

Report of the Kirklees Safeguarding Commission

Kirklees MC Scrutiny Panel

August 2009

Nationwide Children's Research Centre

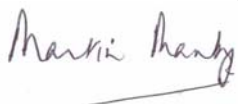
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Acknowledgements

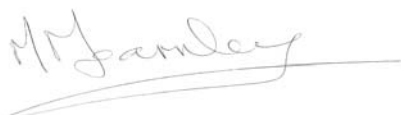
Members of the Commission would like to thank staff from agencies involved in the Kirklees Safeguarding Service for their contributions to this report. Particular thanks are due to Alison O'Sullivan, Director of Children's Services, Paul Johnson, Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision, Lorraine Hansom, Matthew Holland and Pauline Martin; and to Laura Ellis, Carl Whistlecraft and Steve Copley from the Chief Executive's Department. We would also like to thank Anne Robbins for her contribution towards producing the document:



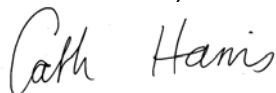
Martin Manby (Independent Chair)
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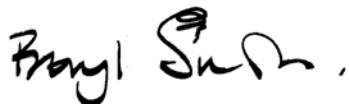
Councillor Jim Dodds
Previous Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Children's Services (until January 2009)



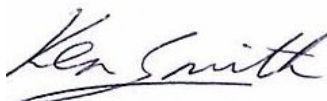
Councillor Margaret Fearnley
Children and Young People's Scrutiny Lead Member (until January 2009; May 2009 to date)



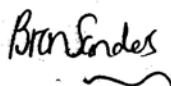
Councillor Cath Harris
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Joint Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Children's Services (from January 2009)



Ms Bron Sanders
Child Care Consultant; Independent Adviser to the Commission.

Observer

Councillor John Smithson, previous joint Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Children's Services (January – July 2009).

August 2009

Glossary of Terms

Action for Children

Action for Children is a children's charity that supports and speaks out for the UK's most vulnerable children and young people. From 2002 – 2009, Action for Children led the Children's Fund Kirklees (CFK)/Kirklees Joint Commissioning Support (KJCSU) in its work supporting the development of the children's sector in Kirklees by sharing learning and evaluation of its commissioned services with those planning and managing children's services between 2002 and 2009. This work supported and contributed to the UK Government's national *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* agenda. On 31 March 2009, CFK/KJCSU came to an end and 2008-09 was the final year of the arrangements for commissioning preventative services for children managed by Action for Children. This funding stream is now part of the Area Based Grant, a central government budget allocated to the Council to address agreed local priorities.

Annual Performance Assessment (APA)

The APA is conducted each year in every council and focuses on the contribution that a council's services have made in the previous twelve months towards improving outcomes for children and young people. It analyses a wide range of published evidence including data, indicators, the council's Children & Young People's Plan, any reviews of this plan and other reference or supporting information. The APA acts as a risk assessment for the *Joint Area Review*.

Blue Print Training

Blue Print is a project that Kirklees have undertaken in conjunction with VOICE (national charity for children in care). The aim of the project was to improve the participation of children and young people in their care plans and reviews. The project has pioneered new approaches which place children at the centre of the processes. This has attracted local and national attention: the project is cited as a model of good practice and has won awards. The training is now part of the core programme for social workers.

CAF – see Common Assessment Framework

CAFCASS – see Child and Family Court Advisory Service

CAMHS – see Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services promotes the mental health and psychological wellbeing of children and young people, and provides high quality, multidisciplinary mental health services to all children and young people with mental health problems and disorders to ensure effective assessment, treatment and support, for them and their families.

Child and Family Court Advisory Service (CAFCASS)

CAFCASS is a non-departmental public body for England and Wales, established in April 2001, to bring together the services that were previously provided by the Family Court Welfare Service, the Guardian Ad Litem Services, and the Children's Division of the Official Solicitor. The functions of CAFCASS relate to family proceedings where the welfare of children is (or may be) in question. CAFCASS advises the court so that any decisions they take are in the best interests of children. Specifically, its role is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child; advise the court about any application made to it; make provision for children to be represented; and to provide information, advice and support for children and their families. The types of cases in which the courts ask CAFCASS to help include: when children may be removed from their parents' care for their own safety or when children could be adopted.

Child Death Review

Government legislation requires every local authority to review the circumstances of all child deaths (up to the age of 18 years). The **Local Safeguarding Children Board** is charged with coordinating the process. Information about each and every child and the circumstances of their death is collected and summarised from records held by ambulance services, hospitals, community health services, schools, police, children's services and other agencies whose staff knew the child.

Child Protection Plan

This is a detailed inter-agency plan for a child who is considered to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The plan is based on current findings from the

assessment and information held from any previous involvement with the child and family. It sets out what needs to change in order to safeguard the child from harm. A key worker from **ChYPS** is appointed, the **core group** members are identified, and decisions are made about what further assessments are required to inform the outline plan. An outline of the child protection plan is drawn up at the **initial child protection conference**, and is further developed by the core group members; it is reviewed at each subsequent **child protection review conference**. There are four categories of abuse for recording the type of significant harm from which a child is thought to be at continuing risk – neglect; physical abuse; sexual abuse; and emotional abuse. Child protection plans can cover more than one category of abuse.

Child Protection Register

The Child Protection Register was removed under the government Working Together guidance published in 2006 – prior to this all local authorities were required to maintain a register of children in its area who were thought to be at continuing risk of significant harm and in need of protection by the authority. Every local authority is still required to keep details of children subject to a child protection plan in their area. The list of such children is held by a designated officer. Other agencies are still able to make enquiries if they are concerned about a child.

Child Protection Review Conference

A child protection conference is also a formal inter-agency meeting to ensure that the child continues to be adequately safeguarded, and to consider whether any changes are required to the **child protection plan**. The first child protection review conference should be held within three months of the **initial conference**; further review conferences should be held at intervals of no longer than six months. A decision that a child no longer requires a child protection plan would only be taken at a child protection review conference.

Children in Need (CIN)

Under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, a child is said to be in need if: “he or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by a local authority”; “his or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services”; “he or she is

disabled". The critical factor to be taken into account in deciding whether or not a child is in need is what would happen to that child's health and development without the provision of services.

Children's Trust

Children's Trusts are local partnerships which bring together the organisations responsible for services to children, young people and families in a shared contract to improve children's lives.

ChYPS

Children and Young People's Service

CIN – see Children in Need

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

The Common Assessment framework provides a nationally standardised approach to conducting an assessment of the needs of a child or young person and deciding how those needs should be met. The CAF is particularly suitable for use in universal services such as health, schools and children's centres, to identify and tackle problems before they become too serious. It is intended to be completed with the family and to be used to promote earlier intervention once additional needs have been identified; help establish an understanding of the child's needs, based on a common language; determine what, if any, additional support may be required; with the consent of the child/family, share information with other practitioners and to reduce the number and duration of assessments a child may need to undergo.

Core Group

The core group can consist of professionals from all agencies and services. It meets at more regular intervals than the ***child protection review conference***. The core group is responsible for developing the ***child protection plan*** and implementing it with the key worker. The core group should include the key worker, family members and professionals or foster carers who have direct and regular contact with the family, and possibly the child.

ECM – see Every Child Matters

Ednet

Ednet is an online resource containing information and resources developed for schools, parents and governors in the Kirklees area.

Every Child Matters (ECM)

ECM is a government initiative that was launched in 2003, at least partly in response to the death of Victoria Climbié. Its main aims are for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

Family Intervention Project

Family intervention projects work with families who experience a multiplicity of needs. What distinguishes them from a range of other provision is that they work intensively with the whole family i.e. all siblings and the parents. Improving parenting skills is always a critical part of the project. The key worker is central to the projects. Their role is to manage or 'grip' the family's problems, co-ordinate the delivery of services and using a combination of support and sanction to motivate the family to change their behaviour. A contract (also known as a behaviour support agreement) is drawn up between the family and key worker which sets out the changes that are expected, the support that will be provided in order to facilitate that change and the consequences if changes are not made, or tasks are not undertaken. The projects are intensely practical and focus on providing a structure for those living in chaotic circumstances - teaching parents basics such as how to get children up and fed in the morning, clearing up, preparing meals and bed time routines. Families involved in the projects are often learning these skills for the first time.

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

Independent Reviewing Officers are registered social workers who are independent of the management of the looked after children's cases that they review. IROs must chair all looked after children's statutory review meetings, from which position they can identify any problems in the child's care and any lack of clarity in the care plan.

They also ensure that everyone involved in the child's case can make a meaningful contribution. They must monitor the local authority's performance, working with the local authority to ensure children's needs are being met and resolving difficulties. In Kirklees IROs also chair all child protection conferences

Initial Child Protection Conference

This is a formal inter-agency meeting convened following a **Section 47 enquiry**. It brings together family members (including the child, where appropriate) and professionals involved with the child and the family, in order to make a judgement about whether the child is at continuing risk of significant harm and should be subject to a **child protection plan**.

Integrated Children's System

This is a systematised approach for gathering and recording the information needed for the case management of social services for individual children. It includes key processes of identification, assessment, planning and review. It is based on a conceptual framework that examines a child's developmental needs, the parenting capacity available, and environmental factors.

Internal Management Review

(also referred to as **Individual Management Review**). An IMR is conducted as part of the **serious case review** process. Each organisation identified in the scoping of the SCR will be required to produce an individual management review. The aim of the review is to look openly and critically at individual and organisational practice to see whether the case indicates that could and should be made and, if so, how those changes can be brought about. Individual management reviews are considered by the serious case review overview panel and assist in the production of the Safeguarding Board's report into the case.

IRO – see Independent Reviewing Officer

JAR – see Joint Area Review

Joint Area Review (JAR)

The Joint Area Review judges the contribution that the council and its partners in the local area are making to improve outcomes for children and young people. They are

normally carried out at the same time as the Audit Commission's corporate assessment of each Council and result in a number of graded and non graded judgements, which are published as part of a report. Since April 2009 the JAR process has been replaced by a new Ofsted framework for inspection of children's services.

Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB)

The KSCB's core objectives are:

- to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority;
- to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body for that purpose

The KSCB has a particular focus on the staying safe outcome and seeks to ensure that all children and young people in Kirklees are protected from physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment, sexual abuse or exploitation or harm caused by witnessing violence or abuse of another.

See: www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk for further information

KSCB – see Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board

Lifeline

A Drug and Alcohol treatment service. Lifeline is an open access service that offer advice, information, referral to substitute prescribing, stimulant service, counselling, acupuncture, harm minimisation service and referral to the Family and Young People's Drug Service.

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

(– also see **Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board**)

Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB) are the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how organisations working with and providing services for children in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to ensure the effectiveness of the work done for that purpose. The Children Act 2004 requires each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board involving local key partners as listed in section 13(3) of the Act. The Act further

requires these (Board) partners co-operate in the establishment and operation of the Board.

Looked After Children

This is the term used to describe any child who is in the care of the local authority or who is provided with accommodation by the local authority social services department for a continuous period of more than 24 hours. The term is not restricted to children in respect of whom a compulsory care order or other court order has been made; for example, it also covers children subject to accommodation under a voluntarily agreed series of short term placements like short breaks, family link placements or respite care.

LSCB – see Local Safeguarding Children Board

MARAC – see Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

MAST – see Multi-Agency Support Teams

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

It provides a structured forum for sharing information between agencies, risk assessment and safety planning in relation to victims, offenders and their children in case of domestic abuse. It also aims to ensure that support services are aware of a high risk or potential risk of domestic abuse situations and that adequate and appropriate support is available to the victim and any dependents.

Multi-Agency Support Teams (MASTs)

MASTs are virtual teams set up from locality staff around a specific named child. It is a mechanism to ensure that the right operational staff are working together to respond to assessed needs/plans for named children.

Review Conference – see Child Protection Review Conference

SCR – see Serious Case Review

Section 17 (s17)

Local authorities have a duty under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of a ‘**child in need**’.

Section 47 (s47) Enquiry

Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to make enquiries when it has 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.' These are known as Section 47 enquiries. Social services have lead responsibility for undertaking these enquiries with other agencies, in particular the police, health bodies and schools. There is also a duty on all other agencies to share information with social services during this investigation.

Serious Case Review (SCR)

A review which is held when a child dies and abuse or neglect is known, or suspected, to be a factor in the death. The **Local Safeguarding Children Board** should consider a review when a child sustains a potentially life-threatening injury or serious and permanent impairment to health and development, or has been subjected to particularly serious sexual abuse; and the case gives rise to concerns about working between agencies which protect children.

Statistical Comparators

Also known as statistical neighbours. Comparison of local authorities with statistical neighbours involves comparison with other local authorities who are most similar to each other in terms of important background characteristics such as deprivation and population density. This provides a more robust starting point for analysis.

SWEET project

The SWEET Project (Sex Worker Empowerment, Education and Training) works to support those involved in prostitution and the sex industry. SWEET supports those wanting to leave sex work and obtain alternative lifestyles and also promotes safer working practices to those continuing to do so. SWEET also mediates with communities affected by the issues.

Executive Summary

Selective key points from the text of the report are included in this summary.

Terms of Reference and Context

- (i) The Commission into Kirklees Safeguarding Services was established by the Council's Cabinet on 07.02.09. The Commission was independently chaired and comprised five elected members of the Council, and an independent adviser.**

- (ii) Background to the work of the Commission included the Laming Inquiry (2001) into the death of Victoria Climbié; the *Every Child Matters* Green Paper (2003); revised Government Guidance on Working Together (2006); and the *Progress Report into the Protection of Children in England* (2009) published by Lord Laming following the death of Baby P, (later identified as Baby Peter, referred to as Baby P throughout this report).**

- (iii) The Directorate of Children and Young People's Services (ChYPS) combining Safeguarding and Specialist Provision and Education was established in October 2006.**

- (iv) The Joint Area Review (JAR) for Kirklees Children's Services in October 2007 assessed all Children's Services as good; its overall conclusion was that children felt safe and experienced good Safeguarding services. The JAR also recorded that the Directorate of Children and Young People's Services was well led.**

- (v) Numbers of children subject to Child Protection Plans in Kirklees are concentrated in a small number of wards with higher levels of deprivation with important implications for local services.**

Prevention and Early Intervention

- (vi) Kirklees has invested strongly through its Children's Centres in services for children aged 0 – 5. Family Support Services are delivered through Kirklees de-centralised Locality Teams.**
- (vii) Kirklees has prioritised training to establish the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in Kirklees since December 2008. Education and Health workers are starting to make important contributions to supporting children with additional needs through the CAF system.**

Child Protection

- (viii) Overall performance in relation to Government indicators for the Child Protection system is good. The number of Child Protection investigations increased markedly following the publication of reports about Baby P.**
- (ix) The Commission identified scope for further improvements in agency reports provided for Conferences, and in the quality of Conference minutes.**
- (x) Other priorities included focusing on children experiencing the cumulative impact of neglect, and further improvements in the quality of direct work with children and young people.**
- (xi) Team Managers in Child Protection provide high quality supervision for front-line staff.**
- (xii) Kirklees undertakes higher volumes of Initial Assessments than comparable Authorities. Management oversight could enable social workers to provide more in-depth assessments to somewhat fewer children and families.**

- (xiii) **Kirklees now has much higher numbers of Looked After Children than previously. This is in line with national trends. Kirklees has enhanced the involvement and experience of Looked After Children in their Reviews. Funding has been increased in this area, demonstrating the support of the whole Council for Looked After Children. ChYPS' support for children with disabilities has also expanded considerably.**

Multi-Agency Working

- (xiv) **There is evidence of effective multi-agency working at all levels in the Safeguarding / Child Protection system. However, social workers still feel that theirs is the main responsibility in Safeguarding / Child Protection; and partner agencies have sometimes found referring new cases to Duty & Assessment/ Care Management difficult, because of these units' high volume of work.**
- (xv) **Recently published Guidance is contributing to improvements in information sharing between agencies for children requiring protection, but more progress is needed in relation to information sharing around children in need.**
- (xvi) **Recognition of the impact of parental substance misuse, mental health issues and domestic violence on the welfare of children have considerably expanded the population of children for whom Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns may be identified. Robust partnerships and shared ownership between all statutory and voluntary agencies involved are essential to achieve best outcomes for these children.**
- (xvii) **Health professionals in Kirklees have prioritised working with families where Child Protection concerns have been identified.**
- (xviii) **The direct role of Police in Child Protection Case Conferences has**

reduced. Kirklees should initiate discussions involving other local authorities and West Yorkshire Police to address this, taking note of best practice in other parts of the country.

