

Annual Report on Child Protection Performance and Service Developments

Education, Children and Families Committee

21/06/12

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To inform Committee about progress on key performance indicators, and service developments, in Child Protection, specifically in relation to the Children's Practice Teams within City of Edinburgh Council.

2. Summary

- 2.1. Child protection services within the council have been on a journey of improvement over the last 4 years since departmental re-organisation in 2008. Performance on key indicators has continued to improve and the service is now doing well across all these indicators. This has been achieved partly through internal improvement actions but also through better partnership with other agencies such as the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration.
- 2.2. This report describes other key service developments including the establishment of Social Care Direct as a single point of contact for all requests for a social work service for families; improved arrangements for assessment of kinship care and plans to improve support to kinship carers; a positive picture in relation to recruitment of social workers in CEC; plans to develop services through the Early Years Fund; improved arrangements for jointly interviewing children subject to Child Protection Procedures; and the development of a learning culture within children's social work in Edinburgh, including a partnership approach with Edinburgh University.

3. Main report

- 3.1.1 Child protection services within City of Edinburgh are on a journey of improvement. The HMle inspection report of 2009 found significant improvements since the inspection of 2007 and rated services as satisfactory overall. Inspectors expressed confidence that managers would make the required improvements and that no further visits were necessary in connection with that inspection.

3.1.2 Since then the Care Inspectorate has completed a further inspection of social work services across City of Edinburgh. The report made 4 recommendations:

- (i) The service should improve communication with people who use services and their carers to ensure they are listened to about proposed changes in the services they receive.
- (ii) The service should continue to improve systems for recording information about people who use services, and ensure that information is accessible to those professionals who need it.
- (iii) The service should ensure that workload monitoring and file auditing takes account of the quality of the work undertaken by staff, and it's impact on service users and takes the views of staff into account when making changes to workload management.
- (iv) The service should continue to improve review processes and ensure that those most vulnerable are subject to reviews by appropriately qualified and experienced staff, and any concerns responded to quickly.

3.1.3 Some of the improvement actions listed below relate directly to these recommendations, particularly in relation to case evaluation and reviews of children and young people

3.1.4 The Care Inspectorate is due to conduct a multi-agency children's services inspection protection in Edinburgh in October/November 2012. The multi-agency Child Protection Improvement Plan is being revised by the Child Protection Committee, with the priorities for improvement being self-evaluation and advocacy for children. The inspection will have a broad focus, looking not just at child protection but also at Looked After Children, Children in Need, Adoption and Early Years.

3.2 **Key Performance Indicators**

3.2.1 Performance levels and improvements across a number of key indicators have been encouraging this year

3.2.2 Appendix 1 contains an extract from a recent report to the Social Work Performance Management Group. This group oversees performance on key indicators relating to child protection and other social work performance

3.2.3 Allocation of social workers to children on the Child Protection Register and Looked After Children has been 100% throughout the year. This is in spite of an increase in the numbers of Looked After Children from 1,342 to 1,398 in the year 2011/12

3.2.4 Provision of reports to the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration has shown continued improvement with the final 2011/12 SCRA figure expected to be above 70% compared to 66% for 2010/11.

- 3.2.5 In June 2011, the authority implemented the National Child Protection Guidance, including decreasing the timescale for Initial Child Protection Case Conferences (ICPCCs) from 28 to 21 days, and introducing a 3 month review after registration. This came just a few months after a reorganisation of the independent reviewing teams (the integrated service now being known as the Children and Young People's Review Team). The implementation of national guidance, along with the increase in numbers of Looked After and Accommodated Children, created some pressure on the service, and there was a dip in ICPCC performance at the turn of the year. Despite this the overall performance trends are upward with 81% of ICPCCs taking place within the 21 day timescale in 2011/12 compared to 79% taking place within the 28 day timescale in 2010/11.
- 3.2.6 The percentage of all Looked After and Accommodated Children (LAAC) who had been reviewed within timescale improved from 62% in March 2011 to 81% in March 2012. This improvement reflects the ongoing monthly performance of conducting LAAC reviews within timescale which was 90% in March 2012
- 3.2.7 Formal monitoring and reporting of reviews for children Looked After at Home was introduced during 2011 with the percentage of all LAC at Home who had been reviewed within timescale being 74% as at March 2012.
- 3.2.8 Formal monitoring and reporting of the allocation of an independent reviewing Officer to newly accommodated children was recently introduced with none of the 28 cases in March 2012 waiting more than the target maximum of five days.

