

Corporate Parenting Panel

Agenda **11 February 2013**

10.00am, COMMITTEE ROOM 2, SHIRE HALL, WARWICK

1. General

(1) Apologies for Absence

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election or appointment to the Council. A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which s/he has a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless s/he has a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if s/he has not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Must leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with (Standing Order 42)
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

Non-pecuniary interests must still be declared in accordance with the new Code of Conduct. These should be declared at the commencement of the meeting.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2012

(4) Chair's Announcements

2. Leaving Care

Members will review the national Charter for Care Leavers, produced by the Department for Education, along with the accompanying video, with a view to it being formally adopted by the Local Authority. A care leaver and worker will be in attendance for discussion and questions.

3. Dartington Project

Members will receive a presentation on the Local Authority's work with the Dartington Project.

4. Safeguarding Budget

The Chair of the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee has asked the Panel to consider the concerns raised by the Finance and Performance Working Group about variations in the Safeguarding budget across the county.

5. Safeguarding Task & Finish Group – Final Report

The final report of the Task & Finish Group is included for information, following endorsement by the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 30 January 2013.

Corporate Parenting Panel Membership

Councillors: John Appleton, Peter Fowler, Bob Hicks, Clive Rickhards, Carolyn Robbins (Chair), Chris Williams

Relevant Portfolio Holder

Councillor Heather Timms – Children and Schools

General enquiries

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**Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting
4 December 2012, 2.00pm**

Present:

Members

Cllr Appleton (Chair)
Cllr Fowler
Cllr Hicks
Cllr Rickhards
Cllr Robbins
Cllr Williams

Officers

Jo Davies, OM Leaving Care
Lesley Malley, OM Fostering
Brenda Vincent, Service Manager - Safeguarding
Richard Maybey, Democratic Services Officer

1.1 Apologies for absence

None

1.2 Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None

1.3 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2012

Agreed

1.4 Chair's Announcements

None

2 Introduction to the Fostering Service

Lesley Malley circulated the Fostering Service's "Statement of Purpose" and provided an overview of its operations:

- a) As a Local Authority (LA), Warwickshire does not run residential children's homes, but invests in a fostering service that provides care in a family setting
- b) Looked After Children (LAC) in foster care range from 0-18 years
- c) The LA provides support beyond the age of 18 via "staying put" and supported lodgings
- d) There are different types of foster placement – respite, short-term, long-term – all with the goal of leading to a permanent arrangement for the child
- e) Foster carers are expected to look after children in the same way they would their own. Carers must recognise and embrace the child's history and existing family; promote contact with the child's family; work with a range of professionals; and encourage integration with the carer's own family
- f) Carers are classed as self-employed, and receive an allowance from the LA. They may receive additional "payment for skills" payments if they reach certain standards and demonstrate their fostering competencies
- g) Prospective carers go through a thorough process comprising: initial informal conversation; receipt of information pack; first visit; signing of consent form for background checks; attendance at preparation groups; family assessment (including reference checks); drafting of report; presented to the Fostering Panel for a recommendation to the Head of Service as to whether they are suitable to foster; if successful, a placement is then sought

Questions from members:

Q. Does the LA make placements in out-of-county residential homes?

A. Yes, if a needs assessment suggests that is the best approach. There are currently 26 residential placements

Q. Does demand for foster carers exceed supply?

A. Yes. The LA is recruiting carers faster than before (although this is slightly offset by existing carers retiring) but does not match the demand. The excess demand is met via external fostering agencies, kinship arrangements (children living with their extended families) and through adoption

Q. What is the allowance rate for foster carers?

A. The LA follows the Fostering Network's recommended minimum allowances, which range from £134 to £232 per week dependent on the age of the child. The Fostering Network is proposing a 2% increase for 2013/14

Q. What are the financial support arrangements from central government in relation to Looked After Children – is it based on a formula, is it a historic amount, is it reviewed in line with changing LAC population?

