action Plan is being implemented and monitored in a satisfactory manner**
- 2. To encourage the children’s services teams from Warwickshire and Coventry to work towards a common approach to sharing child protection information with University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire**
- 3. To consider and agree any actions that might be necessary as a result of the observations outlined in section 3 of the report**

2.0 History of the Review

2.1 Scoping meeting (1)

We met with officers to receive background information about the inspection and the intentions behind the Action Plan, and to define the purpose and parameters of the review using the Council's Scoping Document (appendix A).

Phil Sawbridge (Head of Service, Safeguarding) explained that the inspection was a dual inspection from both Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, with the latter undertaking perhaps less methodical and evidence-based analysis than the former. Consequently, some of the inspection findings and areas for improvement were surprising, given the overall strong rating that the service received.

We asked officers which of the 20 areas for improvement (see appendix F) they thought were a priority, and which were less important. Based on the feedback, we agreed not to pursue Areas for Improvement 5 and 10.

The ambition was for the review to be a short and sharp exercise, to be completed over four further weekly meetings. The first three meetings would be themed to allow focused scrutiny of specific topics (safeguarding, health, LAC), with a final meeting to agree findings and recommendations. The aim was to take a report to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 June 2012.

2.2 Safeguarding meeting (2)

This meeting considered Areas for Improvement 3, 4, 6 and 8.

For Area 3, Jenny Butlin-Moran (Service Manager, Safeguarding) presented the checklists used by managers when undertaking case-file audits and gave a practical demonstration of how this would be done on the CareFirst electronic case-file recording system. For areas 4 and 6, Jenny provided a verbal update.

For Area 8, Billy Webster (HR Service Centre Manager) explained that Ofsted wanted more emphasis on employment files being held centrally, rather than stored locally with managers, and provided an overview of the actions taken so far.

As members, we scrutinised the written and verbal evidence presented, and concluded that suitable progress is being made overall.

Detailed notes of meeting 2 are available at appendix B.

2.3 Health meeting (3)

This meeting considered Areas for Improvement 2, 7, 9 and 18

Jacqueline Barnes (Director of Nursing) explained that the Arden Cluster is working to a different Action Plan to that of WCC. Their Action Plan is based on the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection report, as opposed to the Ofsted inspection report that WCC is working to.

We also observed that WCC and the Arden Cluster have set different timescales for completion of the actions in their respective plans. The Arden Cluster is working to longer implementation times, which meant that certain evidence was unavailable to us for detailed scrutiny.

For Area 2, we heard that an audit of unscheduled care notifications by the Arden Cluster is due in October 2012 to ensure the necessary improvements have been made.

For Area 7, we listened to verbal evidence about the Arden Cluster's training plans and were satisfied that the improvement was being addressed satisfactorily.

For Area 9, it was the opinion of officers that the inspection findings related more to improvements needed in Coventry than Warwickshire.

For Area 18, we learned that a designated nurse for child protection/LAC will be in post from June 2012, and she will have a responsibility to ensure LAC have timely access to supervision, support and advice on health matters.

It became apparent at this meeting, due to the lack of detailed information to scrutinise from the Arden Cluster, that the original aim of taking a report to the 20 June 2012 OSC meeting was no longer appropriate.

Detailed notes of meeting 3 are available at appendix C.

2.4 Looked After Children meeting (4)

This meeting considered Areas for Improvement 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20

Based on a very useful, in-depth and wide-ranging discussion with carers from the Fostering Service and relevant senior officers, we were satisfied that all areas for improvement are being suitably addressed.

In relation to Area 13, we acknowledged that Ofsted's reference to a Corporate Parenting Board has resulted in the formation of Warwickshire's Corporate Parenting Panel, which is now working to improve elected members' knowledge of corporate parenting. The terms of reference and membership of the Panel have been agreed by Cabinet. At the time of writing, it has held two meetings and is scheduled to meet every two months.

Detailed notes of meeting 4 are available at appendix D.

2.5 Interim report

At this stage of the review, it became apparent that not all information or evidence was available for full scrutiny. Therefore, we produced an interim report outlining progress to date. This was circulated to all members via email, and printed copies were made available to members of the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 June 2012. We agreed to reconvene in December 2012 when the outstanding information would be available in order to complete the review.

2.6 Final evidence-gathering meeting (5)

On 6 December 2012, we received an update on overall progress of the Action Plan from Jenny Butlin-Moran, who explained that:

- All elements of the Action Plan have been completed, but on-going work is needed to maintain them
- The Action Plan was presented to the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) on 5 December 2012, and all stakeholders were satisfied with progress

We were keen to look at the areas of the Action Plan where information was not previously available to be assured that progress was being achieved.