- (xix) Training and policy development focusing on Child Protection / Safeguarding has been well developed in Kirklees schools. Schools' expertise in responding to the needs of vulnerable children should be clearly recognised. Schools also require improved access to high quality Child Protection advice in complex cases.**
- (xx) A Review is recommended of the structure of ChYPS where Safeguarding and Specialist Provision is centralised, and where family support and children's centre services are provided on a Locality model.**

Social Care Workloads and Workforce Issues

- (xxi) Senior managers have consistently prioritised maintaining staffing levels for Child Protection / Safeguarding, using agency staff where needed. More social work time needs to be freed up for direct work with children and families, through optimising administrative support, and through refining and improving IT systems and new technology solutions.**
- (xxii) Recruitment and retention of experienced social work staff is essential throughout Safeguarding and Specialist provision: recruiting more experienced staff is a priority particularly for the Care Management section.**
- (xxiii) While acknowledging the invaluable contribution of Team Managers to case supervision, the Commission recommends further consideration of appropriate enhanced delegation for decision making to experienced front-line staff.**
- (xxiv) Very senior managers should contribute to newly-established File Audit systems.**

(xxv) Kirklees' involvement in developing the Newly Qualified Social Worker Pilot Programme, to achieve managed caseloads and personalised training, is particularly commended.

(xxvi) The full resources of the Council, including Human Resources and media specialists, should be deployed to enhance social work recruitment and retention strategies. Kirklees' approach should combine promoting enhanced terms and conditions of service for Child Protection workers, and continuing to ensure optimal opportunities for supervision, training and managed workloads.

(xxvii) The Council has supported its Child Protection workforce well. Positive promotion about the importance of Child Protection social work through local media sources is strongly recommended.

Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB)

(xxviii) The Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board is well established, with high levels of commitment from partner agencies, and an appropriate balance between challenge and support.

(xxix) The Board is currently effectively chaired by the Director of Children's Services. The Board plans to re-visit the issue of appointing an Independent Chair.

(xxx) The KSCB has managed its training responsibilities well.

(xxxi) The accessibility and quality of Safeguarding procedures, now standardised across West Yorkshire, have been widely commended by both managers and front-line staff.

(xxxii) The work of the KSCB has been well organised. Its workload has increased partly because of resources required for Serious Case Reviews; and partly because of increased focus and publicity on Safeguarding over the past year.

(xxxiii) Lessons from Serious Case Reviews have been widely disseminated, and influential in improving policy and practice.

(xxxiv) The KSCB has recognised the importance of liaison with the Local Public Service Board (LPSB) so that Safeguarding in Kirklees is accorded appropriate priority in overall planning for services for children.

(xxxv) Consultation processes involving members of the Commission and Children's Services' staff have proved effective, and members of the Commission became well informed about the Authority's safeguarding remit. These processes should be consolidated and further developed.

(xxxvi) Aspects of the report addressing national issues, for example, the training of social workers and issues relating to their role, status and reputation, should be forwarded to the appropriate national bodies.

1. Terms of Reference and Membership of the Commission and Approach taken.

The idea of establishing a Commission into Safeguarding was conceived by the then Lead Cabinet Member for Children and the Director of Children's Services in the autumn of 2008. This coincided with the tragic death of "Baby P" in Haringey, which was the subject of high profile media comment. The Commission into Kirklees Safeguarding Services was established by Kirklees Council's Cabinet on 07.02.09, in the Council's capacity as lead agency for safeguarding children in the Kirklees area. The Council's Scrutiny function was assigned the lead role in organising the work of the Commission. The intention was to evaluate local services in Kirklees to ensure that necessary steps to achieve improvements were undertaken.

Terms of Reference for the Commission, agreed by the Cabinet, are attached as **Appendix (i)** to the report. These included the effectiveness of the Council's Child Protection Services and the quality of service provided; identification and prevention of maltreatment to children, including training and procedural guidance for all agencies involved; scrutiny and accountability, including external evaluation and the role of key elected members, senior officers and managers; and the effectiveness of the Safeguarding Board, including learning from serious case reviews.

Appointees to the Commission were:

Martin Manby: director of the Nationwide Children's Research Centre (NCRC):
Independent Chair.

Councillor Jim Dodds: previous Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Children's Services
(until January 2009).

Councillor Margaret Fearnley: Children and Young People's Scrutiny Lead
Member (until January 2009; from May 2009).

Councillor Cath Harris: Adult and Healthier Communities Scrutiny Lead
Member (until January 2009).

Councillor Beryl Smith: Children and Young People's Scrutiny Lead Member (January – May 2009).

Councillor Ken Smith: joint Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Children's Services (from January 2009).

Ms Bron Sanders: Child Care Consultant; Independent Adviser to the Commission.

Councillor John Smithson also attended all meetings of the Commission in his capacity as Joint Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Children's Services.

Councillor Robert Iredale, Chair of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee also attended meetings of the Commission.

A representative from Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, Mr Nick Powley, also attended meetings of the Commission.

The Commission was supported by staff from the Council's Scrutiny and Governance Service and from the Executive Support Team.

Approach taken by the Safeguarding Commission

The Commission met nine times between February and June 2009. Seven formal meetings were held in public. Initial meetings were held with the Director of Children's Services and the Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision; and then with social workers, team managers and child protection specialists from within the Council Service. Later meetings were held with members of the Safeguarding Board and front-line representatives of other agencies involved in Safeguarding Services. The business of the Commission was conducted in public, except for the hearing of evidence where confidential issues could be under consideration. Discussions with staff included targeted questions circulated in advance and open discussion using a workshop-style format. A sample of questions used at these sessions is included in **Appendix (iii)**. In addition, the Commission was provided with written submissions. Two meetings were held with front-line Children's Services staff at their offices in Huddersfield and Mirfield. The Commission also met with Children and Young People's Services Locality Managers; met with the Head of Localities and Acting

Integrated Children's Services Manager; held a separate meeting with twenty Kirklees Head Teachers; and met with local Member of Parliament Barry Sheerman, in his capacity as Chair of the Parliamentary Children's, Schools and Families Select Committee. Elected members, as well as independent members, of the Safeguarding Commission, were strongly represented at all these meetings.

A range of documents were provided to the Commission, including those set out below. A full list is included at **Appendix (iv)**:

Victoria Climbié Inquiry (Lord Laming)

Every Child Matters Green Paper (2003)

Working Together (Executive Summary) (2006)

Serious Case Review: *Death of "Baby P"* (Haringey, 2008) (Executive Summary)

OFSTED Report following the death of "Baby P" into Haringey Safeguarding Services (2008)

Joint Area Review Report: Kirklees Children's Services (October 2007)

Annual Appraisal Assessment Letter, 2008: Kirklees Children's Services

Draft Financial Management of Services for Looked After Children: Audit Report (2008 / 2009).

The Protection of Children in England: *A Progress Report*: London Stationery Office (Lord Laming) (March 2009)

Government Response to the Laming Report (May 2009)

The Commission received a set of eight anonymised Case Conference minutes (2 for Initial Case Conferences, and 6 for Review Conferences); and a sample of recent minutes from the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board. The Commission was also provided with Executive Summaries for three Serious Case Reviews which have been published in Kirklees in the recent past. All the documents scrutinised by the Commission were in the public domain. Analysis and comment on aspects of safeguarding were provided by the Independent Adviser.

2. The National and Local Context

This section summarises key elements in recent national documents which have provided the background against which the work of the Commission has been carried out; and also includes a statistical profile for Kirklees.

The Laming Inquiry (2001) into the death of Victoria Climbié in Haringey in February 2000 marked the beginning of national reforms into the way in which child protection services are delivered in the United Kingdom. In a frequently quoted observation, Lord Laming stated that it was “...not possible to separate the protection of children from wider support to families”. Multi-Agency issues, including information sharing were highlighted. Supervision was to be regarded as the “...cornerstone of good social work practice”, and this was relevant also for Health and the Police. The focus needed to shift from registration of children (on the Child Protection Register) to formulating agreed plans “to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child”. The Inquiry Report placed a heavy emphasis on the responsibilities carried by senior managers in all agencies involved in child protection and safeguarding.

The *Every Child Matters* Green Paper (2003), following recommendations from the Laming Report, established the five outcomes which all children should be enabled to achieve, and signalled the intention to establish Children’s Centres nationwide. In 2004, the new Children Act planned for the appointment of Directors of Children’s Services and Lead Council Members for Children in all Authorities. Local Safeguarding Boards would be established, and there were longer-term plans to introduce Children’s Trusts. A duty was placed on all agencies to co-operate on child protection issues. Earlier legislation (Education Act, 2002) had introduced a duty on schools to safeguard pupils and to promote their welfare. Workforce reform for staff involved was underway. Another key development was the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), a voluntary, consent-based system for co-ordinating support for children in need (not meeting the five outcomes); lead professionals would take responsibility for service delivery.

A revised edition of *Working Together* (2006) required that all agencies should know how to recognise and respond to the possible abuse and neglect of children and young people. Key processes included *assessment, planning, intervention* and *review*. Safeguarding Boards had responsibility for Child Death Reviews; and also for Serious Case Reviews. *Working Together* requires “...at least as much effort acting on recommendations as conducting the Review”. (*Working Together* 2006, page 179)

The ambit and volume of child protection services has expanded over recent decades. Until the 1970s, the main focus was on physical injuries, or “baby-battering” as it was first known. Child sexual abuse was widely recognised from the early 1980s onwards. “Emotional abuse” and “neglect” have been included as categories of child abuse since the 1990s. More recently, agencies have recognised the harm to children’s well-being caused by parental substance misuse, parents’ mental health problems, and domestic violence. These factors have resulted in larger groups of children being perceived as “at risk” and potentially needing assessment by child protection workers.

Baby P and the second Laming Report

The trial of three adults charged with the murder of Baby P, and the publication by Haringey Safeguarding Children Board of the Executive Summary of the Serious Case Review into his death in November 2008 led to a public outcry and an OFSTED Review into the state of Child Protection Services in the London Borough of Haringey (November / December 2008). Much of the focus was on the culpability of senior managers and professionals involved. The Director of Children’s Services, subsequently dismissed, who had an education background, chaired the Safeguarding Board and the Serious Case Review for Baby P. The absence of chronologies, recommended by the Laming Inquiry in 2001, was noted. Children had been seen, but their views were not demonstrated in assessments. Baby P’s mother had seemingly co-operated with numerous agencies involved, but the role of other adult males in the family had not been adequately investigated. Haringey had been found to have large numbers of agency staff covering social work posts.

Straight away, Lord Laming was invited by the Secretary of State to review the implementation of Child Protection and Safeguarding Services in England. His '*Progress Report into the Protection of Children in England*' (March 2009) provides relevant background for the work of the Commission in Kirklees. The report stated that "...*Ultimately, Children's Trusts have responsibility for improving the well-being of children (5 ECM outcomes) including keeping children safe*". The report focused particularly on implementation and practice issues. Lord Laming concluded that the legislative framework and procedural guidance already in place were fit for purpose. The following issues are highlighted in the Laming Report 2009:

- (i) The importance attached to *robust, decisive and effective leadership* in creating a supportive culture to Children's Services (the role of Chief Executive, Chief Officers, Council leaders and Lead Cabinet Members were all highlighted). This culture should be characterised by *mutual challenge, improvement and openness*.
- (ii) Development of an improved system for performance management, supported by Government Offices.
- (iii) Further development of the role of Children's Trusts: Lord Laming commented that the same person should not chair the Safeguarding Board and the Children's Trust.
- (iv) The need for a review of the training and supply of social workers: the Laming Report found widespread recruitment difficulties, with half the social workers involved in Child Protection services being newly qualified, or with less than one year's experience. Lord Laming recommended more specialist training, a degree in Children's Social Work and opportunities for post-qualification training.
- (v) Professional issues covered in the report included:
 - A renewed focus on talking to and observing children.
 - The need to guard against a tendency towards justification and reassurance and a requirement to focus on protecting children and

promoting their welfare.

- Thresholds for child protection referrals had no statutory basis, were inconsistent and too high, and undermined the purpose of Section 17 of the 1989 Children Act covering early support and intervention (Laming, 2009 pp 29, 30).
 - Evidence had been received that the Integrated Children's System was hampering progress, and the Government's response noted the "*intense frustration*" of professionals with this system.
 - Information sharing between agencies to protect and promote the welfare of children was still inadequate and concerns about breaching confidentiality held sway in some quarters over the duty to protect children.
 - Nearly half of a cohort of 161 children subject to Serious Case Reviews had been aged under one year; only 12% of these children were subject to Child Protection Plans, leading to concerns about the number of health visitors, the size of their caseloads, and their role in child protection cases.
 - 68% of children aged 4 or over subject to Serious Case Reviews demonstrated poor school attendance, highlighting the role of multi-agency support for these children.
 - The report found unevenness about the state of implementation of CAFs, and clarity was needed about the role of lead professionals.
- (vi) Serious Case Reviews needed to focus on lessons to be learned within organisations, as well as on multi-agency co-operation. Authorities who undertook higher numbers of Serious Case Reviews should not be criticised. Chairs of Serious Case Reviews had to be independent. Subsequently, the Children's Minister wrote a Letter of Guidance stipulating that Safeguarding Boards should appoint separate independent chairs and independent authors for Serious Case Reviews.
- (vii) Directors of Children's Services who did not have a social work background were required to ensure that the Head of Safeguarding / Child

Protection Services was experienced and qualified in that specialism.

Commission's Meeting with Mr Barry Sheerman, MP for Huddersfield, and Chairman of the Parliamentary Children's, Schools and Families Select Committee

Mr Sheerman had been closely involved with national policy developments following the "Baby P" Serious Case Review. His conclusion was that agencies could not guarantee to prevent child murder; they should, however, aim to reduce child misery wherever possible.

Mr Sheerman emphasised the importance of social workers being encouraged to stay in front-line service delivery; the importance of achieving improvements in social workers' public standing; and the importance of agencies listening to children. Mr Sheerman recognised problems for social workers in dealing with highly manipulative, abusive parents who were skillful in avoiding detection. Mr Sheerman recalled one local Serious Case Review which had highlighted the importance of improving community awareness and involvement to bring cases of child abuse to the notice of the Authorities.

Mr Sheerman had been struck by Denmark's positive approach to child care on a recent Select Committee visit. Universal day care was provided to very high standards for children from an early age. State intervention kicks in at much lower thresholds of child neglect or abuse in Denmark compared with the UK, and this seems to have a high level of co-operation and support from parents. Denmark has very high levels of employment, and higher rates of income tax and VAT than the UK.

Children's Services in Kirklees

The role of the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children's Services is well established in Kirklees. Both the current and former post-holders were members of the Safeguarding Commission, and they brought expertise, experience and commitment to the role. They were assisted by three elected members with experience as Scrutiny Lead Members in Kirklees. The work of the Safeguarding Commission can be seen as a well developed example of the cross-party scrutiny function in Kirklees.

The Commission provided valuable opportunities for consultation between elected members and staff in Children's Services.

The current Director of Children's Services was appointed in Kirklees in 2006. The new Directorate of Children and Young People's Services (ChYPS) combining Safeguarding and Specialist Provision and Education, was launched in October 2006. Previously, child protection services, including intake and assessment, had been provided on two sites, in South Kirklees (Huddersfield) and North Kirklees (Dewsbury). From 2006, Duty and Assessment Services (including child protection assessments) were provided from the Westfields Offices in Mirfield. Care Management Services (including children with Child Protection Plans) were provided from the Oakmead Offices in Huddersfield. Newly established Locality Service Managers took responsibility for running Children's Centres and from 2008 Family Support Services, operated on a decentralised basis in seven localities across the Authority.

An important starting point for the work of the Commission was the Joint Area Review (JAR) report into Children's Services, carried out by OFSTED in October 2007 which assessed all Children's Services as *good* (score 3 / 4), including Safeguarding. The Review concluded that children felt safe and experienced good safeguarding services. The Local Safeguarding Children Board was well supported by local agencies and had good representation at an appropriate level of seniority. The JAR commented positively on service and financial management and found a "*culture of openness and willingness to learn from others amongst partners*". Strong leadership was provided from officers and members. A degree of uncertainty among professionals regarding thresholds for social work intervention, and the response and co-ordination of services for children in need was noted. There were some delays in Case Conference minutes being circulated.

The most recent external inspection, the Annual Performance Assessment Letter for 2008, (dated 17.12.08) assessed all Children's Services as *good* (score 3) except *Enjoying and Achieving* (score 2). Safeguarding procedures were assessed as *good*, as was the management of the Children and Young People's Services. The Council was noted to have given high priority to preventative approaches, with a wide range

of services aimed at early forms of support for children and families. Partnership working was assessed as *good*.

Safeguarding Statistics

Statistics drawn from the Safeguarding and Specialist Provision Management Information Report for the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board for the three-month period up to the end of March 2009 are included below.