A. Officers were unable to confirm precise arrangements, so it was agreed that Richard Maybey would request a briefing note from finance

Resolved

- The Action Plan to address concerns raised by Ofsted, and the report of the Safeguarding Improvement Task & Finish Group monitoring its implementation, to be circulated to members ***[Richard Maybey]***
- A briefing note explaining the finance arrangements between central and local government for Looked After Children to be circulated to members ***[Richard Maybey]***
- Lesley Malley to attend a future meeting (approximately 6 months) to field any further questions ***[Invite to be issued when dates have been set]***

3 Looked After Children – Action Plan

Brenda Vincent explained how the colour-coded action plan shows that there are no red (incomplete) items, and the orange items are issues that are in development, often with moving targets or data that is not available until March.

Questions from members:

Q. What practical steps are being taken to improve the assessment completion rate?

A. There are processes in place to ensure the right response is made to prospective carers swiftly – and a clear milestone plan for the assessment procedure. Warwickshire works to a maximum assessment period of 6 months, compared to the national minimum standard of 8 months, but there will always be external factors that prevent applications from being completed (such as the outcome of reference checks or carers dropping out).

Resolved

Members were satisfied with progress against the action plan so far

4 **Get Ready for Adult Life (Leaving Care) – Action Plan**

Jo Davies delivered a presentation about the Leaving Care service, explaining that it had recently been renamed by care leavers to Get Ready for Adult Life (GRfAL) and outlining the structure of the service:

- a) There are children's teams in each of the 5 districts/boroughs, all of which have a GRfAL team to support young people in that area
- b) This works well, as it provides consistent and locally-based support
- c) Jo works centrally as the Operations Manager, providing consistency across the 5 districts/boroughs
- d) This arrangement is funded centrally by the county, but provision is organised locally to seek the best outcomes in each area
- e) There is a separate team for unaccompanied asylum seekers, who have very specialist needs
- f) Contact with care leavers is maintained by the service until they reach 21, with support offered to help them into work/education/training. They all have a Pathway Plan for needs assessment, signposting of further information and personal progression
- g) Guidance notes are issued to workers to help support care leavers (provided to members as part of the agenda)
- h) The LA has created around 11 apprenticeships recently, none of which have been filled by LAC. While LAC are entitled to an interview, there is no guarantee of them being successful
- i) A formal Charter for Care Leavers has been issued by the Department for Education, which was developed by care leavers themselves. Members were asked if and how the LA should formally adopt this

Resolved

- More needs to be done to encourage LAC to apply for apprenticeships [**no action identified**]
- Local businesses need to be encouraged to offer more apprenticeship opportunities [**no action identified**]
- The LEP should be asked to promote the support available to businesses who do offer apprenticeships, e.g., the set-up grant and payment of training fees [**no action identified**]
- Members to consider the Charter for Care Leavers at the next meeting, along with the accompanying video, and agree if and how the LA should formally adopt it. A care leaver and worker to be invited to the next meeting for questions [**Jo Davies to arrange**]
- Members to be sent the "Your Pathway" needs assessment/pathway plan and Henrietta Bond book order form [**Richard Maybey**]

5 **Performance Data**

Brenda Vincent circulated the latest data set, which included benchmarking information against other local authorities as requested. This showed that Warwickshire has improved its ranking in all categories.

6 Other business

The next meeting date was confirmed as 11 February 2012, 10am.

Agenda items:

- Update on Dartington project – Phil Sawbridge
- Charter for Care Leavers – Jo Davies

The subsequent meeting in April (date to be confirmed) would be reserved for an introduction to the Advocacy and Complaints Service for LAC, plus one further item (if needed) to be agreed in February.

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Chair

The meeting closed at 4.00pm

AGENDA ITEM 2



Department
for Education



Charter for Care Leavers

A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This Charter sets out promises care leavers want the Central and Local Government to make. Promises and Principles help in decision making and do not replace laws; they give guidance to show how laws are designed to be interpreted.

The key principles in this Charter will remain constant through any changes in Legislation, Regulation and Guidance. Care leavers urge Local Authorities to use these principles when they make decisions about young people's lives. The Charter for Care Leavers is designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what Government and Local Authorities should do to be good Corporate Parents.