Based on the discussion with Jenny Butlin-Moran and Jackie Channell (who had taken up post as the Arden Cluster's Designated Nurse for Child Protection), we were satisfied that all areas for improvement are being suitably addressed, but requested specific confirmation on the information protocols in place at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) with regard to children being admitted from different local authorities.

This confirmation was provided to us latterly via email, which is included at appendix G. Although this goes some way to appeasing our concerns, we did feel that efforts ought to be made by Warwickshire Children's Services to hold discussion with Coventry Children's Services with a view to agreeing a common practice.

Detailed notes of meeting 5 are available at appendix E.

3.0 Recommendations

Our remit was to develop recommendations that “help the service to complete the Action Plan” and that “must add value to work that the service is already undertaking”.

Based on our review, the Task & Finish Group members are satisfied that the Action Plan is being implemented and monitored in a robust and detailed manner (this is confirmed by Appendix F, which shows our conclusions against each action within the plan), and we have no suggestions to put forward that would add value to the existing work of the service. Our first recommendation is therefore:

- 1. To endorse the overall conclusion of the Task & Finish Group that the Safeguarding Action Plan is being implemented and monitored in a satisfactory manner**

However, as a result of the concerns we had in section 2.6 regarding the information protocols with University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire, our second recommendation is as follows:

- 2. To encourage the children’s services teams from Warwickshire and Coventry to work towards a common approach to sharing child protection information with University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire**

On a similar theme, although not a formal recommendation, we would like to see a more joined-up approach between the County Council and the Arden Cluster on joint action plans such as these to ensure both organisations are working to the same outcomes and timescales.

We also recognise that Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board undertakes regular monitoring of the County Council’s safeguarding arrangements and would suggest that the Committee establishes a closer link with the Board to understand its function, avoid duplication of scrutiny and share information when appropriate.

To reflect these latter two statements, our final recommendation is therefore for the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- 3. To consider and agree any actions that might be necessary as a result of the observations outlined in section 3 of the report**

4.0 Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone involved in this review, particularly the lead officers from the Safeguarding team and the foster carers who made such valuable contributions.

Scoping Document

Review Topic (Name of review)	Safeguarding Improvement (To monitor the implementation of the Action Plan put in place following 2011 Ofsted inspection)
Task and Finish Group Members	Cllr Balaam Cllr Hicks Cllr Robbins Cllr Tandy Cllr Tooth
Key Officers / Departments	Phil Sawbridge, Head of Service, Children In Need Jenny Butlin-Moran, Service Manager, Safeguarding
Lead Scrutiny Officer	Richard Maybey, Democratic Services Officer
Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Timms
Relevant Corporate Ambitions	"Reduce abuse of children and vulnerable adults through improving the reach of co-ordinated safeguarding interventions" "Embed the principles of early intervention so that children, young people, parents & carers have the support they need, when they need it"
Type of Review	In-depth review with a minimum of 4 meetings to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess evidence • Speak to witnesses • Collate findings • Produce report for Committee
Timescales	5 April – Scoping meeting 8 May – Safeguarding 14 May – Health 21 May – Looked After Children 30 May – Agree findings and content of interim report (to be circulated outside of Committee) Future meetings to be held, when suitable, to consider missing information and agree recommendations
Rationale (Key issues and/or reason for doing the review)	In November 2011, Ofsted undertook a statutory inspection of safeguarding and looked after children (LAC) services. The inspectors made a judgement of "good" for the effectiveness of service, with capacity to improve. 20 areas for improvement were identified; 15 relating to work led by the County Council; 3 required immediate action (by December 2011) and have been completed. An Action Plan has been formulated to address the 20 areas for improvement. The Overview & Scrutiny Board has commissioned this Task & Finish Group to monitor the progress and implementation of the Action Plan.
Objectives of Review (Specify exactly what the review should achieve)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor how the service is implementing the Action Plan • To suggest any required amendments/additions to the Action Plan • To ensure the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted are being improved