At 31.03.09, two hundred and twenty nine (229) children in Kirklees were subject to a Child Protection Plan. Numbers of children subject to Child Protection Plans had been fairly stable since 2006. Further analysis is in the Tables (i), (ii) and (iii) below:

Table (i) Categories of Child Abuse by Gender (as at 31/03/09)

Category	Neglect	Multiple	Emotional abuse	Sexual abuse	Physical abuse	Total
Number (% in brackets)	83 (36.2%)	67 (29.3%)	51 (22.3%)	10 (4.4%)	18 (7.9%)	229
Female (% of females in brackets)	33 (33% females)	28 (28% females)	22 (22% females)	6 (6% females)	11 (11% females)	100 (43.7%)
Male (% of males in brackets)	50 (38% males)	39 (30.2% males)	29 (22.5% males)	4 (3.1% males)	7 (5.4% males)	129 (56.3%)

Table (i) shows that higher numbers of children were in the *neglect*, *multiple* and *emotional abuse* categories. A higher proportion of boys than girls were subject to Child Protection Plans, particularly in the *neglect* category. Although numbers are smaller, slightly higher proportions of girls than boys were in the *sexual abuse* and *physical abuse* categories. Proportions in the categories highlighted had been fairly stable over the preceding three years.

As at 31/3/09, duration of child protection plans were as follows:

68.6% (157/229) were for periods of up to 12 months; 21.4% (49/229) were for periods of 12-24 months; and 10% (23/229) were for periods of above 24 months.

Table (ii) Ages of Children subject to Child Protection Plans (as at 31/03/09)

Age	Under 1 year	1 – 4 years	5 – 9 years	10 – 15 years	Over 16 years	Totals
Number (% in brackets)	32 (14%)	73 (31.9%)	66 (28.8%)	53 (23.1%)	5 (2.2%)	229
Female (% of females in brackets)	17 (17% females)	29 (29% females)	28 (28% females)	21 (21% females)	5 (5% females)	100 (43.7%)
Male (% of males in brackets)	15 (11.5% males)	44 (34.1% males)	38 (29.4% males)	32 (24.8% males)	0 (0% males)	129 (56.3%)

Table (ii) shows that a higher proportion of girls than boys subject to Child Protection Plans were aged under 1 year; whereas a higher proportion of boys than girls were aged 1 – 4 years, and also 10 – 15 years. The five young people aged over 16 were all girls.

Numbers of children under one year with a Child Protection Plan are low compared with other age groups. Kirklees needs to be satisfied that they are appropriately identifying children at risk in the under one year category. Recent analysis of Serious Case Reviews nationally showed children under one year to be the subject of nearly half of Serious Case Reviews undertaken.

Table (iii) Ethnicity of Children subject to Child Protection Plans by Gender (as at 31/3/09)

Ethnicity	Number (% in brackets)	Female (% of females in brackets)	Males (% of males in brackets)
White British	159 (69.4%)	77 (77%)	82 (63.5%)
Mixed White/ Black Caribbean	9 (3.9%)	1	8 (6.2%)
Mixed White/ Black African	1	1	0
Mixed White/ Asian	19 (8.3%)	7 (7%)	12 (9.3%)
Other Mixed Background	1	1	0
Pakistani	18 (7.9%)	6 (6%)	12 (9.3%)
Asian Other	1	0	1
Black Caribbean	1	0	1
Other Ethnic Group	2	1	1
Information not Obtained	18 (7.9%)	6 (6%)	12 (9.3%)
Total	229	100	129

Percentages not included where numbers by ethnic category are 2 or less

Much the highest proportion of these children were *white British*, although 30% of them were from *other ethnic groups*. Amongst the non-white British groups, the highest numbers were *mixed white / Asian* and *Pakistani*, followed by *mixed white / black Caribbean*. Information was not available for 18 children. A higher proportion of girls than boys were *white British*; and, conversely, a higher proportion of boys than girls were from *other ethnic groups*.

The proportions of children who were white british or from other ethnic groups appear broadly comparable to the child population of Kirklees (Office of National Statistics, summary data for Kirklees, 2006).

Numbers of children subject to Child Protection Plans for each ward in Kirklees are included in **Table (iv)** below:

**Table (iv): Distribution of Children subject to Child Protection Plans by Ward
(as at 31/03/09)**

Range (Nos. of Children with Child Protection Plan)	20-34	12-19	7-11	4-6	1-3
Ward Clusters	Batley West (34) Batley East (21)	Crosland Moor & Netherton (12) Liversedge & Gomersal (17) Newsome (19) Dewsbury West (18) Dewsbury East (19) Ashbrow (13)	Colne Valley (11) Almondbury (8) Dalton (8) Golcar (8) Dewsbury South (8)	Cleckheaton (5) Holme Valley North (6) Holme Valley South (6) Heckmondwike (4)	Birstall & Birkenshaw (3) Kirkburton (2) Lindley (1) Mirfield (1) Placed Out of Area (2) Greenhead (3)

Table (iv) above highlights the concentration of children subject to Child Protection Plans in a small number of wards. Five wards out of 23 account for nearly half (111 / 229) of these children. Four of these wards are in North Kirklees (Dewsbury West, Dewsbury East, Batley East and Batley West); and one is in South Kirklees (Newsome). Wards with higher number of Child Protection cases make heavier demands on child protection and family support services. At the other end of the spectrum, a further five wards account for just 10 children (Birstall and Birkenshaw, Kirkburton, Lindley, Mirfield and Greenhead).

Total inquiries to the Child Protection Plan list peaked at 1,827 in quarter ended

March 2007. There was a steep fall in the number of inquiries to the list per quarter from September 2007. For both the quarters October to December 2008, and January to March 2009, the number of inquiries to the register was 515.

The number of Section 47 investigations started during each quarter peaked at 328 at December 2005. The lowest recent figure was 132 at December 2007. The number of investigations rose sharply from 152 in the July / September 2008 quarter, to 294 in the October / December 2008 quarter, and has remained at 294 in the January / March 2009 quarter.

The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Kirklees was 23.0 per 10,000 population aged under 18 at 31/3/08. This number was slightly below the average numbers for Kirklees' statistical comparators, and England as a whole. The numbers of children subject to a Child Protection Plan have shown a modest increase to 25 per 10,000 population, as at 31/3/09. The percentage of referrals of children in need that led to initial assessments in Kirklees, at 75.2%, was considerably higher than levels for Kirklees' statistical comparators and England averages.

Funding: Audit Review Report: 2008

Numbers of looked after children per 100,000 in Kirklees at 47.2 aged under 18 in 2007 / 2008 were lower than levels for Kirklees' statistical comparators (66.2), and for England as a whole (54.1). Kirklees' funding for looked after children (LAC) was the subject of an Audit Report completed in December 2008, accompanied by an overspend for Safeguarding and Specialist Provision (SSP) for the financial year 2007 / 2008, and a projected increased overspend on SSP by the end of 2008 / 2009. The number of looked after children in Kirklees had increased substantially during the year ending 31.03.2008. The Audit Report noted that expenditure within Kirklees Council's Children's Social Care had been low by comparison with other Metropolitan Authorities. Following the Audit Report, the Council had recognised the need to increase its budget allocation for SSP by an additional £4.5m in 2009 / 2010, with a further £1.1m increase in the following year. This reflects the commitment of the Council, and in particular the commitment of elected members in their role as

'Corporate Parents' towards Looked After Children in Kirklees.

The Audit Review concluded that financial management within Safeguarding and Specialist Provision for looked after children was good.

It can be noted that Kirklees Council had acted decisively to increase the Children's Social Care budget in the light of the Audit Report.

3. Prevention and Early Intervention

This section is included because effective safeguarding and child protection services have to be built on a secure foundation of prevention and early intervention. The section refers to relevant legislation and highlights relevant Government policy initiatives. The history and development of prevention and early intervention in Kirklees is summarised, including the contribution of Sure Start Children's Centres, the development of Family Support, and the establishment of Locality Services. Gaps in Preventative Services, and tensions between preventative and statutory (child protection services) are acknowledged. Recent initiatives to re-launch the Common Assessment Framework in Kirklees are also covered.

Every Child Matters and the thrust of Government Policy

Although prevention and early intervention are not specifically included in the Commission's Terms of Reference, they are an accepted and crucial aspect of any child protection system. An appreciation of the history and development of preventative services in Kirklees is essential to guide the future implementation of child protection and safeguarding strategy in the Authority.

Prevention, frequently defined as interventions to prevent the need for children to be looked after in Local Authority care, has featured in Children and Young People's legislation since 1963. Local Authorities' responsibilities in this area were formalised in Section 17 of the 1989 Children Act, which placed a duty on Local Authorities to make assessments for children in need of additional support and to develop strategies and interventions to support them. Strategies for children in need (Section 17) and for children experiencing significant harm (Section 47) have been the twin planks of Government policy for the last twenty years.

In practice, children experiencing significant harm have consumed by far the larger share of the available funding and resources. This trend was reinforced by successive enquiries into the care of children who died while subject to child

protection surveillance, which further concentrated spending on protection rather than on prevention. For ten years following the 1989 Children Act, limited progress was made in developing a robust infrastructure of preventative services.

Changes began with the introduction of Sure Start Children's Centres as a key policy plank of the newly-elected Government in 1997. Based on practice developments in the United States, Government was persuaded that significant investment in early intervention was required. Sure Start Children's Centres were developed rapidly from 1999 onwards in areas of high need, providing an expanded range of child care and family support services on a universal model. Sure Start Centres were for families initially with children under 4, and later up to age 5.

The *Every Child Matters* (ECM) framework marked both a change in philosophy and a commitment by Government to secure optimal outcomes for all children, not just those at most risk. The emphasis shifted from a single agency (Social Services) focus to a holistic, multi-agency framework. From 2004 Government started to plan the development of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF), which was intended to provide a single transferrable assessment between agencies, designed to prevent duplication; and through which more support would be provided for children with additional needs. However, across the country progress in implementing the new ECM framework was relatively slow, not least because Local Authorities had to continue to prioritise investment in child protection and safeguarding services.

Prevention and Early Intervention in Kirklees

Kirklees earned the reputation of being a high quality provider of Early Years services, developed from within the Education Department, during the 1990s. Social Services invested strongly in Family Centres in the same period, providing a blend of child care, family support and structured interventions for families within the child protection service. Levels of expenditure on family support services have been higher in Kirklees than the average for Metropolitan Authorities (Kirklees £34 per head of population, average £17 per head of population); (Source: PSSEX1 Return, 2007 / 08). Kirklees has spent more than any of its statistical comparators on family support except Leeds. With regard to provision of Family Centres specifically,

Kirklees' expenditure is below the average for its statistical neighbour group.

Kirklees developed an ambitious programme of Sure Start Children's Centres between 1998 and 2006, including a number of new purpose-built Centres. From 2007, Children's Centres became the responsibility of Local Authorities. Where previously they had served smaller populations in high need areas, they were now required to provide a universal Child Care and Family Support Service, accessible to the whole population. In Kirklees, Children's Centres were integrated within the new Locality Service developed in 2006, located in the new Children and Young People's Directorate.

The next key development within Kirklees was the assimilation of the Family Centres, comprising 43 staff, within the Localities structure. The Family Support Workers previously located at Westtown and Southgate Family Centres had developed a specialist and high quality service for children and families focusing on the protection and welfare of vulnerable children, including children subject to a Child in Need, or a Child Protection, Plan. The Family Support Service had provided intensive support to 50 – 60 families for an average of six months. The service had close links with Safeguarding and Specialist Provision, and service users had to meet eligibility criteria specified by the Safeguarding service. The resource of the Family Support Centres were amalgamated with the smaller numbers of family support workers already employed in the Sure Start Children's Centres. The Locality Services' staffing complement varied according to the level of need in the area served. Locality Managers had responsibility for Children's Centres within their area.

Since the establishment of the Children and Young People's Directorate in 2006, social worker posts have been allocated to specific functions within Duty and Assessment and Care Management, or to other posts within Safeguarding and Specialist Provision, with responsibilities for Children with Disabilities, Looked After Children, Leaving Care and Family Placement. Although social workers within Safeguarding and Specialist Provision had responsibility for Children in Need (Section 17) Assessments as well as for Child Protection Investigations (Section 47), only the most serious Children in Need cases could be prioritised, within the resources available.

The Head of Localities, a member of the ChYPS Senior Management Team, has responsibility for Children's Centres and Locality teams, and in partnership with Adults and Communities is supporting the delivery of the Family Intervention Projects and for two Youth Inclusion Support Programmes (YISPs). Kirklees also ran a long-standing programme supporting families with teenage children where there was a risk of family breakdown. Until 2008, Kirklees Children's Fund ran a number of projects supporting families with children aged 5 – 13. These programmes were nationally funded. The Head of Localities considered that, while many of these had been worthwhile, they had not all been developed to respond strategically to assessed needs within the Authority.

Locality Managers contrasted the open-ended nature of their family support remit with the clear statutory framework for Safeguarding and Specialist Provision. They emphasised the high volume of referrals received, indicative of the extent of need in their communities, and the complexity of much of their work. Locality Service Managers seemed to have responsibility for many Section 17 (see also Chapter 5 below) Children in Need cases, and there was a lack of clarity regarding thresholds between Locality Services and Assessment /Care Management Services. Services for children under 5 were generally well developed, and Young People's Services were accessible for teenage children. There was agreement amongst managers that a gap existed for support to children aged 5 - 11.

Family Support Workers had concerns about the capacity of ChYPS to respond to cases characterised by long-term neglect. Locality Service Managers had particular concerns about liaison with their colleagues in Duty and Assessment/ Care Management services. Relationships appeared to be neither entirely respectful nor equal. Statutory children's social work seemed to be associated with higher status. Locality Services found it difficult to engage with Duty and Assessment and Care Management Services when their involvement was needed, although their view was that these colleagues could be insistent in making demands when Family Support or Children's Centre services were required. (Children's Centres were increasingly used as Contact Centres for children separated from parents). A protocol, similar to the one developed for case transfers between Duty and Assessment and Care

Management, for case transfers or for joint work between Locality Services and the protection focused teams, seems to be urgently required.

The position of Locality Services is summarised below:

Positive Features	Development Issues
<p>High quality resources and skills at Locality Manager, Family Support Manager and Family Support Worker levels.</p> <p>Improving multi-agency work with health and schools.</p> <p>Children's Centres established, accessible and popular.</p>	<p>Children in Need / Family Support brief lacking in clarity.</p> <p>Perceived gap in early intervention and prevention services for children aged 5 - 11.</p> <p>Relationships between Localities and Duty and Assessment and Care Management needing improvement.</p>

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

CAF and multi-agency work in children's services is overseen by a Programme Management Board aiming to achieve full implementation of integrated working. This Inter-Agency Group is chaired by the Head of Localities and the Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision also attends.

Kirklees got off to a slow start in implementing the Common Assessment Framework and limited progress had been achieved up until the end of 2008. Confusion about CAFs was highlighted in one of the recently published Serious Case Reviews in Kirklees (Case F, see section on Serious Case Reviews below). This was one of the factors which led to the re-launch of CAF in December 2008. A four-level training programme (Awareness Raising, Practitioner Training, Training for Lead Professionals, and Training for Managers) was implemented in the Spring of 2009. The training programme was well received, and Schools, Health professionals and other agencies engaged well with this.

An important landmark was the publication in the Spring of 2009 of the Kirklees '*Handbook for Practitioners*', including Guidance on Integrated Working and on the Common Assessment Framework. The handbook contained guidance on information sharing (see section on multi-agency working below), and on the role of lead professionals. Two new CAF Co-ordinator posts were established. *Every Child Matters* Hubs meetings were established across the seven localities to promote integrated working and the use of CAFs. Use of the Pre CAF Assessment was strongly promoted. Multi-Agency Support Teams (MASTs) were to be utilised to implement CAF Action Plans. Authority-wide data recording systems were put in place.

A further significant step forward was the approval of a Memorandum of Understanding on Integrated Working, including endorsement of a *Think Family* strategy by the Local Public Service Board (LPSB) in July 2009. The Memorandum of Understanding, which was due to be signed by management / executive boards in relevant services and departments, highlighted a number of steps towards fully integrated working, including accountability, policy and procedures, workforce development issues, information sharing and promotion of CAF, the role of Lead Professionals and Multi-Agency Support Teams (MASTs).

CAF Re-launch December 2008: Good Practice Initiative

- + Comprehensive, tiered training programme implemented.
- + Handbook for Practitioners on Integrated working and CAF published in 2009.
- + Hubs meetings started in 7 Localities in March 2009.
- + CAF data recording system in place.
- + Memorandum of Understanding on Integrated Working approved by the Local Public Service Board (LPSB) in July 2009.