We Promise:

To respect and honour your identity

- We will support you to discover and to be who you are and honour your unique identity. We will help you develop your own personal beliefs and values and accept your culture and heritage. We will celebrate your identity as an individual, as a member of identity groups and as a valued member of your community. We will value and support important relationships, and help you manage changing relationships or come to terms with loss, trauma or other significant life events. We will support you to express your identity positively to others.

To believe in you

- We will value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations. We will hold a belief in your potential and a vision for your future even if you have lost sight of these yourself. We will help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can. We will believe in you, celebrate you and affirm you.

To listen to you

- We will take time to listen to you, respect, and strive to understand your point of view. We will place your needs, thoughts and feelings at the heart of all decisions about you, negotiate with you, and show how we have taken these into account. If we don't agree with you we will fully explain why. We will provide easy access to complaint and appeals processes and promote and encourage access to independent advocacy whenever you need it.

To inform you

- We will give you information that you need at every point in your journey, from care to adulthood, presented in a way that you want including information on legal entitlements and the service you can expect to receive from us at different stages in the journey. We will keep information up to date and accurate. We will ensure you know where to get current information once you are no longer in regular touch with leaving care services. We will make it clear to you what information about yourself and your time in care you are entitled to see. We will support you to access this when you want it, to manage any feelings that you might have about the information, and to put on record any disagreement with factual content.

To support you

- We will provide any support set out in current Regulations and Guidance and will not unreasonably withhold advice when you are no longer legally entitled to this service. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help we will provide emotional support. We will make sure you do not have to fight for support you are entitled to and we will fight for you if other agencies let you down. We will not punish you if you change your mind about what you want to do. We will continue to care about you even when we are no longer caring for you. We will make it our responsibility to understand your needs. If we can't meet those needs we will try and help you find a service that can. We will help you learn from your mistakes; we will not judge you and we will be here for you no matter how many times you come back for support.

To find you a home

- We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living only when you are ready. We will help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation that is right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times you may need to take a step back and start over again. We will do our best to support you until you are settled in your independent life; we will not judge you for your mistakes or refuse to advise you because you did not listen to us before. We will work proactively with other agencies to help you sustain your home.

To be a lifelong champion

- We will do our best to help you break down barriers encountered dealing with other agencies. We will work together with the services you need, including housing, benefits, colleges & universities, employment providers and health services to help you establish yourself as an independent individual. We will treat you with courtesy and humanity whatever your age when you return to us for advice or support. We will help you to be the driver of your life and not the passenger. We will point you in a positive direction and journey alongside you at your pace. We will trust and respect you. We will not forget about you. We will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.

Guidance: What needs to be considered during pathway planning

This should build upon any previous plan, including their Care Plan or Pathway Plan. It is very important to focus on the positives as well as where there are difficulties.

NB this includes guidance in Leaving Care Act, LAC Reviews, Transitions Guidance & Care Planning Regs
If an UASC then consider triple planning, including voluntary returns.

CAREER?

Consider the information within their PEP completed until they are of statutory school age, and any other information available. (This plan should incorporate the PEP/PEET if not completed)

- What do they enjoy or are good at?
- What did they achieve at school – think broadly, socially, educationally, other....
- What did/do they like and dislike? How could these be developed more?
- What activities or routines do they do now? What motivates them?
- Are they currently studying, working, and volunteering (full or part time)?
- If so, what support is currently being provided? How attends parent evenings, supports homework? Is it sufficient? Could the virtual school assist?
- What experience and skills do they have? How can they get more?
- What qualifications, training or relevant experience do they have?
- What are their future goals? How can we develop this further, into an occupation?
- What might be the obstacles in achieving this? How may they be overcome?
- What do they need to achieve these goals and who have they spoken to about them?
- What other training or employment is needed now or in the future?
- Have they got an up to date CV, confidence in searching for jobs/education; interview skills?
- Do they understand NI, Income Tax and other employment rights/responsibilities?

- Who can help them to achieve their goals and ambitions?
- What can we do to help this happen? Include the *GRPAT* Group.
- What do they do when things don't go as well as expected? What might help to get back on track?
- What are their continuing needs for education/employment/training?

HEALTH & WELLBEING?