<p>Scope of the Topic (What is specifically to be included/excluded)</p>	<p><u>Include</u> The following is included in the scope of the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All areas for improvement identified by Ofsted in their formal assessment • Evidence from Safeguarding, Looked After Children and Health teams related to the Ofsted recommendations <p><u>Excluded</u> The following falls outside the scope of the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any service areas not identified for improvement by Ofsted • Aspects of the Ofsted report that do not have associated recommendations
<p>How will the public be involved? (Community Forums, consultation, community groups / clubs, etc)</p>	<p>Carers from the Fostering Service will be invited to the Looked After Children meeting</p>
<p>What site visits will be undertaken?</p>	<p>Site visits could be arranged as and when members deem them necessary during the review.</p> <p>However, at the time of scoping the review, it was felt that all necessary evidence could be gathered during the scheduled meetings.</p>
<p>How will our partners be involved? (Relevant stakeholders, District / Borough reps)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners from Health Service invited to participate in the Health meeting • Carers from the Fostering Service invited to the Looked After Children meeting
<p>How will the scrutiny achieve value for money for the Council / Council Tax payers?</p>	<p>The findings of the Task & Finish Group will feed into the strategic commissioning review of the service, which is seeking to optimise the value for money of all Council services.</p>
<p>What evidence is needed for effective scrutiny?</p>	<p><u>Existing information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted report • Action Plan <p><u>New information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer updates on Action Plan • Demonstration of audit procedure (recommendation 3) • Example of a child protection plan (recommendation 4) • HR project plan (recommendation 8) • Feedback from carers (recommendation 14) • Outcome of Corporate Parenting Board discussions (recommendation 13) • Updates from Health partners
<p>Indicators of Success – (What factors would tell you what a good review should look like? What are the potential outcomes of the review e.g. service improvements, policy change, etc?)</p>	<p>Recommendations that help the service to complete the Action Plan and satisfy audit/compliance/inspection requirements</p> <p>These recommendations must add value to work that the service is already undertaking</p>

<p>Other Work Being Undertaken (What other work is currently being undertaken in relation to this topic, and any appropriate timescales and deadlines for that work)</p>	<p>Adult Social Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee may have an interest in the health-related actions. A representative of that body should be invited to participate in the Health session.</p> <p>The current governance review of the Corporate Parenting Steering Group / Corporate Parenting Board will feed into the Looked After Children meeting.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Children Board will be reviewing the Action Plan, and the Task & Finish Group's findings will be reported to them.</p>
--	---

Safeguarding Improvement Task and Finish Group Meeting notes, Tuesday 8 May 2012	
<u>Members</u> Cllr Peter Balaam Cllr Bob Hicks (Chair) Cllr Carolyn Robbins Cllr June Tandy Cllr Sid Tooth	<u>Officers</u> Jenny Butlin-Moran Billy Webster Richard Maybey

Introduction

Cllr Hicks opened the meeting, noting that Cllr Rolfe had withdrawn from the group as she was unavailable on any of the agreed meeting dates.

Papers were distributed to members, including the completed Scrutiny Review Outline document as a reminder of the agreed scope/terms of reference.

HR processes (Area for Improvement 8)

“Improve management oversight of council’s HR recruitment processes, and improve the quality of HR files”

Billy Webster explained that Ofsted wanted more emphasis on employment files being held centrally, rather than stored locally with managers, and provided an overview of the actions taken so far:

- Information about recruitment for managers has been revised
- Their responsibilities will be reinforced to them
- A guide for the retention of employee records is in final draft stage with some comments still to be included. Although the deadline has been missed for issuing this guidance, it is deemed more important to get this guidance right
- Changes have been implemented at the HR Service Centre to ensure that pre-employment checks are in place on the HR system
- All employees will have a central file that guarantees they have passed all pre-recruitment checks before start dates can be issued
- Managers are being assigned access to electronic files, so they can view and input to employee files
- It is hoped these actions will satisfy Ofsted at the time of the next inspection

Case file audits (Area for Improvement 3)

“Improve the robustness of children’s social care case file audits to ensure they more thoroughly address the quality of practice including initial assessments and inform service improvements”

Jenny Butlin-Moran presented the following:

- An aggregated report, analysing 6 months of case file audits
- A checklist for managers to complete during an audit (pro-forma)
- A framework for managers to shape their thinking during an audit, based on the key issues that Ofsted look at

Ofsted concluded that case file audits were focused too much on process, and there was not enough narrative about quality of practice.

- Managers are therefore being re-issued with the framework, which yields a fuller audit response when used
- While it may initially take managers more time to complete audits using the framework, the benefits are significant and the process will become quicker the more they use it
- The framework will help managers to consider more than just process and delve deeper into the quality of practice

Jenny gave a practical demonstration of the CareFirst electronic recording system, which is the primary store of case information (some paper records still do exist, from partner organisations etc)

- The audit checklist (pro-forma) is completed by reviewing various screens within the CareFirst system
- The system does provide a historical record of all case details (including previous social workers etc), so information can’t be edited or deleted out
- All social workers have access to the system and can contribute to all records, but there are different permissions for different levels of staff
- Access to a record can be granted to partners or external agencies if their request is based on a genuine concern

Members raised concerns over the complexity of the system and questioned if social workers and managers had access to appropriate training.

- All staff have training on the system, and those that use it regularly are proficient with it
- On average, a case file audit takes 45 minutes to complete – which although is time-consuming, is a key element for managers in assessing social worker performance

Members asked how the improvements would be measured and judged.