The Commission learnt that the Head of Localities and the CAF Lead Manager have adopted a determined and robust approach to CAF implementation. Detailed guidance was being made available in the Summer of 2009 identifying pathways connecting up CAF and Safeguarding / Child Protection processes. An improved flow of work between Prevention and Safeguarding was being encouraged, including consideration of initiating CAFs for “duty managed” cases in Duty and Assessment / Care Management. Positive guidance is being provided to address concerns about securing consent from parents for CAFs to be initiated. Pre-CAF assessments and MAST meetings are available to be used to ensure that services are offered where parental consent is lacking.

Numbers completing CAF training between January and July 2009 are summarised in **Tables (v) and (vi)** below.

Table (v): Level 1 e-learning (numbers by module)

Type of Training	Common Assessment Framework	Integrated Working	Information Sharing	Safeguarding Children	Total Participants
Number	873	448	457	454	1041

Table (vi): Level 2, 3 and Managers’ CAF Training

Level of Training	Level 2	Level 3	Managers’ Training
Number	405	277	125

For Level 2 training, representation has included: Health 137 (34%); Education 131 (32%); Children’s Centres 61 (15%); Youth Service 41 (10%); Other ChYPS 19 (5%). For Level 3 training, the comparable figures are: Education 98 (35%); Health 64 (23%); Children’s Centres 50 (18%); Youth Service 36 (13%); Other ChYPS 16 (6%).

These numbers are impressive and highlight the lead contributions made by Education and Health, and the significant involvement of Children’s Centre and Youth Service staff. However, further time is required to assess the impact of the CAF training on practice.

CAF implementation statistics for the period up to June 2009 are summarised in **Table (vii)** below:

Table (vii): CAF Stats for Safeguarding Commission from 25.02.09 – 30.06.09
Total Number of CAF forms received this period: 52
(Figures are for individual children; age and gender breakdown included)

Council Locality	Number		Sector / Referral Source	Number
Batley, Birstall & Birkenshaw	9		Education	27
Denby Dale & Kirkburton	1		Health	16
Dewsbury & Mirfield	21		Children's Centres	7
Huddersfield North	4		Safeguarding and Specialist Provision	2
Huddersfield South	5		Voluntary	0
Spen	6		Youth	0
The Valleys	6			
Total	52		Total	(52)

Age	No.		Gender	No.
0 – 5	17		Female	11 (21%)
6 – 11	18		Male	41 (79%)
12 – 19	16			
Total	52		Total	52

Note:

These are the first figures produced and trends will need to be kept under review over time including future comparison with child protection data trends.

Nearly four-fifths of CAFs have been for boys, probably linked to concerns about behaviour issues. Numbers are evenly split across age groups. **Table (vii)** shows that Schools (Education) and Health in particular have begun to make stronger contributions to CAF implementation, including taking on lead professional roles. The table suggests that there is scope for an enhanced contribution by most Locality Services¹. Further clarity about expectations that Locality-based family support workers would take on the Lead Professional role, which was already included in Action for Children job descriptions for family support workers in Dewsbury and Mirfield, seemed to be needed.

Implementation of the Lead Professional role was still at an early stage of development. The Commission heard that both health visitors and schools had felt somewhat isolated when taking on the Lead Professional (LP) role. Clarity was needed about the level of seniority appropriate for school-based staff taking on the LP role. One head teacher had taken responsibility for five cases, a heavy workload which was taking up a very significant proportion of his working week. Some schools with high child protection workloads stated that they had less capacity to undertake CAFs.

HUB meetings to promote integrated working have been held across the seven localities since March 2009. The mean attendance level at these meetings was 34. Out of total attendances of 235, Education contributed 79 (34%); Health contributed 53 (23%); the Youth Service contributed 21 (9%) and ChYPS 20 (8.5%).

Although further outcome data about CAFs and services provided are needed, an encouraging start has been made in 2009 to re-launching CAF as a main plank in Kirklees *Every Child Matters* strategy. These policies need reinforcement and advocacy at the highest level within Kirklees.

¹ One Locality, Dewsbury and Mirfield, run by Action for Children, had taken the lead professional role in 7 cases, linked to a strong promotional focus on CAFs in this area (Action for Children were reported to have included responsibility for the Lead Professional role in Family Support Workers' job descriptions); the other Localities were recorded as not having taken on Lead Professional responsibilities so far.

Recommendations

1. The Director of Children's Services and the KSCB should clarify the location of responsibility for the assessment and support of Children in Need (Section 17) within ChYPS, and more widely within the Authority.
2. The Director of Children's Services should commission work within ChYPS, to develop mutual understanding and respect for roles undertaken by family support workers in Localities and in Duty and Assessment/Care Management.
3. The Kirklees LPSB and the Programme Management Board for Integrated Working should develop a strategy to address the perceived gap in early intervention and prevention service provision for 5 – 11 year olds.
4. The Director of Children's Services should clarify expectations about the contribution of locality-based family support workers as Lead Professionals within the Common Assessment Framework.
5. The Director of Children's Services should consider developing a protocol for joint working and case transfers between Locality Services and Duty and Assessment / Care Management.
6. The Director of Children's Services and the KSCB should provide reinforcement and advocacy of CAF at a senior level, to ensure progress continues to build on the successful re-launch and training programme.
7. The Programme Management Board for Integrated Working should investigate and make recommendations on the following issues:
 - The appropriate level of seniority for undertaking CAFs in schools.
 - The capacity for schools with high levels of child protection to undertake CAFs.
 - The support needed for different agencies to enable lead professionals to complete the whole process of CAF, MAST and review.
 - Ensuring that CAF is not a prerequisite for referral to statutory children's services.

4. Child Protection Conference System and Protection Plans

This section reviews the arrangements which follow on from child protection investigations where it is decided a child needs a multi agency protection plan. The Commission heard evidence from conference chairs, managers and front line staff across partner agencies and also analysed 8 sets of minutes from initial and review conferences. The Commission had access to a recent service review of the Child Protection and Review Unit, reviewing the resources available to support the conference and reviewing system.

Overview

'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006' (Chapter 5) provides statutory guidance for the Child Protection Conference system and Protection Plans, including the purpose, timing, attendance, chairing, information, and decisions in relation to conferences and the actions required after the conference.

a) Arrangements for Child Protection Conferences

The Child Protection and Review Unit (CPRU) administers and chairs all initial and review Child Protection Conferences, and also provides a scrutiny and challenge function, ensuring that Child Protection Plans are comprehensive and meet the needs of the child. The Unit also chairs all looked after children reviews, and coordinates meetings regarding professional abuse, organised abuse, sexual exploitation and children who present a risk to other children. The CPRU works collaboratively across all agencies, and is expected to recognise and report on good and poor practice and provide advice and guidance to all partner agencies. The line management of the CPRU is appropriately external to any direct service delivery unit in ChYPS.

Kirklees has recognised pressures on the Child Protection Conference system, and provided additional resources. The staffing of the CPRU currently consists of a Unit Manager, 6.5 (fte) Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and administrative support.

In March 2009 additional staffing was agreed to meet capacity issues in the Unit, in

relation to managing allegations against staff, leading child protection practice development, providing child protection advice and meeting new requirements for the IRO role. The agreed funding of £111,220 will provide:

- A full time senior post to take on the roles of Local Authority Designated Officer and Safeguarding Improvement Officer, ensuring that all allegations against staff are managed consistently and rigorously, and pulling out the learning in child protection and looked after children work, highlighting good practice and areas for development.
- An additional IRO post to address capacity issues and enable the Unit to take on the additional duties of the Children and Young Person's Act 2008, and offer advice to staff on child protection issues on a duty basis.
- Additional administrative support to enable the Unit to perform the administrative functions for looked after children reviews, thereby creating a systematic approach where many of the administrative processes attached to conferences and reviews are done together.

Currently underway is a review of Case Conferences, conducted by the CPRU on behalf of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board. It is due to report in September 2009.

b) Performance Data in relation to the Child Protection System

Overall performance in relation to government indicators is good. The Annual Performance Assessment (APA) letter of December 2008, noted that the majority of stay safe indicators show good, improved and /or sustained performance. This includes reduced numbers of children requiring 're registration', 100% of Child Protection Reviews held within timescale and a stable position in relation to numbers of children who had been registered for 2 or more years.

The number of children with a Child Protection Plan as at 31/12/08 was 213, and at 31/3/09 was 229; as a rate per ten thousand this is 23 and 25 respectively, compared with a national rate of 27. A year previously, the Kirklees and national rates had been close, but the national rate has increased whilst the Kirklees rate has fluctuated

around 23 -25 per ten thousand.

As at 31/3/09, (figures for 31/12/08 in brackets), the majority of children had a Child Protection Plan for reasons of neglect 83 (80), emotional abuse 51 (54) and multiple factors 67 (62), and only 18 (7) for reasons of physical abuse and 10 (10) for reasons of sexual abuse. Child Protection Plans, particularly those for neglect, cluster in higher numbers in areas of Kirklees, reflecting areas of social challenge and deprivation. This has implications for the effective targeting of resources.

As at 31/3/09 (figures for 31/12/08 in brackets), the age distribution of children with a Child Protection Plan is highest in the 1-4yr 73 (68) and the 5-9yr 66 (63) categories, a trend which is reflected back to 2005 (and possibly beyond). This compares with the smaller number, 32 (32) of protection plans for children under 1. This data is significant in relation to the findings of an analysis of Serious Case Reviews (nationally), that nearly half of a cohort of 161 children who were the subject of Serious Case Reviews nationally were under one year old. The relatively low numbers of Child Protection Plans for the under 1 year group in Kirklees raises an issue for further exploration in relation to the effectiveness of front line agencies' practice in the identification of risk for this age group.

A significant issue is the large rise in the number of section 47 investigations in the period October –December 2008. The average number per quarter in the previous 12 months was 159, compared with 294 in October-December 2008, and again 294 at 31/3/09. Practitioners suggested this was directly related to the publicity surrounding the Baby P case in Haringey, and was the result of increased referrals from front line professionals and the public. However, this has not impacted significantly on the child protection system: there has been a small increase in the number of conferences and the number of Child Protection Plans (229) has remained largely consistent with recent trends.

Over the same 15 month period however, the number of enquiries to the Child Protection Plan list fell steadily from 1535 (July – September 2007) to 515 (October-December 2008) to 515 (January – March 2009). This is largely accounted for by a decision to re-route police referrals in domestic violence cases to the Duty and

Assessment Service, (which means they are no longer counted as an inquiry to the child protection plan list). The Child Protection and Review Unit continues to manage enquiries to the list and offer advice and support to partner agencies – the additional resources agreed for the unit will improve their capacity to provide this service.

c) Chairing and Minuting of Child Protection Conferences

The role of conference chair is described positively by practitioners, as ensuring a focus on the child, providing feedback, challenging information and providing a helpful, independent view of complex cases. As parents and children attend the majority of conferences, there is no doubt as to the high level of skill needed to ensure their effective participation, at the same time as ensuring that the information from partner agencies is shared and the risks properly assessed and analysed. Some practitioners commented on the varying quality of the chairs' skills (particularly leadership) and experience; others noted the need to assist the chair by ensuring the right people attend and that information from them is available prior to the conference.

Effective chairing of Child Protection Conferences and Reviews is crucial, as is the ability to challenge practice positively. It is important that partners have confidence in all the chairs, and that there is ongoing personal development and training for the chairs targeted at skills as well as issues.

The Chair, with administrative assistance, is responsible for the minutes of conferences. The Joint Area Review in October 2007, identified delays in getting the minutes circulated, reporting an average timescale of 20 days. This continues to be a challenge, although current arrangements are that within 10 working days either a summary of the conference and outline of the Child Protection Plan or the full minutes of the Conference will be sent out.

An overview of 8 sets of anonymised minutes identified a number of issues in relation to quality and fitness for purpose:

- Whilst appropriate headings are used to structure the minutes, some of the content was unduly long and unfocused whilst other content was not sufficiently

explicit.

- There is a useful section headed 'summary of risks identified at previous conference.' However, this did not always provide clarity about why a Child Protection Plan had been required, or the key features of the history of the case.
- Some minutes did not clearly specify the risks being identified, for example, in one case whether this related to an adult as a sex offender or as a drug user.
- The decisions of the conference were not always clear – for example, whether a child was to remain the subject of a Child Protection Plan, and in one case of siblings whether a second child's individual situation had been considered. The focus of the conference had been diverted to the sibling who was expecting a baby. In another case, no clear decisions were reached.
- Many of the decisions seemed to be directing further assessment, for example, parenting assessment of partner, rather than focussing on actions.

The minutes of conferences and reviews are the responsibility of the chair, and are currently subject to a review. There is a dedicated minute taking team doing a difficult job. However, there are opportunities to improve the quality and consistency of the minutes, and in particular to ensure they are more explicit about the risks and clearer in terms of decisions and plans.

d) Agency Attendance and Contributions at Initial and Review Conferences

Attendance at Child Protection conferences and reviews is largely positive and consistent. However it does not appear to be prioritised equally by all agencies, and this merits further review and challenge between partners.

Practitioners told the Commission that to produce informed and effective recommendations, it is important to ensure full attendance and timely submission of information to initial conferences; and that poor attendance and missing or late information (verbal and written) brings delays into the process.

Most Initial Case Conferences are called by Social Workers. KSCB procedures (Section 3.1.5 (5) set out the primary principle for determining a quorum as '*sufficient agencies present to enable safe decision(s) to be made in the individual circumstances*'. This is further defined as normally being the social worker and 2 other professional disciplines with direct contact with the children /family. In 2007/8 there were 187 initial conferences relating to 257 children: of these 5% were said to be inquorate. However, achieving a quorum is not said to present difficulties, as partner agencies give appropriate prioritisation to attending initial conferences.

The Joint Area Review (Oct 2007) noted that less than a third of initial conferences were attended by the Social Worker, although Team Managers attended regularly. This can relate to the practice of transferring the case from Duty and Assessment to the Care Management Team at the point the conference takes place. The Commission was told that since the JAR stronger focus has been put on the social worker who has undertaken the Section 47 investigation attending initial conferences. The sample minutes recorded that 2 of the 3 initial conferences were attended by social workers.

Limited resources result in the Police not routinely attending initial and review conferences. The Police representative on Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board said that if there is active involvement in a case, the Police will endeavour to attend, and if this is not possible, then they will provide research and a written report. In some cases however, new information emerges at the conference which then requires further research. A Detective Inspector scrutinises the minutes of all conferences to identify actions for the Police. Contributions from partner agencies suggested that these practices impacted negatively on sharing risk and networking, and in some cases on the local knowledge available at the conference.

Health visitors attend all conferences and reviews in relation to under 5s, but they said that they were not routinely consulted on dates which could impact on attendance. Health professionals commented that changes in venue and cancellation of meetings at short notice can detract from their contribution.

The sample of conferences and reviews shared with the Commission included five

which related to children and young people over 5 years old. A school nurse attended two of these, providing important health information about the young persons. Where there was no health professional present, this information was absent.

Connexions provides advice and guidance to young people, including those who are vulnerable. The Commission was informed that Connexions are not routinely invited to conferences, despite often having information about young people involved, or young parents who have received targeted engagement with Connexions advisors.

The SWEET Project (Sex Worker Empowerment, Education and Training), which works to support young people involved in the sex industry also commented that on some occasions, despite being the agency with the highest level of engagement with a young person, they had not been informed about child protection meetings taking place.

Reports for Child Protection Conferences and reviews are not consistently provided by partner agencies and made available before the meeting. This impacts on the ability of the chair to prepare, the efficiency of the meeting, the quality of planning and the meaningful involvement of parents, carers and children/young people. The Commission heard from social work staff that other professionals do not routinely produce reports for conferences and/or they are not shared with the conference. They felt this can lead to the social workers being seen to lead the decision making process with little challenge, and parents/carers not getting the sense of a shared multi agency process.

The Commission heard that targeted training has led to positive shifts in the interface between children's and adults' services, and that multi agency training is making progress in helping professionals speak up in front of families and children in conference situations. The Commission was informed that some partner organisations can lose sight of the best interests of the child, through focussing on parents' issues and needs. This is more likely to be the case with agencies who are working with specific needs of parents, such as drug and substance misuse, mental health and disabilities, and some workers identified particular issues in relation to

Lifeline Kirklees, which provides services for adults, young people, families and communities, affected by substance use. Lifeline, in response, identified differences between the approach of individual workers working alongside Lifeline, particularly in terms of communication, support and joint working, which can negatively impact on those Lifeline staff who are not confident and experienced in safeguarding issues. Effective and strong chairing was cited as key to helping manage the complex dynamics in case conferences when there are differences between professionals, and part of the chair's role is to relay practice issues that arise back to partner agencies. The Commission was made aware of a protocol and process in place for chairs to raise any practice concerns with managers in ChYPS, but it would be beneficial if such protocols were put in place with all agencies.