- Include information from the recent Health Assessment and other available info. This must consider their physical, emotional and mental health.
- Have they been informed about their right to meet with a specialist Looked After Doctor or Nurse to talk through their health, including health prevention, and to ensure support is provided?
- If they refuse, what might encourage their participation? Talk to the HELAC nurse.
- Are they registered with a GP/dentist and optician? Do they know where to find them and how to make an appointment? Do they have specialist services or know how get such support if needed?
- Are they, or anyone else, concerned about:
 - Their general health, e.g. eyesight/hearing; dental health, immunisations, eating habits; sleeping patterns, leisure activities, accidents, illnesses....
 - Any family health issues or difficulties, now or in the past?
 - Their diet /eating and the importance of exercise to stay healthy?
 - Their relationships with other people, and what would help?
 - Their ability to keep safe? Including any bullying or harm they are exposed to? Include social networks? Include any running away or missing from placement etc.
 - Their behaviour or emotional wellbeing (I.e. sadness / anger / anxiety / tiredness, lack of motivation / concentration / loneliness / changes in behaviour / feeling out of control)?
 - Their use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs/substances, gambling, gaming etc.?
 - Their sexual health and well-being (contraception, sexually transmitted infections, feeling pressurised by others, views about becoming a parent?)? Include the *GRPAT* Group.
 - Their access to sexual health information and local clinics?
 - Their identity (It must consider their Disability; Religion; Race; Linguistic Background & Culture; It should also consider any other identity needs, I.e. gender, sexuality, mental health)?
 - Anything else?
- If so, what support has been provided and what else might help?
- What do they want to happen, who may support them in achieving this?
- Can we make any referrals to support them more? Include contact full details of possible support?
- If the young person does become concerned about anything, who do they think they can talk to?
- What other support is available, I.e. confidential support; include these in their plan.

FAMILY & FRIENDS?	<p>Who are the most important people in their life; consider parents, siblings, wider family, friendships, previous carers, professionals? Consider current and historically.</p> <p>How often do they have contact with these significant people?</p> <p>Is there any consideration about living with family members or supported lodgings within network?</p> <p>What are the parents'/carer's views? How have we taken these people's views into account?</p> <p>What do they enjoy doing with these people, would they like to do other things?</p> <p>How do they get there, are there any difficulties? How can these be sorted?</p> <p>Is there anyone they would want to see or talk to more? Are there people that they miss?</p> <p>How can we improve this support network?</p> <p>Are there any difficulties, including risks, in these relationships or arrangements? What may help?</p> <p>How can we promote continuity of these positive relationships if planned changes ahead?</p> <p>Does the support network encourage & enable positive transitions to adulthood, what else is needed?</p> <p>Do they understand the full range of Leaving Care Support: Allocated worker, Personal Advisors, Virtual School, Advocacy, Independent visitors, Mentors?</p> <p>Do they know they can contact EDT if there is a crisis out of hours?</p>
WHERE THEY LIVE: (inc Independence skills)?	<p>Their current arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do they feel about their current accommodation? Is this accommodation suitable and meeting their needs into the future? Are the relationships positive within this accommodation? If not, what needs to be done, by whom and by when? What are the financial arrangements, do they have clear understanding of their budgeting? What local activities do / could they do? What might help this happen? Has anything happened in the past, which may reoccur and put their accommodation at risk? What can we do to reduce this likelihood? What is the plan if things start to go wrong? Outline the contingency planning. <p>Do they have the practical and other skills for independent living?</p> <p>We have a duty to support them to feel fully prepared for living independently. Do they, or anyone else, think that they need more support about independence skills, i.e. Cooking, Budgeting, Washing, Ironing, Cleaning, Personal hygiene, Shopping, Public Transport?</p> <p>Who will support them to develop this? Include the <i>GRPAT</i> Group.</p> <p>Their future plans: (Staying Put, Supported Lodgings, Supported Housing, Independent Living, Other.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do they want to live with others? Whereabouts? What are their choices available in the longer term? What do they prefer? Is this realistic and/or suitable (separate assessment & review to discuss options beforehand)? What needs to occur for the young person to move onto in their accommodation? What are their other options if things don't go to plan?
FINANCES?	<p>We have a duty to assess their actual and anticipated ability to manage their finances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do they have a bank account, and do they feel confident to use it? Do they, or others, have any concerns about budgeting? What might help? Do they make good use of their Allowances? If in foster care, is this managed well by the carer? Do they know what they will receive from the Team, now and in the future (E.g. allowances, accommodation, incentives, LTS, birthday/Celebration, independence support, on-going educational support may be available until 24, including university bursary) Do they understand where else they can receive money, E.g. Employment, Benefits, Bursaries etc.? Do they understand "saving" for more expensive items? What do they want to use their LTS for? Do they feel able to ask for additional support? Who can they talk to?
BEING INVOLVED?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have they attended their LAC reviews and pathway planning meetings? How involved do they feel? How can we improve this? What might get in the way? Do they have any comments, complaints or compliments about the service? Do they know they can talk to a manager if they are unhappy with the service (or the complaints unit)? Do they understand their journey into / through care? Their current plan? What might help? Do they have opportunities to meet with other Looked After people or Care Leavers? Would they like to be more involved in developing the service? Do they know about the Children In Care Council/FORUM, and other participation activities?