3.3 Service Development

- 3.3.1 Social Care Direct continues to provide an effective one-stop shop for all children's social work referrals, ensuring that children needing a social work service are work-flowed promptly to the practice team for allocation of a worker.
- 3.3.2 In relation to requests for service which do not meet the threshold for social work allocation, there is still no mechanism to ensure that information about incidents involving children (eg police reports of child concerns) is passed to the named person in universal services. Discussion is underway to resolve this within the Children's Partnership.
- 3.3.3 Recruitment of social workers continues to be done on a city-wide basis. We have protected staffing levels within social work practice teams in spite of overall budget reductions and recruitment continues to be healthy in that we attract a large number of good quality recruits each time we advertise. Our establishment of social work practitioners across the city is 115 social workers and 40.5 senior practitioners. In the last year, 14 social worker posts were converted to senior practitioner as part of the staff retention strategy. These are included in the figure of 40.5. Both figures include staff in the specialist disability team and the hospital social work teams. We have a small number

of vacant posts created by recent moves and will be advertising to fill these in the near future.

- 3.3.4 Over the last 2 years the service has developed an assessment service for kinship carers of Looked After Children. The service is managed by a kinship care co-ordinator, who oversees all assessments. Most of these are carried out by independent assessors employed on a “piecemeal” basis to do individual assessments. The service has dealt with 370 referrals in the last 30 months involving over 460 children. The work of the team was reported to the Children’s Partnership in March 2012. There is work in progress to consolidate the service and to commission services to improve support to kinship carers. We have also recently set up a multi agency advisory group on kinship care to ensure that all agencies are working together and taking into account the views of kinship carers.
- 3.3.5 Another issue in relation to kinship care is that Looked After Children admitted to kinship placements do not currently receive a service from the Looked After Nurses in NHS. In addition, there is no medical advice provided to the kinship care panel which makes recommendations on routes to permanence in relation to children placed in kinship care. This issue is under discussion at the Children’s Partnership.
- 3.3.6 The work of the Early Years Fund group and Priority Based Planning within CEC will also include proposals to strengthen early support to children and families at risk or in need, by improving models of family and community support and implementing evidence based practice approaches such as Multi-Systemic Therapy.
- 3.3.7 Child protection case audits in social work continue to show good results in relation to clear plans being in place which meet the needs of children and families. The service now needs to develop our model of case auditing to have a greater focus on the quality of intervention and the outcomes for children and their families. Work is underway with the Quality Improvement Team to develop this model, which will include a greater level of dialogue with social workers and team leaders about specific cases. The aim would be to then widen this approach on a multi-agency basis in order to strengthen multi-agency self-evaluation.
- 3.3.8 The service has an established social work/police rota for Joint Investigative Interviews of children within the child protection process. In addition to the fixed VRI equipment at Vega, we now have mobile equipment allowing for a more flexible approach. We have started to quality assure the video recorded interviews. This involves a JII trainer viewing the interview (with child and parental consent) and providing feedback to the worker/s involved. This process has only recently started and in due course we will be in a position to report on the findings of evaluations.
- 3.3.9 A Social Work Practice Panel is in place. The membership includes managers and practitioners from within CEC as well as representatives from Edinburgh University. It aims to support a culture of learning in social work including partnership with the academic sector. We have just held our second

practitioner event on the theme of “conversations about practice”, whereby workers have the opportunity to discuss what is informing their practice, how they make and sustain effective relationships with service users and achieve successful outcomes for children. Both events were attended by approximately 70 staff, with very positive feedback.

3.4 Action plan

The key points for further service improvement include:

- 3.4.1 Continue to work with SCRA to ensure data accuracy in relation to performance on reports.
- 3.4.2 Sustain improvements in relation to review and case conferences within timescale.
- 3.4.3 Develop case evaluation towards more analysis of quality and outcomes.
- 3.4.4 Develop work of practice panel, including joint funding bid with University to the Economic and Social Research Council for more activity to support learning culture.
- 3.4.5 Continue work of Early Years Fund including strengthen support to kinship care.
- 3.4.6 Implement advocacy service for children subject to child protection measures.
- 3.4.7 Consider better use of IT systems and Social Care Direct to route all child concerns (not referred to social work) to named person.
- 3.4.8 Consider service improvements in relation to access to Looked After Children’s Nurses for children in kinship placements; and provision of medical advice to kinship carers and kinship panels.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications of this report.

5 Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Strengthening arrangements for children in need of protection or looked after by the Council will have a positive impact in relation to reducing inequalities.