Although a high number of children have a Child Protection Plan due to neglect, there was a suggestion from various practitioners that neglect is not seen to be as serious as other categories of abuse. The SWEET Project in its submission commented, for example:

“Alongside midwives, health professionals and schools we have often re-referred but are frustrated because the criteria are such that there has to be ‘significant change’ for a referral to be accepted – we would argue the cumulative impact of this is significant enough to warrant a referral.”

Neglect cases are difficult to assess and manage in the child protection system, which tends to focus on incidents and relatively short term planning. Neglect cases need a more holistic and longitudinal focus, and evidence gathering in relation to areas such as child development, engagement with services, and patterns of school attendance.

Given the high number of neglect cases and messages from research about its cumulative long term impact of neglect, the status and management of neglect cases needs to be reviewed, to ensure that the welfare of this group of children is adequately safeguarded.

e) Involvement of Parents and Children in Initial and Review Conferences

The Joint Area Review (October 2007) found that conferences are routinely attended

by parents and carers and, where appropriate, young people. A conference monitoring exercise covering 36 conferences between June and September 2007 recorded parent/carer attendance at 93.8%. This is also evidenced by the sample of conference and review minutes provided to the Commission, in which parents/relatives/carers attended 7 out of 8. Social workers are expected to share their report and prepare parents/carers for conferences and reviews. The conference monitoring exercise in 2007 recorded 56.3% of Social Work Reports being shared with parents 2 days prior to conference. The small sample of minutes provided indicated that written material is often tabled, which may leave some parents unable to access or take in the information and therefore effectively contribute to the conference/review. For example, in one initial conference attended by a fifteen year old boy and his parents, social work and school reports were tabled. The family situation would suggest that the family would struggle to absorb this written information without earlier notification and adequate preparation. This raises questions about the treatment of parents as respected partners, and about whether current practice involving parents in conferences is sufficiently empowering for them, and providing them with opportunities to contribute to planning and finding solutions (see research summary in box on page 40). There is also potential here to draw on the findings from research about the benefits of the family group conferencing model in enabling parents and extended family members to take on more responsibility for decision making (Marsh and Crowe, 1998; Manby, 2007).

Practitioners commented that children are actively involved in conferences where appropriate, and their views considered. The sample minutes provided to the Commission, showed that 4 young people (all teenagers) attended 4 out of the 8 conferences/reviews, one of these for only part of the conference. The minutes provide evidence of positive attempts to involve them in the conference. There is a specific section in the minutes which separately records the views of children whether they are present or not. In two of the sample minutes the views of the other sibling were not included (the conference had tended to focus on the needs of one sibling), and in two other cases the complexity of the family had inhibited the effective engagement of 4 siblings (aged 15, 13 and 11) in one case, and 2 siblings (aged 11 and 13) in the other.

Overall, positive attempts are being made to consider the voice of children and young people, but more care needs to be taken to include the views of **all** siblings. A stronger focus is needed on developing the skills required to hear the views of young people in complex/hard to engage situations, and the voices of younger children need to be sought in an age appropriate way. It is acknowledged that in many cases it will not be appropriate for children to attend conferences, but it is important they are listened to. Kirklees has an excellent model to draw on in the Blue Print training (which is focused on improving the child's experience of their own review), and needs to consider ways of ensuring that practitioners have the capacity and skills in direct work with children and young people.

Key Messages from recent research in Kirklees and West Yorkshire

Exploration into the views of parents and carers about their recent experiences of involvement in the Child Protection system has been the subject of a joint research programme by the NSPCC North Division, and the NCRC (2008/09). Detailed interviews were held with 42 families from Kirklees and two other Authorities. The research will be published later in 2009.

- + Parents found absorbing information about child protection processes, including gauging risks about whether their children would be removed from their care, extremely difficult, especially at the beginning stages of investigation.
- + Almost all parents found attending Child Protection Conferences extremely daunting and often 'scary'. Some were bewildered by the number of professionals attending.
- + Parents said that it was impossible for them to absorb the content of reports written about them for Child Protection Conferences if they were not given sufficient time for this, and were not adequately prepared.
- + Parents found Core Groups more supportive and more constructive than formal Child Protection Case Conferences.
- + Most parents recognised the power of professionals within the child protection system. They appreciated being consulted, given opportunities to speak, and being treated with respect.
- + Parents had a clear understanding of the importance of the role of the child protection social workers, and of the different roles of other professionals involved.
- + Most parents accepted the need for Child Protection Plans to ensure children's safety, and some parents, often those whose partners rather than themselves had been the subject of allegations, viewed child protection processes positively as a way of accessing much needed support.
- + Parents found specialist workers, including those from Drug/Alcohol agencies helpful. Therapeutic support for themselves was in short supply. There was a serious lack of therapeutic programmes for parents and children together.
- + More than half the families (n=24, 57%) reported receiving good packages of support or a good standard of service from one agency whilst they were subject to a Child Protection Plan, with some very good examples of constructive inter-agency working.
- + Changes of social worker, and being required to repeat painful family histories, troubled parents a great deal.

'Working Together' (2006), pg 132, defines the core group as being responsible for developing the Child Protection Plan as a detailed working tool, and implementing it, within the outline plan agreed at the Child Protection conference. The core group is led by the key worker, and includes the child (if appropriate), family members, and professionals/carers who have direct contact with the family.

The *Joint Area Review (Oct 2007)* identified good multi agency involvement in core group work in Kirklees as a major strength. Professionals who spoke to the Commission were also positive about the commitment to core groups.

'Working Together' (2006) requires that whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, as a first step, there should be a strategy discussion involving social care, the police and other agencies as appropriate. The discussion is used to share available information, agree the conduct and timing of any criminal investigation, and agree the actions required to immediately safeguard the child and to further the investigation. Professionals told the Commission that Strategy meetings take place, but some raised concerns about the lack of clarity regarding their role and timing, particularly when cases which start out as Section 17 (Child in Need) become reclassified to Section 47 (Child Protection). This means that not all cases which go to conference have had a strategy meeting, and suggests there is a need for more robust practice in identifying those cases which have become Section 47 cases during assessment, and in calling a strategy meeting. The Commission was concerned to hear that strategy meetings are not routinely recorded and the notes are not routinely distributed to partners in accordance with procedures.

Recommendations

8. The KSCB should look into the issue of the relatively low number of children under one year with a Child Protection Plan, to satisfy itself that there is appropriate identification of risk in this age group by front line practitioners.
9. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should develop plans to

further improve the quality of work undertaken to engage and elicit the views of children and young people (including siblings) who are involved in the child protection system.

10. The KSCB should further develop and prioritise mandatory training around issues of neglect, and undertake a review focusing on how neglect cases are handled within the child protection system with a view to improving practice in this area.
11. The KSCB should review how services and support systems are aligned to fit the geographical areas where child protection issues feature most strongly, ensuring that areas do not develop a different threshold of intervention than less deprived areas (not least with regard to neglect cases).
12. The Manager of CPRU should review training and development needs of chairs/IROs, develop an action plan for improving the quality and focus of case conference minutes, and put in place arrangements/protocols for taking up practice issues which emerge at conferences with relevant agencies.
13. The KSCB should look at the issue of attendance and contribution to initial and review conferences to ensure appropriate prioritisation, and timely submission of reports by partner agencies; and in particular to ensure that parents have sufficient time to read and understand the content of reports written about them.
14. The KSCB should lead a regional approach to reviewing Police attendance at Child Protection Conferences and Reviews, taking account of best practice elsewhere in the country.
15. The KSCB should continue to focus training on agencies who work with adults to ensure their understanding of the priority to protect the children.
16. The KSCB should ensure strategy meetings are held and recorded in accordance with procedures.

5. Assessment and Care Management Arrangements

This section reviews arrangements for assessing and managing cases of children in need. The Commission has looked at the findings of the Joint Area Review 2007, the OFSTED performance appraisal letter for 2008, and recent messages from national documents, alongside the views of social care staff and managers and partner agencies. The main focus has been on practice in protection, although there is a continuum that links to early and medium levels of intervention and prevention.

Baby P

The Joint Area Review undertaken in Haringey after the death of Baby P found assessment and care planning poor overall, identifying that *'repeated failure to take account of historical concerns places children and young people at risk'*, that *'information from other agencies is not always used to inform assessments'* and that *'managers in all agencies were aware of the poor quality of assessments, however they had not identified measures to address these serious deficiencies.'*

Structure and Resources

In 2006 separate teams for Duty and Assessment, Care Management and Children with a Disability were established, operating on a Kirklees wide basis and reporting to the Divisional Manager Fieldwork Services. Looked after children (LAC), residential services and family placement teams are the responsibility of the Divisional Manager for LAC, Care Leavers and Family Support Service. A structure chart for ChYPS is included at **Appendix (v)**.

A snapshot of the experience levels of the social workers across these services, as at May 2009, are set out in the **Table (viii)** below:

Table (viii) Experience level of social workers by service area

Service Area	Level 2 SW	Level 3 SW	Senior Practitioner	Advanced Practitioner
Duty & Assessment	13	11	3	0
Care Management	27	9	3	2
Children with a Disability	12	6	2	4 - Deputy Team Manager
Looked After Children	9	6	1	1-Deputy Team Manager
Leaving Care	2	4	1	0
Family Placement:				
- Fostering	2	7	3	2-Deputy TM
- Adoption	2	5	3	1

Duty and Assessment Service

The Duty and Assessment Service consists of a Duty Room, 3 Child Concern Teams and a Child in Need Team based at Westfields in Mirfield.

Most initial and core assessments, and section 47 investigations are undertaken by the Duty and Assessment Service. Child Protection cases are transferred from Duty and Assessment to Care Management after the Initial Conference.

Staff in this service have on average been qualified for 3 years. Social work experience levels represent a reasonable balance of experience (see table above). Work is intense and busy in the service with pressure to complete work and/or move it on through the system. The Management Team is experienced.

The JAR 2007, recognised the benefits of a centralised single Duty and Assessment service in providing a consistent point of contact and consultation for other

professionals. However, the Commission has also heard from staff about high mileage levels resulting from covering the whole of Kirklees, which can limit the time spent with families, and also about difficulties in forming close working networks with other professionals.

Care Management Service

The Care Management Service has 6 Teams based at Oakmead in Huddersfield, and undertakes long term statutory work, including care proceedings, children with a Child Protection Plan and complex children in need cases. Cases are transferred to the Care Management Service by way of a weekly allocation meeting, for which there are set objectives, criteria and priorities. Highest priority is given to allocation of care proceedings, followed by child protection with a Child Protection Plan. A few of the staff in the Care Management Service have 10 or more years post qualification experience; others have moved on to other areas of social work which means teams can have a mix of relatively experienced and inexperienced staff. Social work experience levels show a high level of less experienced staff (see table above). The Service has their own dedicated duty worker to cover work awaiting allocation, and any other tasks in the duty diary.

Good Practice in Supporting staff involved in court work:

- ✚ The Care Management Service has been innovative in bringing in 2 Legal Project Officer posts to support staff in preparing for court work, which has resulted in better quality reports and a more positive experience for social workers in court.

Initial Assessments

The Annual Performance Assessment letter to Kirklees in December 2008 identified a major strength in the patterns of referrals, re-referrals and initial assessments, which “shows good impact of services to pro-actively respond to children in need at

earlier stages”.

Data from 2007-8 showed that Kirklees completes a significantly higher number of initial assessments (75.2% of referrals) than statistical comparators (46.2%) and the England average (59.4%). However, the percentage completed within 7 days of referrals was 69.3% compared to statistical comparators (75.9%), and the England average (70.7%), and represented a fall from the previous year’s performance of 72.9%. As at 31/3/09 the percentage of initial assessments completed in 7 days has reduced further to 68.6%.

The First Report of the Social Work Task Force in May 2009 heard from many social workers that *“performance management regimes cause social workers to prioritise quantity and processes over quality in some cases”*. This was echoed by social workers who spoke to the Commission, who said that they were conscious of needing to do more analysis, but *“process and timescales dominate”*. This issue also featured in research undertaken in Bradford (Featherstone 2009): *“Practitioners spoke of the pressure to complete initial assessments based on one visit, and of their frustration with then spending days in front of the computer trying to input the data obtained”*. If Lord Laming’s recommendation that all referrals to social care should result in an Initial Assessment is implemented, there will doubtless be resource implications for Kirklees (and all local authorities), and potentially further emphasis on producing a product rather than completing quality assessments on those families most in need.

The Commission was made aware of other issues in relation to Initial Assessments:

- Social workers do not routinely consult chronologies or case histories before going out to assess families. It was suggested that accessing the IT system could make it difficult to do this in time to undertake the visit. However, failure to review case histories can impair a thorough and relevant assessment of the families’ issues. It was also suggested that many social workers do not prioritise reading the case history because of pressure on timescales.
- The focus on short, sharp assessments/investigations does not meet the needs of children suffering from neglect over lengthy periods of time, and suggests the need to reframe how concerns about neglect are handled.

- According to health professionals, a number of Initial Assessments are being undertaken without consulting health professionals. This may result in crucial information not being included in assessments.
- The decision to undertake an Initial Assessment is not always being made within 24 hours of referral, as required by Government. The Commission heard however that nonetheless the most pressing cases were being identified and actioned within the required timescale.

In reflecting on the issues pertaining to the quality of Initial Assessments, the Commission is questioning whether Kirklees should continue to complete higher than average numbers of them. As an alternative, managers could take responsibility for prioritising a smaller number for completion, potentially giving staff the time to read case histories, consult partners, analyse case material and arguably produce higher quality assessments. This should not, of course, compromise those cases where urgent action is needed to protect children. It is acknowledged that this may be difficult to progress if Lord Laming's proposal for Initial Assessments on every referral to social care becomes a government requirement.

Core Assessments

The Joint Area Review in 2007, identified good performance in meeting national timescales for core assessments, and commented that more children have core assessments of their needs than other areas. However, the Annual Performance Assessment letter to Kirklees in December 2008 identified core assessments as an area for development, as *'over a quarter of them do not occur within timescales'*. Data from 2007/8, showed that 71% of core assessments were completed within 35 working days. This was lower than statistical comparators (80%) and the England average (80%), and represented a drop from the high point in 2005/6 when 75% were completed in 35 working days. As at 31/3/09, the figure shows marginal improvement to 72.2%.

The Commission heard from social workers that the standardised core assessment form is very long, over-detailed and that some parts of it are irrelevant. It was described as 'a step backward' from the previous approach to complex assessment,

and managers commented that the quality of assessment is compromised by the chase for so much information in a tight timescale. Other social workers said that *“the focus is so wide it does not help identification of the most important parts of the assessment”*. Managers commented that the core assessment format does not encourage an emphasis on risk assessment and analysis. Issues in relation to electronic recording exacerbate this further, for example core assessments that are scanned cannot be updated, which results in time spent duplicating information.

Safeguarding Looked After Children

The JAR 2007 was very positive about safeguarding arrangements for looked after children in Kirklees, identifying that they live in safe, secure placements, are supported by well-trained staff, and have effective care plans with good multi agency support packages.

Kirklees has a dedicated Looked After Children (LAC) team, which has the benefit of staff developing relevant expertise and also protecting the service to looked after children from the demands of crisis child protection and care proceedings work.

The experience levels of social workers working with looked after children are well balanced: 9 Level 2, 6 Level 3, 1 Senior Practitioner and 1 Deputy Team Manager. There is also a Leaving Care Service to support looked after children into independence.

The number of looked after children in Kirklees, as noted in Chapter 2 above, has increased from 315 in 2005 to 490 in 2009, a 56 % increase. In 2007/8, Kirklees had lower numbers per 100,000 children than Statistical Comparators and the England average: Kirklees 47.2, SN 66.2, England 54.1. It may well be that this gap has closed in recent months although there is a national trend towards increased numbers of looked after children.

The Commission has been told that the reasons for the increases in Kirklees have been identified as:

- Children staying in care longer
- Increased numbers of asylum seekers
- Courts reluctant to make supervision orders, preferring Care Orders

Kirklees has taken decisive action in managing the impact of these increases, by commissioning an Audit Review Report in 2008, and in the light of the Report's findings, increasing the LAC budget for 2009/10 by £4.5m and for 2010/11 by a further £1.1m.

Despite the increases in the number of looked after children, the number whose statutory reviews were completed on time has steadily increased to 90.9% as at September 2008. Additional Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) resources have been agreed to ensure that optimal performance can be maintained in the light of the increased numbers of looked after children.

