



Agenda Item 3 (i)

EAST AYRSHIRE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE: 26 AUGUST 2009

PERFORMANCE & AUDIT SUB GROUP REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee in respect of the work of the performance and audit sub group.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The performance and audit sub group has met three times since the last Child Protection Committee and has reviewed progress in relation to its action plan and the assessing risks and needs self-evaluation plan.

3. SELF EVALUATION

- 3.1 One of the key tasks of the sub group is to oversee the multi- agency self evaluation report for the child protection inspection. The group have agreed a proforma for each agency to complete in line with the revised quality indicators. Each agency in East Ayrshire is currently compiling their own self evaluation report which will detail the areas of good practice, impact and areas for improvement. These will then be collated along with details of the Child Protection Committees work into a multi agency self evaluation report which will be presented by the Chief Officers Group to the HMle principal inspection team.

4. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- 4.1 The performance and audit sub group has collated the information from the assessing risks and needs action plan, the baby P action plan and other tasks allocated to them from the annual report and business plan, recommendations from HMle inspection report and significant case reviews in to a master plan. The sub group review this plan at each meeting to chart their progress.
- 4.2 Part of this plan relates to gaining the views of children and their families who have experienced the child protection process. The self evaluation forms were agreed at the Child Protection Committee on 19 May 2009. The evaluation forms pilot in the Cumnock area for a 3 month period was slightly delayed due to difficulties in briefing staff during the school holidays and the 3 month pilot will begin 24 August 2009.

4.3 File Sampling Group

The file sampling group was established following the last Child Protection Committee to carry out the file sampling work of the self evaluation plan. The group has representation from Child Protection Co-ordinator (Chair), Social Work, Schools, Early Years, Health and SCRA, Police (x2) and Housing.

East Ayrshire hosted a Pan Ayrshire training event led by Fiona McManus (HMIe) looking at file sampling and the revised quality indicators. The group drafted and circulated to the CPC members for agreement a file sampling agreement (appendix 1). The group agreed the audit tools to be used for CP1 sampling and a separate tool for file auditing. The audit tool ensured that the actions of the assessing risks and needs action plan would be fulfilled and looked at areas for improvement from the last inspection.

On 4 August 2009 the group audited 9 CP1s and on 12 August 2009 the group audited 4 child's files. A full report will be circulated to committee members detailing the file auditing activity in due course. This report will highlight areas of good practice and areas for improvement with an action plan.

The key action point raised from the file reading were: -

- a. Overall the file reading demonstrated good practice with clear communication between agencies;
- b. One case highlighted a need to ensure that if one agency is aware that a child who has come into the area has previously been on the child protection register in another area that it would be good practice to share this information with the key agencies;
- c. Ensure that when there are pre birth concerns and case conferences at birth that the information from the Midwives file is transferred to the Health Visitor file;
- d. Lack of reference in CP1 and files to term 'tripartite'. In the majority of cases there was clear communication between health, social work and police. In a few of the cases there was no reference in the CP1 or case file of discussions with health at the information gathering stage.

4.4 Supervision tool

The Performance and Audit group from the recommendation in relation to Baby Peter which highlighted the importance of supervision and the need to encourage self evaluation at all levels, a supervision checklist was drafted. Following comments from the Practitioners sub group and Practitioners forum in June 2009. The tool has now been remitted by the Performance and Audit sub group to the Practitioners group for further discussion as to whether a

multi- agency supervision tool is a viable option. This matter will be discussed at the Practitioners forum meeting on 2 September 2009.

5. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

- 5.1 The sub group has been reviewing the provision of information to the committee from each of the key agencies. It has been agreed that a separate multi agency group needs to be established to look at how this information can be provided. Consideration must be given to this taking place in conjunction with the Pan Ayrshire Chair/ Lead officers meetings that are looking at an Ayrshire data set for management information.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Child Protection Committee is asked to: -
- (i) note the progress of the work of the sub group

Susan Taylor
Chair of the Child Protection Committee
18 August 2009

Report prepared by Diane Burns, Child Protection Co-ordinator



EAST AYRSHIRE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

MULTI AGENCY FILE AUDIT

PRACTICE AGREEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to set out agreed arrangements for conducting multi-agency file audits in East Ayrshire on behalf of the Child Protection Committee. The rationale underlying the multi-agency audit of child protection files is to evaluate and improve services to protect children in East Ayrshire, rather than to review individual records.

In line with the revised Quality Indicators “How well do we protect children and meet their needs” part of the task of the audits will be to examine the outcome for the child.

FILE READER FUNCTION

The function of the file reader is to act as auditors to audit and review the files. The group members shall not be reviewing the files in the capacity of a managerial review.

PREPARATION FOR AUDIT

Prior to a multi-agency file audit taking place the Child Protection Committee will agree the purpose of the audit and the focus. The audit tool can be refined for each audit to ensure that the appropriate quality indicators are being audited.

CONFIDENTIALITY

No individual names will be recorded or identified in any evidential record held by members of the audit team. Service users will not be identified or recognisable in any of the reports produced. All the notes taken by file readers and evidence collected will use identifying numbers, not names. The notes taken by the file readers will be handed in to the child protection co-ordinator at the end of the session.

All members of the Inspection file reading group are bound by professional obligations to preserve confidentiality.

SELECTION OF SAMPLE

Cases will be selected by the child protection co-ordinator using the criteria set by the child protection committee and the file sample group.

CASE RECORDS

Records will be brought by the agency representative on the day of the file reading and will not leave the room where the sampling is taking place. No copies of records will be made by the file sample team. While the majority of records are likely to be read by one file reader, some cases could be read by two file readers. Where more than one person reads the records, evaluations will be jointly agreed and recorded by one file reader.

Health Case Files

Where consent has not been given by the parent/child for the case file to be read by another agency, only the health representative, on the case file reading group, can read the file. An entry must be made in the file of the date of the case file reading and the name and designation of the reader.

IF A CONCERN IS FOUND WITHIN A FILE

If a file reader is concerned that a child has suffered or is suffering (or is at risk of suffering) from previously un-investigated abuse, the matter will be referred immediately to the relevant agencies following East Ayrshire Child Protection Guidelines.

If the file reader is concerned that the quality of the service is so poor that children are being placed at immediate risk (e.g. a worker who condones very risky behaviour by a teenager; a severe shortage of staff in a care service; or a plan to protect an individual child that has not been implemented). In such circumstances, the matter will be raised by the child protection co-ordinator with the person responsible for the day to day management of the service. The reasons for the concern will be fully explained to these persons and they will be advised to immediately address the matter in such a way as to ensure that children are kept safe.

On other occasions, it may be that in the assessment of the file reader that the quality of the service has been very poor over a considerable period and, whilst not putting children at immediate risk, endangers their safety, health or well-being in the longer term (e.g. allowing contact with a very emotionally abusive parent to continue even though the child does not want it; a child living in a residential school that has no facilities to support their disability; or a young person who has very onerous caring responsibilities for a mentally ill parent and has no support). In such circumstances, the matter will be immediately raised with the person responsible for providing the day to day running of the service.

Any other issues in relation to practice development and areas for improvement that do not involve the immediate safety of the child will be reported to the Child Protection Committee in the file audit report.

OUTCOME OF FILE READING

Following the file reading exercise the information from the readers sample tool will be compiled into a report for the Child Protection Committee. The report will highlight areas of good practice and areas for improvement. The report will be written in line with the Quality Indicators.

Any issues in relation to practice development and areas for improvement that do not involve the immediate safety of the child will be reported to the Child Protection Committee in the file audit report.

This Code of Practice will be reviewed after the first file sample exercise session and will be modified accordingly, in the light of any new issues identified