- Ofsted have not asked for evidence, but would re-assess at the next inspection
- A report will go to the Senior Leadership Team later in the year outlining what improvements have been made
- Members requested that this report should also go to the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee in November 2012

Child protection plans (Area for Improvement 4)

“Ensure that all child protection plans are specific and measurable and have clear timescales”

Ofsted recommended that all child protection plans should be more SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely)

- An audit of the authority’s current child protection plans is being undertaken shortly to ensure they are SMART
- Members requested that a report of the audit findings be presented at their meeting on 30 May 2012

Referral thresholds (Area for Improvement 6)

“Warwickshire County Council and NHS Warwickshire should ensure that referral thresholds for safeguarding are applied consistently across the county to ensure appropriate referrals are made and that children and young people are protected from harm”

- The thresholds document and escalation policy has been sent to all relevant agencies, along with an implementation plan for how to use the policy

Safeguarding Improvement Task and Finish Group Meeting notes, Monday 14 May 2012	
<u>Members</u> Cllr Peter Balaam Cllr Bob Hicks (Chair) Cllr Carolyn Robbins Cllr June Tandy Cllr Sid Tooth	<u>Officers</u> Jacqueline Barnes, Arden Cluster Jenny Butlin-Moran, WCC Phil Sawbridge, WCC Richard Maybey, WCC

Introduction

Cllr Hicks opened the meeting, welcoming Jacqueline Barnes from the Arden Cluster who was present to provide updates on the areas of the Action Plan related to Health.

Area for Improvement 2

“Ensure that notifications of attendance of children and young people from unscheduled care and accident and emergency units are of a good quality and give full information relating to attendance, including the frequency of visits, so that concerns can be followed up effectively.”

- Jacqueline explained that the Arden Cluster has been working to complete a different action plan, based on the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection report – rather than the Ofsted report that WCC is working to
- Members requested a copy of the CQC report and the Arden Cluster’s action plan
- South Warwickshire Foundation Trust has had some problems in relaying information from A&E departments due to their paper-based card systems. This is being addressed by the move to an electronic system, which is almost complete
- There are some difficulties with walk-in centres, especially at Camp Hill, in terms of getting the right information to the the right people
- Improvements should be complete within 2 months, and will be measured/overseen via:
 - The Arden Cluster’s internal contract performance meetings
 - Warwickshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (WSCB), who will monitor the implementation of the action plan
 - An Arden Cluster audit in October 2012, which will also go to the WSCB
- Members were of the view that if the Task & Finish Group was no longer in operation at that time, the findings of the audit should be reported to the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee and/or the Corporate Parenting Board

Area for Improvement 7

“NHS Warwickshire should ensure that there are robust systems in place to: collect safeguarding training information, assess the impact that training is having on the improvement of safeguarding health services within each contracted service and ensure that safeguarding training is sufficient to meet the needs of health staff.”

- Contracts are in place with hospitals to ensure there is satisfactory training for at least 80% of front-facing staff
- The Arden Cluster is monitoring this and ensuring systems are in place to allow for appropriate training
- Further work is needed with GPs
- It is difficult to measure and assess the impact of training
- Individual trusts have their own training arrangements
- Training is undertaken on an annual basis
- Members were satisfied that the Arden Cluster’s training plans were well advanced and the area for improvement was being addressed satisfactorily

Area for Improvement 9

“NHS Warwickshire should review the different approaches to identifying domestic violence, ensuring that: all opportunity is given to pregnant women to disclose abuse, that they and their unborn babies are appropriately protected from harm, and that information sharing with midwives and health visitors is strengthened.”

- The CQC deadline for this area of improvement is July 2012
- Policies have been reviewed in each organisation
- Many of the issues identified by the CQC relate to improvements needed in Coventry rather than Warwickshire
- For example, there are already processes in place for sharing information effectively with police
- Members asked for evidence that the approaches in Warwickshire are working correctly
- Jacqueline agreed to provide a written update on current approaches

Area for Improvement 18

“NHS Warwickshire should ensure that health staff involved with looked after children and young people have access to supervision, support and advice in a timely manner.”

- Health visitors are invited to LAC reviews, as appropriate (predominantly for LACs under 5 years old)
- Action plans from assessments are being shared with health staff
- The thresholds document has been approved by WSCB and put into place at GP practices

- A new designated nurse for child protection and looked after children starts work in June. Her role will be to:
 - Ensure the reviewed policies and procedures with Trusts are being implemented
 - Co-ordinate work with primary care teams to promote immunisations and wellbeing etc
 - Review current arrangements for supervision, support and advice and make improvements as required
- Jacqueline agreed to confirm the role of this post in writing for members

Safeguarding Improvement Task and Finish Group Meeting notes, Monday 21 May 2012	
<u>Members</u> Cllr Peter Balaam Cllr Bob Hicks (Chair) Cllr Carolyn Robbins Cllr June Tandy Cllr Sid Tooth	<u>Officers</u> Jenny Butlin-Moran, WCC Phil Sawbridge, WCC Brenda Vincent, WCC Richard Maybey, WCC <u>Visitors</u> Kim Brandrick Judy Dyson Elaine Finnerty

Introduction

Cllr Hicks opened the meeting, welcoming in particular the three carers from Warwickshire's Fostering Service, who were in attendance to answer questions about action plan items relating to Looked After Children.