AGENDA ITEM 3

The Dartington Project

Revisions to the running of
Children's Panels

Introduction

- The Dartington Project is a partnership between Dartington Social Research Unit and Warwickshire Children's Services.
- It aims to safely reduce the numbers of children needing to become looked after by investing in evidence-based programmes which divert them from becoming accommodated.

Outline of the Project

- Dartington Social Research Unit (SRU) is working with Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and Sandwell MBC on this project
- It commenced in the summer of 2011 and will run for a total of 3 years
- A steering group has been set up which includes, Safeguarding, Early Intervention, Health, Business Intelligence
- There are sub-groups to consider communication, Children's Panels and learning and development from the programme.

Progress so far(1)

- A “Matching Needs and Services” exercise was undertaken on 100 children which identified the main needs of children in our LAC population
- This has helped to identify that we will be investing in Functional Family Therapy as our Evidence-Based Programme for 10-16 year olds to divert children at the edge of care from becoming looked after.
- We will also be offering “Triple P- level 4” to families where children aged 10+ are at the edge of care.
- The evaluation will involve carefully comparing the progress and outcomes of two groups of children, one of which has been looked after and the second, has received the FFT programme.
- The research design will be a random control trial, by far the most powerful way of evaluating impact, and has been approved both by ethics committee of both the Social Research Unit and by Warwickshire

Progress so far (2)

- We have also undertaken a “Going Home” exercise which has identified the key factors in children’s circumstances which indicates that they may be able to return home
- From this exercise, 15 children are being considered by managers as to whether they can return home.

The decision to divert a child from accommodation (1).

- Following the 'Edge of Care' meeting called by the Practice Leader when separation from the family home is judged to be a real possibility.
- Multi-agency meeting to include professionals working with child and an Early Intervention manager.

The decision to divert a child from accommodation (2)

- *What more can be done to ensure that we reduce or remove significant impairments to the child's development and ensure that s/he can safely remain with their family?*

The decision to divert a child from accommodation (3)

- Where the decision is that the child should remain at home and work should continue with the family, a Child in Need Plan will need to be completed.
- Resources are available to support this incl FIP, Triple P level 4

The decision to divert a child from accommodation(4)

- Where a decision is made to look after a young person aged 10-16 you should consider the criteria for FFT as an alternative to accommodation.

Referral to FFT(1)

- An Operations Manager has agreed that the risk to this young person is not so specific and severe that they must leave their home for reasons of their safety
- An Operations Manager has agreed that the young person meets the criteria for FFT and that there is no reason why they should not be referred to the programme
- The young person and their family have read and understand the leaflet on Functional Family Therapy, or that it has been explained to them, and that they agree to be referred to the programme if a place is available and allocated to them

Referral to FFT (2)

- The allocated worker, or another relevant person, will then find out if a place on the programme will be available.
- This will be done by firstly checking that the young person meets the criteria for the programme,
- then whether the programme has the capacity to accept the referral and begin contact with the family almost immediately.
- The young person will then be randomly allocated either to the programme or to becoming looked after.