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 aims to ensure better outcomes for looked after children, and introduces new guidelines for the role of the IRO, to improve continuity and the experience of care planning for the child.

Good Practice: Improving the involvement of LAC in their reviews:

The Commission was told about excellent practice in place in Kirklees through the Blue Print training, which has increased the involvement and experience of looked after children in their statutory review.

The Commission was informed that some social workers found it difficult to see Looked After Children placed at home, on their own. Parents who had regained day to day care of their children, and the children themselves sometimes had little understanding about the safeguarding process. These children can be more vulnerable than children in care placements or even those subject to multi agency protection plans, and therefore seeing and listening to these children should be a clear priority.

Section 17

The Children Act 1989 envisaged that children whose needs came under Section 17 of the Act would fall within the province of Social Services Departments. From the outset local authority social care teams have struggled to provide a service to every child in need because the remit was too wide, and cases have been prioritised with a recognition that statutory social care teams assume responsibility for child protection, looked after children and children with complex needs and/or disabilities. This has sparked ongoing interagency debate and negotiation about thresholds. The Laming Report 2009 (see Chapter 2 above) noted that thresholds for social care are inconsistent and too high and undermined the purpose of Section 17 – to provide early support and intervention.

The Kirklees JAR (2007) noted that: ‘There remains a degree of uncertainty amongst some professionals regarding thresholds for social work intervention, and the response and coordination of services for children in need outside of the formal safeguarding arrangements.’

There is no doubt that the whole picture, (increased expectations of the social work role, bureaucracy, technology and higher referrals levels) has impacted on the thresholds in Kirklees and nationally, and therefore reduced the amount of less complex Section 17 work that can be dealt with. The Commission was told that only the more complex cases were likely to be considered for allocation. It has also been suggested that increased concern about risks and responsibilities amongst universal service providers, for example, health, schools and locality services, have contributed to their feeling less comfortable about dealing with Section 17 cases.

The Commission heard that information sharing (see Section 6 below) could be difficult in Section 17 cases where parental consent is required. Social Workers described particular tensions with health partners in this respect.

Children with Disabilities

There is a specialist team for children with disabilities which covers all of Kirklees. The Team has a Team Manager, 2 Deputy Team Managers and 7 Social Workers (3 of these have been provided to respond to increased workloads). In addition to managing ongoing cases, the team undertakes Children in Need assessments and Section 47 investigations in relation to disabled children. This enables both the expertise in dealing with child protection issues and working with disabilities to be brought to these cases.

Managers and staff from the Disability Team acknowledged that a child's disability can take the focus away from child protection issues, but contend they work hard to keep an appropriate focus. Neglect cases in particular are considered hard to assess and manage and the service uses the 'graded social care file' toolkit (which has been introduced by one of the team from another authority) to help manage neglect cases.

The team covers a wide range of work from complex statutory to family support. Staff told the Commission that there are high levels of absent fathers and issues of poverty in many of the cases they deal with. The Team works with localities to help build knowledge and awareness of disability issues and has introduced two Referral and Information Advice Officers to help signpost families and agencies to community based resources, as receiving locally based integrated support is in both children's and families' interests.

Information from the Children's Disability Team was that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) would not work with children with learning disabilities. In other cases CAMHS would sometimes decline involvement until the child was settled; this could be a "chicken and egg" situation.

Direct work with Children

The Laming Report 2009 has brought a renewed focus on seeing children – observing, talking and listening to them.

Team managers told the Commission that in cases where children are at risk, they are seen and interviewed alone. There is no system for identifying (“flagging up”) when children and families are not being seen. It was suggested to the Commission that building this into the IT system could be explored, as managers do not have time to read all social work records and tend to concentrate on key documents.

Team managers considered that ongoing direct work with children did not happen as often as it should, and that practitioners varied in the level of skills and motivation which they bring to engaging children in this way. Managers were aware of these differences and addressed them in supervision. Social workers suggested that their role has become one of coordination, with little time to engage in direct work. In child protection cases, social workers take on the key worker role with responsibility for the core group and the Child Protection Plan. As such they tend to have become coordinators and commissioners of work, and arrange for other workers to engage the child or young person on specific tasks or for therapeutic purposes. Fewer opportunities to work with children was cited as one of the reasons social workers leave the service.

For children in the child protection system to be effectively safeguarded, they need engagement with social workers and high quality individual work.

Recommendations

17. The Director of Children’s Services should consider whether to reduce the number of Initial Assessments undertaken by social workers through prioritisation, with a view to improving the quality of these assessments.
18. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should ensure that chronologies are in place on social care files and that they are routinely consulted in all assessment processes.
19. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should ensure that relevant professionals, particularly those from health, are routinely consulted in the preparation of Initial Assessments.

20. The Director of Children's Services should further develop the capacity, skills and expertise of social workers in direct work with children, with a view to Kirklees having a reputation for excellence in this aspect of practice.

21. The Director of Children's Services should clarify the location of responsibility for the assessment and support of Children in Need within ChYPS and more widely within the authority.

Cross reference to recommendations 1 and 4 on page 43 regarding thresholds and Section 17.

22. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should ensure that looked after children who are placed with parents are reviewed, visited, seen and spoken to (alone if appropriate), to at least the same standard as those in care placements.

23. The KSCB should investigate the role that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services plays in supporting children in need, including children with learning disabilities and looked after children.

Cross reference to recommendation 9 on page 55.

24. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should explore the feasibility of developing a process within the electronic recording system, for identifying ("flagging up") children who have not been seen by a social worker.

6. Multi-Agency Working

This section reviews multi-agency working at the level of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board, and in relation to Child Protection Investigations (S.47) and children in need (S.17) and children requiring additional support. Thresholds for referrals and information sharing between agencies are considered. Key relationships between Children and Young People's Services and other professional groups, including Health professionals and Schools are considered. The section also notes the potential for the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to impact on Multi-Agency Working and comments on relevant structural issues.

Some agencies still think they are helping out Social Care rather than (recognising) that Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. (Chair of Loughborough Children's Safeguarding Board, cited in Laming, 2009, p36).

This section argues that while there is evidence of positive and effective multi-agency work at all levels, further strenuous reforms are needed to achieve a fully integrated children's service.

Overview

Improving the effectiveness of joint working, and improving communication and multi-agency working has been at the top of the Child Protection and Safeguarding agenda at least since the publication of the Maria Colwell Inquiry in the early 1970s. Clamours for improvements in this area have been repeated in national and local inquiries, following the deaths of children who have been abused or neglected. In Kirklees, there is evidence of a great deal of multi-agency work, much of it effective. The Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board is a very good example of multi-agency working between senior managers and professionals across all agencies involved in Safeguarding. Members of the Safeguarding Board bring distinctive professional contributions, but combine together to achieve a shared, multi-agency focus on the safeguarding of children and the promotion of their well-being. There is plentiful evidence of multi-agency co-operation in joint working on Serious Case Reviews.

Every Case Conference held under the auspices of the KSCB represents a genuine attempt between agencies to pool knowledge and resources to clarify safeguarding concerns and develop Child Protection Plans. At this level, Kirklees should feel confident that its performance compares well with similar authorities. As well, examples of good practice have been found in many areas, and some of these are highlighted below.

Nonetheless, evidence presented to the Commission has identified a number of key concerns which will require commitment and detailed attention:

- (i) Social workers within the Duty and Assessment and Care Management Services continue to feel that they have to take the primary role in safeguarding children, and often feel isolated and unsupported by other agencies in doing so.
- (ii) Partner agencies often find it difficult to refer work to the Duty and Assessment/ Care Management Services within ChYPS. Thresholds for cases to be accepted by ChYPS are perceived to be too high, and accessing services for families where there are Child Protection concerns is experienced as difficult.
- (iii) The centralised structure of the key ChYPS safeguarding services, Duty and Assessment and Care Management, does little to aid multi-agency working. The development of multi-agency working at the Localities' level is more encouraging.
- (iv) In spite of much recent policy-making, information sharing remains contested territory.
- (v) Although the statutory children's services and schools are now both part of ChYPS, liaison between them has not yet reached optimal levels, and a large number of schools feel unsupported with regard to their child protection responsibilities.

- (vi) The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) got off to a slow start in Kirklees. While the re-launch of CAF, including a substantial training initiative, has been well received, further progress is required to ensure that CAF can achieve a significant increase in the level of support for children and families with additional needs.
- (vii) Partner agencies have been made aware of the wider ramifications of child protection in recent years, including the adverse impact of parental substance misuse, domestic violence and mental health problems on children's well-being. This has resulted in a considerable expansion in the total volume of child protection concerns, causing overload to the system.

These issues are now considered in more detail:

(i) *Child Protection Social Work: still an isolated enterprise*

The views of child protection social workers are considered first.

The role of social workers in child protection is, by its nature, a specialist one, providing support to families with children at risk of significant harm, and reaching decisions about where children need to be provided with alternative care. These are difficult roles which require high level judgements about complex issues. Recently published guidance about integrated services in Kirklees stipulates that the lead professional role in child protection (as for Looked After Children) cases must be held by qualified social workers. Nationally, the health visiting profession has long adopted a position that health visitors should not take the key role in child protection cases. Child protection social workers are right to feel that they carry the ultimate responsibility in this area. Without falling into the trap of stereotyping recipients of child protection services, it has to be recognised that the families of children vulnerable to abuse can be both manipulative and violent towards social workers, which makes the social worker's job particularly difficult.

The picture is not all bleak. Evidence received by the Commission was that the police could be relied upon to undertake joint visits with social workers where access

was proving difficult, or where violence was anticipated. Child protection workers have been able to establish good working relationships with professionals in other disciplines including health visitors who, generally, understand the role of child protection social workers well (the Commission heard that health visitors had prioritised child protection cases in Kirklees and allocated much of their time to supporting these families). Child protection social workers have established effective working relationships with some schools, particularly those most frequently involved in child protection work.

In spite of this, the Commission has recognised that child protection social workers continue to feel isolated and unsupported in their role in much of their work. While there is clear evidence of sharing of responsibility for safeguarding at the level of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board, this feeling is only faintly reciprocated amongst front-line workers. Colloquially, child protection workers talk about “buck passing” and being “dumped on”. They exemplify this with reference to schools telephoning them to tell them about children known to their service who are absent from school (with the expectation that they will respond and do something about this); and by describing core groups where expectations are that child protection social workers will take the lion’s share of responsibility for implementing Action Plans. This sense of isolation is felt by some more than others, and by front-line staff more than managers; and the problem this represents is by no means irretrievable. It is closely linked to social workers’ experience that their role and status is comparatively low, and that they are frequently the butt for criticism from the media when failures are highlighted. These feelings can be compounded, for example in the Courts, where other professions are accorded higher status, and where other services, for example CAFCASS, or expert witnesses, are frequently treated with more deference, and their opinions are given more weight.

(ii) *The Issue of Thresholds*

Child protection social workers can adopt a somewhat defensive mentality at times of increased service pressures. Other agencies, while acknowledging that children within the child protection system receive a good level of service, have regularly reported that they find it difficult to refer new cases, particularly those with lower level

concerns. The Commission heard that thresholds for new referrals to be accepted are generally considered to be set too high. While there is little dispute about referrals where children have been subject to physical abuse or other unmistakable evidence of harm, there is more disquiet about children who fall below this “threshold”. Kirklees Safeguarding statistics show that only a small proportion of children are subject to physical or sexual abuse. A much higher proportion fall within the neglect or emotional abuse categories, where the level of harm to the child can be more difficult to assess. This area is experienced as problematic by Family Support Workers within the locality services managed by ChYPS, and also by schools.

The impression from outside the Safeguarding and Specialist Provision is of two not wholly connected systems: that of child protection, where cases are investigated and followed up; and the rest of child and family support work in the Authority where family support workers, schools, health professionals and others support families to the limit of their resources, with comparatively little input or contact with child protection services. Typologies of child protection and family support services (for example Hardiker et al, 1991) have frequently categorised child protection services as the most complex band of work (Level 4), and universal services, support for children with additional needs, and more complex cases have been described as occupying lower rungs on the hierarchy of support and intervention (Levels 1 – 3).

While an element of separation between child protection and other support services is very common, and is likely to be replicated in other similar authorities, the level of separation between child protection and other child and family support services in Kirklees is regarded as too wide and needing serious attention in order to narrow the gap.

(iii) A Comment on Structure

As noted in the introductory section, the current organisation of child protection services within the Children and Young People’s Services in Kirklees dates back to 2006. A desire to ensure a consistent approach to assessment of needs and service delivery was an important factor in deciding on the current centralised model.

Managers within Safeguarding and Specialist Provision told the Commission that they doubted that the present volume of child protection referrals – which increased very steeply in the final quarter of 2008 - could be sustained if a more decentralised service model was adopted. This is an important consideration. On the other hand, the present structure, which locates Duty and Assessment functions on the Westfields site near Mirfield, and Care Management Services on the Oakmead site in Huddersfield, arguably does not do much to promote multi-agency work. Duty and Assessment social workers engage with professionals from other agencies across the whole of the borough for short periods, which means that they have fewer opportunities for developing relationships of trust and mutual confidence. Care Management workers engage with clients for much longer periods, but still have to relate to other agency professionals across the whole Authority.

The centralised structure of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision contrasts with the decentralised locality model of service promoted generally by Kirklees. Within ChYPS, seven locality managers are responsible for children's centres and family support workers, building on the legacy of Sure Start which prioritised services for children under five. Locality managers have commented positively on opportunities they have enjoyed for developing multi-agency approaches to family support; in particular, they have reflected on enhanced levels of co-operation achieved between children's services and health professionals.

(iv) Information sharing

Information sharing is one of the main building blocks of effective multi-agency working within the safeguarding / child protection arena. Government guidance was issued in 2006 and updated in 2008. The recent Laming Progress Report has restated the main principles underpinning information sharing (March, 2009, pp 41, 42). Lord Laming states that:

“Whilst the law rightly seeks to preserve individuals’ privacy and confidentiality, it should not be used (and was never intended) as a barrier to appropriate information sharing between professionals. The safety and welfare of children is of paramount importance, and agencies may lawfully

share confidential information about the child or the parent, without consent, if doing so is in the public interest.”

The Kirklees Guidance document on Integrated Working clarifies the position locally. The Safeguarding Children Board has provided leadership here, and professionals consulted by the Commission were generally well informed.

The Commission received evidence that information sharing generally worked well at the level of S.47 child protection investigations. Professionals in all agencies are aware that considerations relating to safeguarding children are paramount where children are known to be at significant risk of harm. The position, unsurprisingly, is less clear cut where the focus is on promoting children’s welfare rather than addressing child protection concerns. Good practice requires that parental consent is always sought as a first option in cases of this kind. Guidance that information may also be shared in order to promote children’s welfare, where a public interest can be demonstrated, has also been widely circulated. Concerns had arisen about information sharing in Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) in Kirklees, and a Guide to Information Sharing had been placed on the Kirklees Safeguarding Board’s website; and the issue was also covered in training.

The 2009 Laming Report highlighted that health professionals had continued to resist information sharing because of concerns about client confidentiality. In Kirklees, the Commission learnt that the Safeguarding Children Board had adopted a positive policy in relation to information sharing to promote children’s welfare. Health professionals consulted recognised that more needed to be done to challenge cautious attitudes. Safeguarding Children Board representatives, from both health and social work backgrounds, promoted the common sense view that professionals would always be supported if information was shared with a clear focus on promoting children’s welfare. These positive attitudes are encouraging.

However, evidence received by the Commission was that front-line child protection staff still encounter significant difficulties in this area. Members of the Commission noted that there is a residual belief amongst practitioners that it is not safe in law to share information. The Commission noted instances where professionals hesitated

to share information on comparatively minor matters, for example, immunisation records. Two external organisations, Lifeline and the SWEET Project, who provided written evidence to the Commission, highlighted information sharing as an area where professional practice needed to be improved. The SWEET Project emphasised the importance of following data protection procedures which required that requests should be made in writing, and the purpose for needing information should be clear. The SWEET Project also needed reassurance that after information had been shared, they would receive feedback about how the information was used in relation to their clients. Historically, Lifeline, the main agency in Kirklees supporting people dependent on drugs and alcohol, had been perceived as an agency reluctant to share confidential information. Evidence received was that practice improvements in this area had been noticed, with a clearer understanding that all agencies had to recognise that the welfare of the child was paramount, and that this had to take precedence over other considerations.