Area for Improvement 12

"Ensure that children and young people are routinely consulted about the timing and venue of their review and that care planning targets have timescales clearly specified."

Jenny Butlin-Moran explained that Ofsted were seeking more evidence of consultation taking place, and requested that planning targets were given more precise parameters – i.e., "within x months" rather than "as soon as possible".

Carers spoke about how LAC reviews take place with young people (YP):

- Carers advocate for their YP, so reviews take place when and where they want them – i.e., out of school, at home, to fit in with their social life
- YP prefer short reviews in a relaxed environment, with familiar officers so information does not have to be repeated
- Consultation is via a booklet for YP to complete (not that they always do)

Officers added that there is a tight planning system in place for LAC reviews, with an established escalation procedure through the line management structure.

Carers felt very well supported by the local authority, explaining that support is always available either through their fostering social worker or the out-of-hours support service. Carers can suggest improvements and provide feedback via a regular questionnaire.

Members were satisfied that the area for improvement was being suitably addressed.

Area for Improvement 14

“Ensure consistency in the application of sleepover policies.”

Brenda Vincent explained that there is a consistent sleepover policy, which is provided to children’s teams and carers. In short, it gives decision-making responsibility to carers about whether a YP can have a short break away (up to 4 days), but gives a clear framework about how to reach that decision. Warwickshire was the first authority to implement such a policy, and this has now been adopted nationally.

Carers reported that the policy works well and is used frequently. It is based on the same principles that parents would use for their own children – i.e., taking into account circumstances at that time. If a sleepover is allowed, then carers speak to the other adults first to exchange contact details etc.

Phil Sawbridge stated that LAC should have the same opportunities as other young people, and therefore sleepovers are encouraged. But they have to be within safe boundaries. Decisions are based on individual circumstances, but the framework for making those decisions has to be consistent.

Members were satisfied that sleepover policies are being used consistently.

Area for Improvement 16

“Ensure that the complaints service is effectively promoted and is readily accessible to looked after children and young people.”

Carers stated that older very much know their rights; they know how to make a complaint and access the services available to them. Complaints are rare, but when they do occur are usually about trivial issues such as access to their mobile phone or staying up late. Younger children are supported by both carers and social workers in understanding their rights and the options available to them.

Brenda Vincent stated that the customer service team is currently updating a leaflet for carers that outlines how and who to access should issues arise (i.e., contact details for reviewing officers, social workers; info about sleepover policy etc). There is also targeted information for young people, which has been designed with their input. For example, there is story-based information for younger LAC (with guidance notes for carers), and a system for older LAC based around playing cards and QR codes (linking to web-based info).

Brenda confirmed that there are very few complaints (less than a handful a year), which may be the reason why Ofsted put forward the recommendation – i.e., they perceived that YP did not know how to make complaints. However, there may be other reasons why the numbers are low – such as that YP don’t feel the need to complain or there are suitable other systems in place to deal with problems.

Members were satisfied that the complaints service is effectively promoted and accessible.

Area for Improvement 17

“Ensure that there are sufficient independent visitors, in order to meet the needs of all looked after children.”

Officers explained that LAC with no direct family (e.g., if they are an asylum seeker or have no living family members) have access to an “independent visitor” through a befriending service operated by Barnados.

At the time of inspection, Barnados could not provide sufficient independent visitors to meet demand, hence their recommendation. This has now been addressed and contract has been renewed. There is currently no waiting list for independent visitors.

Members were satisfied that the area for improvement has been addressed.

Area for Improvement 20

“Ensure that there is sufficient appropriate housing to meet the needs of care leavers and that any temporary accommodation offered is in a safe environment.”

Phil Sawbridge suggested that the Ofsted recommendation was based on them finding a few cases where YP had made unsuitable housing choices when leaving care, plus some subjective responses from YP to a survey.

He also explained that clear protocols are in place for when YP leave care, overseen by a dedicated Leaving Care Manager. The local authority is also considering the appointment of a designated LAC officer in each of the 5 boroughs/districts who would support YP’s housing requirements.

Phil stated that – as a member of the Supporting People group that is responsible for commissioning services – he would be advocating strongly for Leaving Care support services.