Revisions to Children's Panels.

- As this project directly relates to children becoming looked after, Children's Panels will become a key vehicle for monitoring the effectiveness of the EBP on keeping the child out of accommodation and being able to return home in a timely manner.
- The project has looked at how to streamline processes to avoid duplication.

What's New?-Edge of Care Meetings

- The minutes of the Edge of Care meetings that are held where there is a real possibility of a child becoming looked after, will be sent to Children's Panels. This aims to:
- Review and raise with the Operations Manager any observations on the plan for a particular child/young person, and provide advice on the best way forward - in some cases the Panel may also ask for further progress reports
- Ensure that for each child/young person that is looked after, permanency is achieved as quickly as possible
- Identify broad issues of demand, resources or practice and ensure that these are placed appropriately within the Partnership (*for example within the Sufficiency Duty Strategy*) for detailed discussion and resolution.

What's New?-Membership

- The Panel's membership will be multi-agency:
- Social Care Operations Managers,
- Area Leads from the Virtual School
- Designated health professional for LAC,
- Fostering Practice Leader,
- Adoption Manager
- Early Intervention Manager,
- Children's Reviewing Manager,
- Primary Mental Health Practitioner and
- Integrated Youth Support staff
- **with each representative being in a position to share information known to that agency/service about the child/young person or family, and empowered to commit resources to effecting the decision reached.**

What's New?-Care Planning

- All Panels will give a high priority to discussing cases of children who have just become looked after.
- The Care Plan needs to address :
 - the transition for the child into their new placement, where this has not already occurred.
 - A timely decision on permanency needs to be taken. Where that is to return home, the Care Plan needs to address:
 - How the child can retain continuity (of territory and role as well as contact) within the family
 - What work will continue with the family to address the problems that caused the separation
 - How continuity of education can be maintained, any hobbies or interests of the child can be pursued and how religious belief or other elements of personal identity can be developed

What's New?- Twin Track Planning

- Children's Panel will endorse a twin track plan which needs to be presented to the second looked after review.
- There may be cases where sufficient progress has not been made by the second review, but could be envisaged within a time-scale appropriate to the child/young person that would still allow a return home.

What's New? Role of IRO

- LAC reviews also have a crucial role in ensuring that the agreed plan for a looked after child is progressed in a timely fashion appropriate to the needs of, and ensuring the best outcomes for the child.
- Where the IROs have concerns, these should be raised with the allocated social worker or Practice leader, including if necessary the Operations Manager and/or Service Manager.
- The IRO Service, in conjunction with operational staff, will agree 'exemplar' Care Plan for each group of children identified in the Matching Needs and Services review undertaken in 2011 and standards against which cases of children looked after might be referred back to later Panel meetings. Both the exemplar care plans and standards for referral back will be informed by research.

What's New?-Information Framework.

- The Business Intelligence Unit will develop an information framework, available to each Children's Panel and to Operations Managers, that tracks the progress for each child from the point of the first 'Edge of Care' Meeting.
- These staff will from time to time attend Panel meetings and facilitate an information based discussion on consistency across the County.
- They will also formally report regularly to the Steering Group of the Looked After Children's Project and information will be shared more widely within the management groups within the Safeguarding and Early Intervention Services.
- To ensure that the information is focused and accessible, a limited number of data will be tracked for each child, by Children's Panel. The information will also allow comparison between Panels on key data and against baseline data on children's needs within their area (for example child poverty).

AGENDA ITEM 4

Referral of Safeguarding budget issue from Finance & Performance Working Group

On 11 September 2012, the Finance and Performance Working Group considered the Quarter 1 2012/13 Organisational Health Report to Cabinet.

It identified concern at the forecast overspend in the Safeguarding budget (see the relevant extract from the Cabinet report on page 2 of 2).

The Working Group asked that the Children and Young People OSC consider the issue further, focusing particularly on how the County Council would mitigate the increase in costs and the disproportionate increase in statutory workloads in the north of the county.