The Commission heard that improvements in information sharing would do much to enhance the credibility of multi-agency work amongst practitioners. The Kirklees *Handbook for Practitioners* on Integrated Working and the Common Assessment Framework, published in 2009, should make a significant contribution to clarifying information sharing requirements in the Authority. Guidance has been available from the Kirklees Information Sharing Service (KISS). KISS has collated data about children and families where multi-agency work is required and about named practitioners who may have been previously involved. KISS is providing local information until the National Contact Point Service is rolled out in Kirklees later in 2009. Contact Point will enable professionals to check which services are involved in supporting families, although no client's specific details will be recorded.

The *Handbook for Practitioners* contains a pocket guide summarising Government Guidance and Local Policies on information sharing. The guidance provided is of high quality. Step by step advice is set out, including clarification about whether the public interest test is met in cases where a child's parents / carers refuse consent for information sharing. The *Handbook for Practitioners* is now available on-line and should make a valuable contribution to improving practice in this area.

(v) Child Protection Social Work and Health

At the level of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board, principles of multi-agency work between health and child protection workers are well established. An integrated approach was demonstrated by the appointment of the Assistant Director for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults at Kirklees PCT as the Deputy Chair of the KSCB. The Commission heard evidence that the Health Visiting Service in Kirklees had prioritised support for families with children in the safeguarding / child protection system, so that these families received much more support than families requiring universal services. Kirklees PCT acknowledged that problems had arisen linked to vacancies in health visitor and midwifery posts in Kirklees. Nonetheless, health visitors had a well established role within Child Protection Case Conferences. Health professionals had been fully involved in a number of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). The PCT had organised dissemination events so that Health professionals had had opportunities to assimilate lessons about professional practice following SCRs. One issue here was that attendance at these events was not compulsory, and the PCT was unsure about attendance levels.

Health visitors who met the Commission advised that they always attended Child Protection Case Conferences for children under 5, and they felt able to contribute fully within these settings. Health professionals were supported by “Named Nurses” able to advise on child protection issues. The Named Nurse’s role included providing training on the duty to share information within GP practices, an area where progress was now being made. Multi-agency practice and information sharing was improving.

Evidence from health visitors was that they had been able to establish “good enough” working relationships with Duty and Assessment and Care Management social workers. They restricted referrals to cases where they considered there to be a significant risk of harm to a child. Responses from the Duty and Assessment Service could be variable. Feedback, for example, where no further action was taken, was not always available. Health visitors observed that they had experienced a degree of reluctance from Duty and Assessment/Care Management to deal with children over the age of 10; this was considered to be linked to the capacity of the social work teams. Health visitors’ perceptions were that the social work teams

focused particularly on safeguarding concerns for younger children. Health professionals referred to difficulties experienced when Child Protection meetings were cancelled or venues changed, sometimes at short notice. They did not always feel actively involved in writing Child Protection Plans following Child Protection Conferences, and there was a view that a more inclusive approach would have been welcome. Health visitors, in accordance with their Association's National Policy, did not undertake key worker roles for children subject to Child Protection Plans.

When asked about the potential for the number of midwifery and health visiting vacancies to adversely impact on the safeguarding agenda, a senior health representative acknowledged the existence of concern noting that these are key posts. It was also acknowledged that some professionals might abrogate/ 'hand over' responsibility to children's services.

The senior health representative acknowledged progress in the context of information sharing but acknowledged scope for further improvement. Examples were cited of telephone calls asking for advice indicating the need to work on enhancing understanding and professionals having the confidence to share information.

Overall, evidence received by the Commission indicated that relationships between health professionals and child protection social workers were well established, with areas for further improvement. Health visitors' involvement and knowledge about families are crucial to enable accurate assessments of significant harm to children to be completed. The Commission's view is that the role and contribution of health professionals to assessment and implementation of Child Protection Plans should be further enhanced. Positive evidence has been received about improvements in relationships between health visitors and Locality Services, with effective shared contributions to supporting families with younger children.

(iii) Child Protection Social Work and Schools

Schools' responsibilities for the protection of children and for promoting their welfare stem from the Education Act 2002, Section 175. Members of the Commission were very aware of the obligations of Governors, Head Teachers and school staff for the

care of their pupils.

Evidence about good Child Protection / Safeguarding practice in schools is summarised in the box below.

Good Practice Development in Schools

- + Establishment of the role of the Safeguarding Officer for Schools and Learning.
- + Safeguarding / Child Protection Training Strategy for school-based staff.
- + Model Child Protection Policy for schools now available.
- + Designated senior persons for child protection established in all schools.
- + Implementation of Bichard Inquiry.
- + Recruitment Panels for school staff now include a staff member who has completed NCSL Safer Recruitment Training.
- + Safer Schools Partnership piloted at two Kirklees High Schools now being rolled out nationally.

Although the Commission has learnt about serious concerns from school-based staff about the pressures they are experiencing in relation to their child protection responsibilities, it is important to emphasise that strong foundations are being built strategically, and within Kirklees schools, to improve children's safety. Head teachers and other senior school-based staff fully recognise the importance of ensuring children's emotional well-being in order for them to benefit from the school curriculum. Head teachers and their staff know children, and frequently their families, well; and they are well placed to make sound judgements about children's need for additional support, or for interventions to ensure their safety.

The section below on multi-agency training acknowledges the very promising progress achieved in establishing a training infrastructure for schools in Kirklees.

An important development has been the completion of Kirklees' Model Safeguarding Policies for Schools (November 2008). The document provides detailed guidance on recruitment and selection; partnership with parents and other agencies; training and staff induction; the roles of school staff; identifying children suffering significant harm; and actions required to ensure children's safety. Policies are clear that schools do not have responsibility for investigating child protection issues. Although some schools had not been able to obtain copies of the Model Policy as soon as they would have wished, the document makes an important contribution to ensuring proper standards of safety for children in school.

Detailed guidance is now available for schools on safe recruitment policies, including accessing NCSL (National College of School Leadership) Safer Recruitment Training. Model procedures can be accessed through Ednet.

In September 2008, the Schools Safeguarding Officer distributed a Safeguarding Audit / Tool Kit, to assist schools in assessing progress in fulfilling their safeguarding / child protection responsibilities. The Tool Kit covers training, recruitment (including Criminal Records Bureau checks), safeguarding policy, recording and handling allegations. The document had been well received by schools, although some found it onerous. By April 2009, 54 / 194 schools had responded. While recognising the work pressures experienced by head teachers, the Commission was concerned about the large number of schools who still had to complete the Audit.

The Commission heard evidence from twenty head teachers in June 2009 about their involvement in promoting children's well-being, and about their experiences of liaison with child protection services. Schools in Kirklees generally have had long experience prioritising children's well-being, recognising that children, particularly those living in deprived areas, may need a wide range of support before they can benefit from the school curriculum. Responsibilities in this area have been formalised in recent legislation (Education Act 2002). Designated Child Protection roles have been well established in schools in Kirklees for many years and these

have usually been carried out by head teachers in Primary Schools. Head teachers' experience of training in this area was variable.

While some schools had been able to develop effective liaison with child protection social workers, a number of both Primary and Secondary Schools heads, expressed concerns in this area, as follows:

- (i) There was a widespread view that since ChYPS had been set up the level of involvement of schools in safeguarding and child protection had increased. Some head teachers considered that liaison with Duty and Assessment and Care Management had deteriorated during this period.
- (ii) Day-to-day contacts with the Duty and Assessment Service could be problematic, for example, establishing a satisfactory point of contact. Head teachers emphasised that their requirement was frequently for high level advice and guidance about action to be taken in cases of considerable complexity. Head teachers reported that contact with child protection workers could be effective once cases had been allocated.
- (iii) Head teachers consulted, commended liaison established with the recently appointed Education Child Protection Development Worker. More support of this kind is needed. Head teachers commented that they did not have access to supervision on child protection issues, other than through the advice of their Development Worker.
- (iv) The burden of child protection work was considered by head teachers to fall unevenly on schools. Those in the most disadvantaged areas had much more work of this kind. These schools were also likely to be ones where standards of education were subject to challenge by OFSTED.
- (v) Closer strategic contact between schools and Duty and Assessment/Care Management Services was required. A recent Liaison Group had been established between a group of head teachers and Duty and Assessment/Care Management Services, and this was proving to be a

valuable vehicle for resolving shared concerns.

- (vi) Some Schools missed the support previously provided by Education Social Workers, whose role had now been changed to focus on attendance issues.
- (vii) There was a view that channels of communication between schools and child protection services needed to be urgently improved to ensure children's safety and well-being.
- (viii) Schools particularly valued the role and contribution of school nurses, although this resource was spread thinly across relatively large numbers of schools.

The Commission considered that schools who provided evidence demonstrated considerable competence in responding to children's emotional needs. They were well placed to ensure that additional services which they controlled, for example learning mentors or parenting support advisers, were made available to support families. Schools needed to be encouraged to discharge their responsibilities fully for supporting children's emotional development, relying in most cases on their own professional judgements about children's needs, what support they required, and how they could be helped. Schools were likely to need additional help from statutory child protection services mainly where complex needs had been identified.

The Contribution of CAF to Multi-Agency Working

The development of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in Kirklees has been covered in the preceding section on Prevention and Early Intervention. The development of CAF now has a much more secure location in the development of multi-agency work in Kirklees. CAF is not a panacea, but, properly used, can make a useful contribution to co-ordinating support for children with additional needs. As already noted, the recently published Kirklees '*Handbook for Practitioners*', provides timely and high quality advice on Integrated Working. New resources (two CAF Co-ordinator posts) have been established to provide guidance to practitioners. Clearer policies about the role of the lead professional are now in place. Since March 2009,

multi-agency Locality Meetings known as ECM (*Every Child Matters*) HUBS have been held in all seven localities across Kirklees to promote integrated working and the development of CAF. The ECM HUB is described as “*the ideal space for practitioners to trouble-shoot issues about CAF and the role of the lead professional*”. Strategic managers are becoming more confident that multi-agency practice is on a positive trajectory, with opportunities for positive outcomes for children and families to be evidenced.

Key issues will include:

- (i) Ensuring that responsibility for the implementation of CAF is regarded as essential business for strategic managers, and that effective liaison and co-ordination between the Integrated Working Programme Management Board and the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board is developed.
- (ii) Ensuring that close connections and effective communications are established between localities, (where CAFs will mainly be implemented) and Duty and Assessment /Care Management services.
- (iii) Ensuring that responsibility for CAF implementation, including the role of the lead professional, is shared responsibly (and is perceived to be shared responsibly) between the agencies involved.
- (iv) Ensuring that all agencies, including those responsible for older children and young people (e.g. Young People’s Service and Connexions) and voluntary sector agencies are accorded the status of equal partners in the implementation of CAF.

Recommendations

25. The Integrated Working Programme Management Board, the KSCB, and the Director of Children’s Services should establish a ‘close contact model’ between partner agencies, the Localities and schools and Duty and Assessment/Care Management Services, to improve communication, break down barriers and

harness all the resources and expertise available to support Children in Need.

26. The Director of Children's Services should develop a new strategy within ChYPS to improve liaison between child protection services and schools. A conference to cement a closer working relationship should be seriously considered.
27. The Director of Children's Services should lead a radical shift towards further empowering schools in managing the welfare of children in their care. To help achieve this, schools should be provided with access to timely, high quality advice on child protection and children in need issues, and opportunities to develop reflective practice.
28. The Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Council's Chief Executive and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services, should make a considered statement within six months of the publication of this report about the medium / longer-term structural development of ChYPS. The statement should address tensions between the centralised Safeguarding and Specialist Provision and the de-centralised Locality Services, and issues arising in ensuring support to children in need and their families. This statement should include examination of potential moves towards establishing co-located Multi-Agency Children's Services teams.
29. The KSCB should explore opportunities for further enhancing the role and contribution of health professionals, including health visitors, midwives and school nurses, to the development and implementation of Child Protection Plans.
30. The KSCB should continue to pay attention to improving information sharing, to achieve an all encompassing system which makes it easy to share information.
31. The Director of Children's Services and the Head of Learning should encourage schools to prioritise the completion of the Safeguarding Audit, which assists schools to assess progress in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities.
32. Head teachers, the Head of Learning and the Director of Children's Services

should explore possible funding sources, with a view to establishing a second Safeguarding Officer for Schools post.

33. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should lead further initiatives to ensure social workers provide routine feedback to referring agencies.

7. Social Care Workloads and Processes

This section reviews the workloads across social care, a key issue raised in the Laming report, and one central to ensuring children are safeguarded. Also considered are the issues Lord Laming has raised in relation to the support systems available to social workers and the impact these are having on safeguarding and on direct work with children and families. The Commission has heard from Social Workers and Managers about the processes for managing and prioritising work in Kirklees and also about some of the processes which support day to day safeguarding work.

Workloads Across Social Care

The Laming report recommended national guidelines setting out maximum caseloads for children in need and child protection cases. The Children's Social Work Taskforce has been entrusted with this.

The JAR for Haringey 2009 found that, although all children's social care cases were allocated, workloads were heavy, and some staff were unable to action all cases effectively. Some allocations were made electronically without discussion.

Duty and Assessment and Care Management

There has been a significant increase in the workloads of the Duty and Assessment and Care Management Services in Kirklees in the last 12 months due to changes in public law legislation and to the impact of the Baby P case in Haringey. Although designed to speed up the court proceedings the public law legislation has increased the preparation work required from social workers.

Duty and Assessment caseloads are on average about 16 cases. Some Social Workers felt that, because of the pressure caused by the number of referrals, they were closing cases too soon. Caseloads in Care Management Teams are on average 5 with a maximum of 3 care proceedings. Some workloads are predominantly care proceedings, others more mixed. Care Management staff told the Commission that the number of cases held may appear to be lower than

neighbouring authorities, but that travelling time (covering the whole authority), and the time consuming task of setting up contact between children and parents were pertinent issues in Kirklees. The approach to managing workloads in Kirklees has been to find innovative ways of manage the pressure of increased work, within a strong (and commendable) culture of managers maintaining responsibility for the overall workload.

There has been a positive and much appreciated commitment by senior managers to maintain staffing levels in both the Duty and Assessment and Care Management Services, where necessary using agency staff. At the same time, team managers in Care Management said they were not under undue pressure to allocate every case, partly due to an internal duty system for monitoring some cases. Team managers have appropriately assumed responsibility for managing work awaiting allocation and keeping cases under regular review. Previously, cases awaiting allocation have been colloquially called 'stacked cases' - an unfortunate name which does not do justice to the way they are being effectively managed. Social workers said there is considerable pressure to allocate work. The Commission felt there was an appropriate balance between managers not making unrealistic demands on their staff, and workers' productivity being maximised. Newly qualified social workers are protected at least initially in terms of the quantity and type of caseload. One worker gave a detailed account of a good experience in having a protected caseload and a good learning experience in care proceedings. However the same social worker cited an example of a colleague in another team who had not had the same level of support. The new arrangements in the (draft) Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme will formalise support arrangements and bring greater consistency.

The key issues which the Commission heard from staff in relation to workload pressures were:

- The impact of travel across the whole authority (and beyond) on workloads.
- Contact visits – time consuming for administrators and social workers who have to manage it until the contact team picks up the case.

- Some social workers experiencing regular pressure to work late.
- Social workers accumulating 'Time in Lieu' they do not have time to take.
- Some social workers claiming they could not make time to prioritise preparation for progression to Level 3.
- Report preparation being rushed and the quality of reports suffering as a result.
- Social workers not always having time to reflect on practice issues.
- Administration requirements – for example spending 60-80% of time inputting records, assessments, and report writing - impacting negatively on workloads.
- Staff experiencing workload pressures impacting on time to undertake direct work with children and families.
- Staff wishing to see more lower level intervention work being done to support children and families.

The Commission welcomes innovative practices which have been introduced already to help manage workload pressures. It considers that there are opportunities for further work to be initiated to examine the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff and the management of allocated, unallocated and "duty managed" cases.

Children with Disabilities

Managers and staff working within this service commented on increased workloads in the past year which they see as relating to children surviving increasingly complex medical conditions, multiple disabilities in families, and the impact of Baby P on the public and agencies. Staffing in this team has been increased to reflect this increased workload.

The Commission was informed that all child protection cases were allocated, but that there were currently high numbers of Children in Need cases not allocated. A temporary worker has been employed to review these cases.

Looked After Children

Numbers of looked after children increased from 315 in April 2005 to 490 in January 2009 (56% increase). While historically Kirklees has had lower than average levels of Looked After Children, recent data suggests that increases in Kirklees parallel those of the national average. Following an audit report in 2008 funding has been increased to meet increased service pressures, and in 2009 the impact of the increases on LAC reviews has been addressed in a service review of the child protection and review group and an additional IRO post created.