Brenda Vincent informed members about the initiatives in place for care leavers:

- “Staying Put”, which encourages YP to stay in a fostering environment after the age of 18
- Preparing YP for independence via pathway plans that cover issues such as finances, housekeeping, health and wellbeing etc
- Temporary lodging options are available to care leavers, where their needs can be assessed
- Additional visits and support for care leavers who require it
- Supporting YP to come back into foster care if they become vulnerable

To support YP with their housing needs, officers help negotiations with landlords and social workers visit potential homes with YP to assess suitability. Warwick District

Council leads the housing policy on behalf of all 5 districts, ensuring there is a consistent county-wide approach.

Members were satisfied that the area for improvement is being addressed.

Area for Improvement 11

“Ensure that all statutory visits to looked after children and young people are completed by qualified social workers. Where cases are held by practice leaders they should attend the review.”

Jenny Butlin-Moran explained that Ofsted had witnessed some statutory visits being undertaken by non-qualified social workers – although it should be noted that they did have relevant backgrounds and were always overseen by qualified team leaders.

Guidance has now been put in place and given to all team leaders, and the review templates have been revised to make it clear what is a statutory and non-statutory visit. Service managers are now confident of demonstrating to Ofsted that the necessary systems and processes are in place and are sustainable.

Members were satisfied that the area for improvement is being addressed.

Area for Improvement 13

“Elected members should ensure that they are familiar with the key priorities established by the Corporate Parenting Board in order to ensure good outcomes for looked after children and young people, and the development of apprenticeship schemes.”

This recommendation stemmed from Ofsted interviewing a Corporate Parenting focus group, which included elected members, health representatives and LA officers. From this, Ofsted concluded that not all members may be aware of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

The Local Authority has addressed this via:

- Two dedicated training sessions for elected members, which were well attended
- Work of the Corporate Parenting Steering Group, including a review of monitoring arrangements and how other authorities operate
- Proposal to establish a formal Corporate Parenting Board, which Cabinet will decide on soon
- Scope for regular member briefings on Full Council day

Regarding apprenticeships, LAC receive a guaranteed interview for vacant apprenticeships if adequately skilled. However, Phil Sawbridge stated that he would be promoting the number of LAC who actually enter apprenticeships as one of the Council's “Going for Growth” indicators.

Brenda stated that information about apprenticeship opportunities is now more available via Twitter and Facebook, and clear pathways are in place. There are two LAC currently in apprenticeships and 14 are in training positions.

Members acknowledged the steps taken already and the scope for further training for elected members. They also acknowledged that a Cabinet decision was pending around the formation of a Corporate Parenting Board.

Area for Improvement 19

“Develop the work of the Tiffin Club to ensure that strategic support for the council’s corporate parenting role is improved, including the promotion of apprenticeship opportunities within the council and with local business partners.”

Members were appreciative of the work undertaken by the Tiffin Club, acknowledging that it is not a statutory requirement for the local authority to deliver – but an officer initiative that adds value.

Members were satisfied that strategic support for the Council’s Corporate Parenting role is being suitably addressed (via the Corporate Parenting Steering Group etc) and apprenticeship opportunities are being promoted effectively (see Area for Improvement 13)

Safeguarding Improvement Task and Finish Group Meeting notes, Thursday 6 December 2012	
<u>Members</u> Cllr Peter Balaam Cllr Bob Hicks (Chair) Cllr Carolyn Robbins Cllr Sid Tooth	<u>Officers</u> Jenny Butlin-Moran, WCC Jackie Channell, Arden Cluster Richard Maybey, WCC

Introduction

Jenny Butlin-Moran circulated an updated and integrated Action Plan – which was put in place to address the concerns raised by the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections held November 2011.

Jenny explained that all elements of the Action Plan have been completed, but on-going work is needed to maintain them.

The Action Plan was presented to the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (WSCB) on 5 December 2012, and all stakeholders were satisfied with progress.

Area for Improvement 3

“Improve the robustness of children’s social care case file audits to ensure they more thoroughly address the quality of practice including initial assessments and inform service improvements”

The Local Authority (LA) understands that case file audits are key to assuring inspectors, and has therefore held a workshop for managers to stress their importance and provide guidance on improving their robustness. The LA has put in place additional audits of child protection plans and Looked After Children (LAC) visits.

Members asked what useful information the case file audits have revealed.

- Although performed on a random basis, they do reveal geographical trends of where things are working well and where they aren’t
- They also reveal that practice leaders do not always take on the case manager role, so managers have been asked to remind practice leaders of their responsibilities

Area for Improvement 4

“Ensure that all child protection plans are specific and measurable and have clear timescales”

Ensuring timely fulfilment of child protection plans is difficult to achieve, as the timescales associated with referrals cannot always be predicted. However, the LA does ask for indicative timescales from all agencies involved, which are reviewed at every meeting to keep the plans as accurate as possible.