6 Environmental Impact

- 6.1 The report has no adverse environmental impact.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 Child protection services within City of Edinburgh Council, and within the multi-agency partnership, are on a journey of improvement. There has been

sustained improvements in Key Performance Indicators. The service therefore is in a good position to focus on more qualitative aspects of the service such as evaluating the quality of practice and building the learning culture within the organisation in order to continue to improve outcomes for children. Actions are in place to achieve this.

8 Recommendations

8.1. Committee members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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Appendices 1 Key performance measures

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Wards affected

Single Outcome
Agreement

Background
Papers







Appendix 1 - Children's Social Work Performance Monitoring Scorecard March 2012

Extract of Performance Indicators

PI Code	Short Name	3-month trend			Current Target	Traffic Light Icon	Latest Note
		January 2012 Value	February 2012 Value	March 2012 Value			
CF-VC-002a	Number of children on the Child Protection Register	254	258	266			
CF-VC-003	Number of children on the Child Protection Register without a named Key Worker	0	0	0	0		
CF-VC-005	Number of children on the Child Protection Register for more than 2 years	0	0	0			This good performance has been sustained for the last ten months.
CF-VC-007	Number of Looked After Children	1,405	1,415	1,398			The number of Looked After Children as at the end of March 2011 was 1342.
CF-VC-008	Number of Looked After Children without a named Key Worker	0	0	0	0		
CF-VC-010a	Number of Looked After Children at home	396	387	370			The figure has decreased from 402 in December 2011 to 370 in March 2012.
CF-VC-011a	Number of Looked After Children away from home	1,009	1,028	1,028			
CF-VC-013a	Number of children registered over a six month period	192	188	177			The six month period is October 2011 to March 2012.
CF-VC-013c	Percentage re-registered within 2 years	8.9%	8.5%	7.3%			The figure has decreased from the high of 9.9% in November 2011 to 7.3% in March 2012, which is in line with March 2011.
CF-VC-016	Percentage of children seen by a supervising officer within 15 working days	75%	80%	73%	100%		Ongoing data recording issues cause fluctuations in the monthly reported figures and these continue to be monitored. The confirmed annual figure for 2011/12 is 98% showing improvement with 2008/09 being 72%.
CF-VC-017bi	Percentage of initial child protection case conferences taking place within 28 days of an Inter-agency referral discussion	100%	100%	100%	100%		All 21 took place within 28 days.
CF-VC-017biii	Percentage of initial child protection case conferences taking place within	77%	100%	90%	100%		19 took place within 21 days.

Appendix 1 - Children's Social Work Performance Monitoring Scorecard March 2012

Extract of Performance Indicators

PI Code	Short Name	3-month trend			Current Target	Traffic Light Icon	Latest Note
		January 2012 Value	February 2012 Value	March 2012 Value			
	timescales (21 Days)						
CF-VC-017eiii	Percentage of pre-birth child protection case conferences taking place within timescales	75%	100%	100%	100%		
CF-VC-018a	Average number of days to complete an eIRD	13.1	12.1	9.6			This is based on the time from initiation of the IRD (Interagency Referral Discussion) in the multi-agency eIRD system to the point the IRD is signed off by all agencies and marked as completed. The calculation is then the average for all IRDs completed in the month. There were 71 IRDs closed this month.
CF-VC-021c	The percentage of Children's investigation reports received by the Reporter within target time (non-verified SCRA figures)	72%	65%	64%	75%		SCRA March performance was 57 of 89 received on time. The year to date figure stands at 70% which is above the 2010/11 figure of 66%
CF-VC-023a	Number of children subject to Place of Safety Warrants which were unimplemented on the day	0	1	1	0		s66: 30 warrants were issued for 30 children. 29 were placed on the day s69: 15 warrants were issued for 11 children. All children were placed on the day of warrant. The total figure for March is 45 warrants issued for 41 children. The warrant that was not implemented on the day related to one child and was implemented after one day.
CF-VC-024b	The percentage of current Looked After and Accommodated Children reviewed within timescales	78%	79%	81%	100%		This figure is the highest seen to date.
CF-VC-024h	Number of Looked After and Accommodated Children awaiting the allocation of a Reviewing Officer for more than five days	N/A	2	0	0		All new cases are initially added to the 'awaiting allocation' list prior to being allocated to a Reviewing Officer. The value for this month is based on 28 cases being allocated.
CF-VC-025c	Percentage of Looked After Children at home who have been reviewed within timescales	66%	70%	74%	100%	