

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Update on working group activity

This report provides an update on the activities of the Board's various working groups, since the last meeting on 17th September.

Safeguarding – Resources

This working group held two sessions on 24th September.

In the first session, Members met with care management team staff and a core group for child protection plans, to hear at first hand from staff about their roles in the process.

The second session provided detailed information on resources including:

- the current position with regard to social work staff involved in front-line child protection work: eg numbers of social workers, caseload, vacancy rates, sickness rates, recruitment and retention programmes, training and development, supervision, experience levels, turnover.
- the numbers of children at risk: eg the numbers of referrals, numbers of initial and core assessments, performance against target times for assessments, number of children with a child protection plan
- budget provision for this area of work

The final session has been rearranged for 21st October. This is due to cover the following areas:

- the LGA report – Respect and protect: respect, recruitment and retention in children's social work. Safe recruitment practice.
- findings of the audit of child protection plans for 0-4 year olds in Leeds, and the Leeds self-evaluation of issues arising from the 'baby P' case, and relevant action plans from the service transformation programme
- information about the handling of serious case reviews in Leeds, including Ofsted assessment of the reviews, and the implementation of findings from reviews

Safeguarding – Preventative Duty

The second session of this working group will meet on 7th October, and will focus on

- progress towards becoming a Common Assessment Framework (CAF)-led city
- pilot implementation of the CAF and Budget Holding Lead Professional programme

- take-up and outcomes of CAFs across the city to date, including number of CAFs undertaken, number of staff trained to undertake CAFs, spread of lead CAF professionals, examples of good practice and potential barriers to take-up

The remainder of the sessions are timetabled for 16th , 26th and 29th October. These sessions will cover the following areas:

- the role of statutory sector partners in the CAF programme and the preventative duty, taking domestic violence as a theme for considering various partners' contributions.
- meeting with local Safeguarding Children Board Chairs
- the role of the voluntary, community and faith sector in contributing to the CAF programme and the preventative duty.

A date is currently being finalised for a joint session of both Safeguarding working groups to consider the emerging conclusions and recommendations of the inquiry.

Dates are also currently being finalised for the following working group meetings:

14-19 Review – meeting with employers
School Organisation Consultations – second meeting
Attendance – end of calendar year review
Youth Service Surveys – first meeting