Area for Improvement 1

“Ensure that health agencies, including GPs, are promptly notified of child protection strategy meetings and conferences to which they are being invited”

Strategy meetings, by their nature, are usually emergency meetings so the notification period will be short. The LA does ensure prompt notifications, but the issue is more about GPs attending and contributing to those meetings.

Jackie Channell, as the Designated Nurse for Child Protection, has delivered training to 30 GP practices, including guidance on their responsibilities. For example, if unable to attend the meeting itself, GPs are required to provide a written report. Most GPs do recognise and fulfil these responsibilities.

Area for Improvement 2

“Ensure that notifications of attendance of children and young people from unscheduled care at accident and emergency units are of a good quality and give full information relating to attendance, including the frequency of visits, so that concerns can be followed up effectively”

Audits have been completed at various sites (including George Eliot Hospital, Warwick Hospital and Stratford) which have revealed the need for some improvements. Actions are in place for these and they will be monitored by the WSCB Health Sub-committee. As problems are identified, staff have visited the sites to address the issues there and then.

Legibility of information has improved with the introduction of a new card system, which ensures that information is typed rather than handwritten. This will be audited and monitored.

There was discussion around the information given to University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) by Coventry Social Care to identify children with a child protection plan. It was confirmed that Warwickshire’s policy is only to provide information if the hospital has concerns when a child is presented; it does not provide the hospital with a list.

Members asked for a briefing note to clarify:

- What information UHCW receives from Coventry Social Care
- If Coventry Social Care operates a different policy to Warwickshire
- If there is confusion among staff, and therefore risks to children, as a result of UHCW operating different systems for each authority

Area for Improvement 9

“NHS Warwickshire should review the different approaches to identifying domestic violence, ensuring that: all opportunity is given to pregnant women to disclose abuse, that they and their unborn babies are appropriately protected from harm, and that information sharing with midwives and health visitors is strengthened”

South Warwickshire Foundation Trust (SWFT) and George Eliot Hospital (GEH) have reviewed their approach and put new policies in place. Information relating to risk of domestic violence is now shared with all relevant agencies (e.g., health, midwifery, mental health services). Jackie has been distributing various domestic violence resources (leaflets, posters etc.) to all GP practices and a number of awareness events have been organised.

Area for Improvement 17

“Ensure that there are sufficient independent visitors, in order to meet the needs of all looked after children”

The contract for independent visitors has been re-tendered, and the new contract terms take into account the rising LAC population. This will be monitored via the LA’s Contract Monitoring arrangements and through feedback from those assessing the service.

Area for Improvement 18

“NHS Warwickshire should ensure that health staff involved with looked after children and young people have access to supervision, support and advice in a timely manner”

A system is in place to ensure supervision for all staff working with LAC. Staff know that they can contact the Designated Nurses for LAC and/or Child Protection at any time – and they are doing so. Staff responsible for younger LAC or children with a child protection plan already had automatic supervision, but now all staff have the opportunity for supervision if they want it.

Area for Improvement 20

“Ensure that there is sufficient appropriate housing to meet the needs of care leavers and that any temporary accommodation offered is in a safe environment”

The LA works with its partners to ensure appropriate housing according to the needs of the young people. The LA has a statutory duty to stay in contact with care leavers up to the age of 21 (or 25 for those with a disability), and this is done via personal advisers who are commissioned from Barnardos. Young people who chose to leave foster care at age 16/17 are still supported by the LA in terms of housing provision (although they are encouraged to stay in a family setting as long as possible).

Conclusions

- Members were satisfied with overall progress of the Action Plan to date
- Members asked for clarification on the information policies at UHCW, before finalising its findings

Next steps

- Jenny Butlin-Moran / Jackie Channell to prepare briefing note on information policies at UHCW (Richard to circulate to members)
- Richard Maybey to prepare final report and circulate to members for approval
- Cllr Hicks to present final report to Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 30 January 2013

Action Plan – with conclusions of the Task & Finish Group (TFG)