Cllr Jackson, as Chair of the OSC, has since referred this to the Corporate Parenting Panel for consideration.

Extract from Finance and Performance Working Group action sheet

Action / Question	Progress / Response
<p><i>Safeguarding, 2012/13 Revenue Budget – budget variations across the three Social Care Teams were significantly different, in terms of underspend and overspend. There was a request for clarity around this.</i></p>	<p>As at Quarter 2 the overall Business Unit overspend equates to 5% of budget and is mainly caused by child placement and child protection costs exceeding budgets due to increasing numbers of child protection/looked after cases and higher than expected sessional staff payments who have to be present for child family meets as directed by the Courts. Despite a 13% increase in statutory workload over the last twelve months the overspend has been managed in all areas except the North where numbers have increased disproportionately. In the South & East this has only been achievable with an increased general culture of austerity/tighter fiscal control within the service taking account of assessed risk. In addition the profile of the care settings has changed as the internal fostercare market has been unable to grow in line with the rising numbers. This has driven an increase in the unit cost per child. 4 additional children are being cared for in Residential settings and 47 more children in external fostercare. The average weekly costs of these placements to the authority are £2,500 and £889 respectively. In-house fostercare provision by comparison is £406 per week.</p> <p><i>On the 19th November 2012, the Working Group agreed to forward this to the CYP OSC for further consideration, focusing particularly on how the County Council would mitigate the increase in costs and the disproportionate increase in statutory workloads in the north of the county.</i></p>

Referral of Safeguarding budget issue from Finance & Performance Working Group

Extract from Cabinet report: Quarter 1 2012/13 Organisational Health Report

Revenue Spending

Since the service estimates were approved in March there have been a number changes to the budget. These changes are due to agreements between Heads of Service in the delivery of the 2012/13 budget as well as the adjustment of revenue budgets, flowing from the approved carry forwards in the 2011/12 Q4 Organisational Health report. As a result the current budget is £15.218 million higher than the original budget reported to Council in March.

Table 2: 2012/13 Revenue Budget – Summary of Agreed and Projected Changes						
App.	Group/ Service	Budget as 01/04/2012 £'000	Agreed Changes £'000	Revised Budget £'000	Variation	
					£'000	%
	People Group					
A	Safeguarding	36,071	(219)	35,852	1,307	3.6%
B	Social Care & Support	99,936	620	100,556	(1,049)	-1.0%
C	Business Manager	17,088	76	17,164	658	3.8%
D	Strategic Commissioning	16,407	495	16,902	(207)	-1.2%
E	Early Intervention and Family Support	17,351	(420)	16,931	(387)	-2.3%
F	Learning and Achievement	64,933	3,198	68,131	1,332	2.0%
	Resources Group					
G	Customer Service	9,074	170	9,244	(66)	-0.7%
H	Finance	4,500	2,240	6,740	(34)	-0.5%
I	Human Resources & Organisational Development	4,419	172	4,591	(13)	-0.3%
J	Information Assets	6,335	329	6,664	76	1.1%
K	Law and Governance	1,110	34	1,144	(160)	-14.0%
L	Physical Assets	14,043	416	14,459	(90)	-0.6%
M	Service Improvement and Change Management	2,455	28	2,483	(36)	-1.4%
	Communities Group					
N	Sustainable Communities	20,107	2,519	22,626	(451)	-2.0%
O	Localities and Community Safety	9,955	1,699	11,654	(824)	-7.1%
P	Transport and Highways	26,183	1,943	28,126	118	0.4%
Q	Public Health	135	58	193	0	0.0%
R	Fire and Rescue	19,483	1,869	21,352	83	0.4%
S	Other Services	(46,167)	(8)	(45,586)	(1,403)	3.0%
	Total	323,418	15,218	338,636	(1,132)	-0.3%

Safeguarding – The forecast overspend is predominantly due to the increasing numbers of child protection cases, in addition to higher than anticipated payments to sessional staff who, as directed by the Courts, must be present for child family meets. The service is delaying some project work in order to correct this variance.

AGENDA ITEM 5



SAFEGUARDING IMPROVEMENT TASK & FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT

*Working for
Warwickshire*

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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.