	Area for Improvement – identified by Ofsted	Conclusions
1	Ensure that health agencies, including GPs are promptly notified of child protection strategy meetings and conferences to which they are being invited.	WCC – actions complete TFG – no action requested at meeting 1
2	Ensure that notifications of attendance of children and young people from unscheduled care and accident and emergency units are of a good quality and give full information relating to attendance, including the frequency of visits, so that concerns can be followed up effectively.	NHS Warwickshire – actions complete TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 5: • Satisfied with progress
3	Improve the robustness of children's social care case file audits to ensure they more thoroughly address the quality of practice including initial assessments and inform service improvements.	WCC – actions complete TFG – reviewed at meeting 2 / further assurance at meeting 5: • Satisfied with progress
4	Ensure that all child protection plans are specific and measurable and have clear timescales.	WCC – actions complete TFG – received verbal assurance at meetings 2 and 5: • Satisfied with progress
5	Ensure that the concerns of parents and carers of disabled children and young people, about the quality and flexibility of school transport arrangements, are suitably investigated.	WCC – actions complete TFG – no action requested at meeting 1
6	Warwickshire County Council and NHS Warwickshire should ensure that referral thresholds for safeguarding are applied consistently across the county to ensure appropriate referrals are made and that children and young people are protected from harm.	WCC – actions complete TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 2: • Satisfied with progress
7	NHS Warwickshire should ensure that there are robust systems in place to: collect safeguarding training information, assess the impact that training is having on the improvement of safeguarding health services within each contracted service and ensure that safeguarding training is sufficient to meet the needs of health staff.	NHS Warwickshire – actions complete TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 3: • Satisfied with progress
8	Improve management oversight of council's HR recruitment processes, and improve the quality of HR files.	WCC – actions complete TFG – reviewed at meeting 2: • Satisfied with progress
9	NHS Warwickshire should review the different approaches to identifying domestic violence, ensuring that: all opportunity is given to pregnant women to disclose abuse, that they and their unborn babies are appropriately protected from harm, and that information sharing with midwives and health visitors is strengthened.	NHS Warwickshire – actions complete TFG – reviewed at meeting 3 / further assurance at meeting 5 • Satisfied with progress
10	NHS Warwickshire and Warwickshire County Council must ensure that the accommodation for sexual assault referrals is forensically clean pending the construction of the new centre.	Warwickshire Police TFG – no action requested at meeting 1
11	Ensure that all statutory visits to looked after children and young people are completed by qualified social workers. Where cases are held by practice leaders they should attend the review.	WCC – actions complete

		TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress
12	Ensure that children and young people are routinely consulted about the timing and venue of their review and that care planning targets have timescales clearly specified.	WCC – actions complete TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress
13	Elected members should ensure that they are familiar with the key priorities established by the Corporate Parenting Board in order to ensure good outcomes for looked after children and young people, and the development of apprenticeship schemes.	WCC – actions complete TFG – reviewed at meeting 4 / further assurance at meeting 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress
14	Ensure consistency in the application of sleepover policies.	WCC – actions complete TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress
15	Improve the quality of case file audits within children’s social care services to ensure they robustly address the quality of practice and inform service improvements.	WCC – actions complete TFG – reviewed at meeting 2 / further assurance at meeting 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress
16	Ensure that the complaints service is effectively promoted and is readily accessible to looked after children and young people.	WCC – actions complete TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress
17	Ensure that there are sufficient independent visitors, in order to meet the needs of all looked after children.	WCC – actions complete TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress
18	NHS Warwickshire should ensure that health staff involved with looked after children and young people have access to supervision, support and advice in a timely manner.	NHS Warwickshire – actions complete TFG – reviewed at meeting 3 / further assurance at meeting 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress
19	Develop the work of the Tiffin Club to ensure that strategic support for the council’s corporate parenting role is improved, including the promotion of apprenticeship opportunities within the council and with local business partners.	WCC – actions complete TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress
20	Ensure that there is sufficient appropriate housing to meet the needs of care leavers and that any temporary accommodation offered is in a safe environment.	WCC – actions complete TFG – verbal assurance at meeting 4 and 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with progress

Addendum to the report of the Task & Finish Group

Supplementary information regarding information protocols at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW)

“Jackie Channell has liaised with UHCW with regards to the information they receive from Coventry Children's Services. It seems that they do receive information about children subject to child protection plans from Coventry. However, this does not result in differential practice and they do contact Warwickshire Children's Services to discuss concerns regarding children who present to UHCW and make referrals as appropriate. Jackie has checked with the other hospitals in Warwickshire and they do not have any difficulties with the procedures adopted by Warwickshire Children's Services in this regard. Therefore we do not think that there is any further action that needs to be taken.”

Source: Email from Jenny Butlin-Moran (Service Manager, Safeguarding) dated 8 January 2013

Response to the perceived need for closer working between Warwickshire Children's Services and the Arden Cluster on future action plans

“Warwickshire Children's Services and the Arden Cluster did devise an integrated action plan, derived from the recommendations made within the report compiled by Ofsted. Due to the way in which the inspectorate conducted the inspection process, a separate report was completed by the Care Quality Commission which detailed only the actions for the health economy – therefore its layout was different. It was this action plan that Jacqueline Barnes referred to when she met with Members. This did cause some confusion due to the difference in the layout although the content was the same. The resultant different plans unfortunately was beyond the control of Children's Services or the Arden Cluster and was a feature of the inspection process. I would like to reassure Members that Children's Services and the Arden Cluster did work collaboratively in devising the action plan and in subsequently reporting to the Safeguarding Children's Board.”

Source: Email from Jenny Butlin-Moran (Service Manager, Safeguarding) dated 8 January 2013