Workload Management and Prioritisation

The Laming Report 2009 recommended a weighting mechanism to reflect the complexity of cases. The view of the Social Work Task Force is that this is a critical issue for the profession, but that caseload management should not itself create additional bureaucracy and divert attention from key practice issues.

Team Managers reported that there is no official caseload management system in operation in Kirklees. In the past a points system had been used to manage social workers' workloads, but this was found to be overly prescriptive and inflexible, and did not take into account that different cases require different levels of work. They felt that the current arrangement under which each team manager takes responsibility for balancing workloads works well. The Senior Management Team maintains an overview of allocation and workloads, and this information is available to all staff. Managers were confident that staff could raise issues if they felt their workload was excessive. Supervision meetings are used to look at individual's workloads.

There are clear priorities for allocation and workload management in Duty and Assessment and Care Management set out in written guidance. Referrals to Duty and Assessment are allocated immediately to practitioners through a rota system

which involves all qualified workers in the Duty and Assessment service.

Management and Decision Making

The Commission was impressed by the quality of managers in social care, and by their commitment and the responsibility they have appropriately assumed for all aspects of the development and management of the service. Unit Managers play a positive role in supporting first line managers and have led a range of service innovations to support service delivery, such as the introduction of report templates and legal officers to support social workers through the court process. Social workers and front line managers spoke highly of the support they received from unit managers. There is also a clear cohesion and team ethos between management levels and with front line workers, a sense of effective leadership, and a solid and stable management culture.

The Commission heard from social workers that they had access to managers for decision making and support when needed, which they considered to be of high quality. Team managers saw a key part of their role as being available to support social workers with timely, quality decision making. Team managers contended that decision making requires experienced team managers and staff, as decisions often have to be made quickly, sometimes over the phone, and there is pressure to ensure the decision is the right one, particularly when safeguarding and child protection issues are involved. Team managers told the Commission that they supported each other when appropriate, for example in complex or unfamiliar situations. The publicity surrounding the Baby P case had caused other agencies to be increasingly anxious about risk, and increased the tension between social workers and partners about decision making. This had brought the team manager role in decision making into even clearer focus.

Nevertheless, the Commission wishes to comment on the trend over the last two decades in which child welfare decisions have been increasingly referred to more senior levels, impacting on the development of professional responsibility and accountability in the social work role.

The Commission did not undertake a systematic review of decision making levels. The Commission was however made aware by practitioners of differential levels of decision making, for example, that the decision not to proceed to conference is authorised by the Unit Manager, but the decision to proceed to conference is taken at team manager level. There may be other such issues, which suggests that a review of decision making levels would be productive.

Administration, Recording and Technology

Kirklees has made an impressive commitment to providing the equipment, expertise and training to support the development of electronic administrative systems. The vast majority of all children's social work recording systems are electronic. Considerable numbers of paper files and records have been scanned on to the electronic system, although there is still a backlog of documents for which this process is incomplete.

Kirklees, in common with approximately some seventy other Local Authority children's services, operates an electronic client database called Care First, which was implemented in 2000. The system is still being developed by OLM, the provider, and although the Commission heard that the system is slow, has insufficient memory, and is prone to crash regularly with insufficient backup, work is in progress to upgrade the system in the coming months.

CareStore, the part of the system from which historical documents are accessed is slow, has limited storage and has other technical glitches which are also being tackled by the provider. These problems have been cited as one of the reasons social workers do not routinely research the case history before visiting new referrals, and also why chronologies are not in regular use.

The Integrated Children's System (ICS), the national IT framework for working with children in need and their families, has so far only been introduced on a trial basis in the Children's Disability service in Kirklees. The Laming Report 2009 noted that there are problems nationally with the utility and effectiveness of the system, and recommended further investigation by the Social Work Task Force. The Social Work

Task Force has prioritised ICS in its work, and recommended to the Secretary of State that *“ICS be reformed so that it supports effective record keeping and case management by social workers, but should not seek to mandate a particular approach to front line social work practice”*.

Recent research in Bradford, (Featherstone 2009) has found that the introduction of ICS has reinforced existing pressure to spend less time with families, and cites research conducted in five other authorities (Broadhurst et al 2009), which found evidence that ICS is overly complex and audit driven. Complex data has to be recorded for each child, and there have been frequent complaints that it is difficult to gain an understanding of a case from a review of the records. It is probable that if the ICS had been introduced across the wider children’s workforce in Kirklees, it would have resulted in even greater stresses on the workforce at a time of increased referrals and workloads.

The Children’s Disability Team, in piloting the Integrated Children’s System, has experienced many of the difficulties described by the Social Work Task Force in terms of bureaucracy, repetitive requirements for data input, and systems failures. However, the Commission was told that having worked through the complexities of ICS, the team is benefiting from positive elements of the system.

The Commission heard reports of between 60% and 80% of social work time being spent on administration, including recording contacts and compiling assessments and reviews. Team Managers felt that there was a need to find ways of speeding up the input of standard data. Much of the administrative time was spent duplicating records, because the system cannot do this. Recording Core Assessments on computer is an overly lengthy process and requires completing a large number of standardised questions. The system does not accommodate updating previous assessments.

Electronic, bureaucratic and administrative requirements make it difficult to balance administration and record keeping with the time spent with children, with families, and in maintaining contact with other professionals.

Welcome new initiatives are being developed, testing out opportunities to harness IT to help improve efficiency and flexibility. These include use of laptops and docking stations, Z pens and Pronto forms. Whilst these do not solve everything, they are nonetheless a sign of an authority seeking to take advantage of “state of the art” IT systems. No one spoken to by the Commission thought the current problems would be resolved by going back to paper systems.

The Commission heard from some administrative staff that they felt they have the capacity to do more to support social workers. There were models shared with the Commission where team manager, social worker and admin staff worked effectively together with the result that the burden of administration on the social worker was reduced. The Commission heard that more could be done using this model to tackle issues staff identified as problematic, such as contact arrangements.

Performance Management and Audit

The first Laming Report in 2003 in respect of Victoria Climbié, recommended a monitoring and audit scheme for supervision and file records to ensure compliance with procedures.

In Kirklees a Case File Audit Tool is used to check that documentation of appropriate quality is in place, and that assessments have been made within required timescales. For child protection cases the Audit Tool logs whether appropriate checks have been made, the evidence for strategy meeting having taken place, the decisions from Section 47 investigations, and whether conferences have been held within timescales. It also checks that Social Work reports for conferences, Child Protection Plans and the Core Group Minutes are on file and up to standard.

There are new requirements for managers to be involved in systematic file audits: managers are expected to audit four files of another manager each month. Their report is then sent to the Team Manager responsible for the case, and the Unit Manager. Team managers told the Commission they do not have time to read all records, and that electronic recording within the current limitations of the system is a hindrance to auditing files. They rely on contact, discussion, information,

assessments and other formal reports to carry out their case management audit role.

The Commission was not made aware of any audit system for supervision files. This would be worthy of consideration and may be extended to include Personal Development Records.

The First Report of the Social Work Task Force in May 2009 included findings from consultations undertaken with a range of social work professionals, who are concerned that inspection and performance management arrangements do not do enough to measure the quality of provision, and that performance is measured in mechanistic ways which privilege quantitative rather than qualitative outcomes.

The Commission's view is that there would be merit in including a role for very senior managers within the current peer review system carried out by team managers and unit managers.

Recommendations

34. The Director of Children's Services should review the issues potentially impacting on social worker workloads as outlined above, with a view to releasing more time for direct work with children and families, and for improved quality of work. The role of administrative support should be further reviewed with a view to reducing the administrative burden on social workers.

35. The Director of Children's Services should review the decision making framework with a view to:

(a) Ensuring, over time, an increase in the level of responsibility carried by social workers in decision making.

(b) Reducing where appropriate the number of decisions taken at a senior level, and ensuring that these decisions are appropriate for purpose.

36. The Director of Children's Services should ensure that case and supervision files

are audited regularly and that this process should include a role for very senior managers.

8. Social Care Workforce Issues

This section reviews workforce issues which impact on safeguarding. Recruitment and retention, supervision, social work development and the image of social work are considered in the light of national and local contexts.

Overview

The Laming Report identified serious concerns about social care workforce issues: *'Frontline social workers are under an immense amount of pressure. Low staff morale, poor supervision, high caseloads, under-resourcing and inadequate training each contribute to high levels of stress and recruitment and retention difficulties.'*

Lord Laming contends that the impact of these issues on social workers increases the risk of harm to children, and has recommended a raft of initiatives to lead the way in improving recruitment and retention, setting standards for supervision, remodelling children's social work, and improving the image of the profession.

Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers/Vacancy Levels

The recruitment and retention of social workers is an issue of local and national concern.

Lord Laming has recommended that the Social Work Task Force develops the basis for a national children's social worker supply strategy, with an emphasis on child protection social workers. The Task Force has noted this will take time to develop and requires leadership and commitment from central government.

Recruitment

Kirklees is positioned better than many local authorities in respect of social work vacancies, but, given the precarious and changeable nature of the recruitment market, cannot afford to be complacent in a climate of increasing statutory work.

The Commission heard that Kirklees uses a range of approaches to recruitment:

- Ensuring that placements are offered to students on social work training courses, which has proved to be a valuable source of recruitment.
- Managers regularly attending recruitment fairs.
- Providing a managed workload, good supervision and support and opportunities for training and development.

Team managers acknowledged the extra investment which Kirklees had put in place to address difficulties in recruiting staff. This had shown some positive results in recent months with the recruitment of a number of additional social workers.

There are currently difficulties in recruiting team managers. The Commission was advised that half of the management team in some areas were agency staff and that it is also becoming more difficult to recruit from agencies. In some cases use of agency staff can lead to those staff choosing to take on permanent posts, which can be a positive outcome.

Retention

The Commission was reassured to hear very positive messages from staff about their commitment to their work and the support they receive from their managers and their teams. However, retaining workers is a complex and finely balanced endeavour. Workers talked of feeling they are left with ultimate responsibility for families referred to them. Staff leaving can have a knock on effect on levels of experience in a team, which in turn can impact on stress levels of less experienced workers who find they are taking on more complex work, perhaps before they are ready.

The Commission's view is that there is no magic formula to resolve retention issues. These need a comprehensive range of measures to succeed, including the full

resources of the Council, for example, Human Resources and media specialists. Many of the following ideas for retention are not new, but they reflect the views of social workers, managers and the Commission itself:

- Continue to aim for full staffing levels through recruitment strategies, but also if necessary through use of agency staff.
- Encourage models of multi agency practice that develop a sense of shared responsibility and increased levels of understanding.
- Support social workers, particularly those who are less experienced, through a comprehensive package of:
 - supervision and personal development;
 - training, seminars and workshops to ensure they feel confident and prepared for the challenges they face in their work;
 - mentoring, peer support, and shadowing, to improve practice skills;
 - opportunities for further academic learning and advanced practice training, particularly for more experienced staff.
- Enhance terms and conditions of service for child protection workers. Some managers are paid an increment for working in child protection, but social workers are not. A market supplement has recently been awarded to child protection workers as part of current measures to retain and recruit social workers.
- Where appropriate, rotate staff from the front line to prevent burn out. (Social workers were not in favour of this as a general practice, but acknowledged that for some staff this may be a useful option.)
- Review support systems and processes to minimise the bureaucratic demands on social workers and enable them to spend more time in direct work with children and families. This includes resolving current IT issues, exploring the benefits of new technologies that reduce desk time, reviewing the role and contribution of administrative staff, and continuing to develop innovative support roles to assist

social workers.

- Consider ways of positively promoting the role of social worker in Kirklees, and contribute to national initiatives on this.

Agency Staff

Managers and staff appreciate the availability of agency staff to support service delivery. High numbers of authorities are looking to take on agency staff, and the availability of good and experienced agency staff is becoming an issue of concern with demand exceeding supply.

The costs of agency staff are higher, but there are some advantages in that they can bring useful experience from other authorities and there may be opportunities to offer appropriately skilled agency staff permanent posts in Kirklees.

Supervision and Support Arrangements

The Laming Report 2009 noted that the role of social work staff and managers is particularly critical in ensuring action to protect children, and that regular, high quality, organised supervision is vital.

The Commission heard from both social workers and managers, that supervision takes place for all staff regularly and in accordance with their experience level and needs, and that it is supplemented by advice, discussion, guidance and mentoring on a day to day basis. Supervision is recorded, whether formal or informal, and documents added to case notes and/or employees' personal files as appropriate.

Personal Development and Career Management

Kirklees has a framework and process in place for the completion of personal development plans. Team managers told the Commission they found the Personal Review and Development (PRD) system long, complicated and difficult to maintain in situations of high staff turnover. There was acknowledgement that PRDs had not

been held as frequently as they should have been, although managers contended that they had continued to address training and development needs in supervision, and tended to prioritise staff for PRDs when they were approaching progression to higher social work levels.

The Status and Reputation of Social Workers

The Laming Report and the work of the Social Work Task Force have commented on the demoralising impact on social workers of an undervalued, poorly understood and continuously publicly vilified social work profession. The image, reputation and status of social work staff has frequently been damaged by press exposure of national child protection tragedies in recent years, and through negative accounts of social workers as being heavy handed and cavalier on the one hand or negligent and ineffective on the other. This has impacted on the numbers of people choosing to train as social workers and numbers leaving the profession, or has led social workers to move to social work roles which are perceived as less stressful. The Social Work Task Force is developing a refreshed and easy to understand description of the purpose of social work, and is planning to engage with the media to begin to break through the negative cycle of poor media representation and negative public perceptions.

The Commission found that morale amongst social workers and team managers in Kirklees was reasonably high, given the national climate, although staff had found the concurrent single status negotiations unsettling. Staff mainly took a commonsense, unfussy, “let’s get on with the job”, approach to their work. Some staff in schools involved in child protection seemed more vulnerable, perhaps partly because their support systems were less well developed.

Team managers and social workers told the Commission that they had appreciated and been encouraged by the actions taken by Kirklees Councillors and very senior managers to defend their reputation and work during the recent press attention in relation to a recent very high profile case in the Authority. They also felt the Council’s decision to invest in children’s services, including child protection, in 2008, 2009 and beyond showed an understanding of and commitment to their role as corporate parents. Kirklees has an opportunity to mirror the work of the Social Work Task Force

locally, through a planned programme of engagement with local media and through making opportunities to promote positive images of social work and child protection. Although this is not an easy task, the benefits to the workforce and to the Authority could be considerable.

Single Status and Travel

At the time the Commission was undertaking discussions, the Council was implementing the Single Status agreement. For social workers this has meant the removal of essential car user allowance. Discussions have taken place with the trade unions. Staff expressed concerns as to how they would do their job effectively without access to their own car, particularly as many of the statutory children's teams work across the Authority. The Commission's view is that the Council needs to ensure that transport is available to ensure that ChYPS' social workers can function effectively to safeguard children, and that using Kirklees Council transport does not reduce the quality of social worker's own family life².

Recommendations

37. The Council Leader, Cabinet Members (Children and Young People), Chief Executive, and Director of Children's Services should develop a strategy for enhancing the understanding of the social work role and improving its image, including a programme of engaging with the local media, courts and other opinion formers, and utilising local communication systems.

38. The ChYPS Management Group should simplify the Personal Review and Development record and re-launch the PRD process, starting with senior managers and cascading down the structure. Managers should routinely audit the completion and quality of PRDs.

² Further progress had been made by the conclusion of the work of the Commission. Social workers could use either their own or a pool vehicle. Changes in Conditions of Service had been negotiated, including social workers being allocated a market supplement.

39. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should develop a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy for managers and workers in child protection, including consideration of additional remuneration for front line child protection work.
40. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should develop a strategy to strengthen experience levels within safeguarding and specialist provision and in particular in Care Management Services.
41. The Director of Children's Services should continue to monitor and review travel arrangements for social workers to ensure children's welfare and the welfare of staff is not compromised.
42. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should consider providing mobile communication systems to all staff who are potentially working in dangerous situations.

9. Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB)

This section draws on a report by the Head of Planning, Performance and Commissioning, Kirklees Children's Services (December 2008), and progress towards establishment of Children's Trusts (analysed by the Audit Commission, 2008). Views of members of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board are also included. Minutes of three recent sets of KSCB minutes were also reviewed.

Children's Trust Arrangements

From the mid 1990s onwards most Authorities had in place Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships to take a lead on planning and service strategy.

Government first specified the development of Children's Trusts in the *Every Child Matters* Green Paper (2003) with expectations that these would be in place by 2008. The Audit Commission's Review (2008) found that progress towards this target across the country had been slow, and confusion about the purpose of Children's Trusts was identified. Improvements in co-ordination of Children's Services and collaborative working have frequently been achieved through informal arrangements outside the Children's Trust framework. Nonetheless, by March 2008, almost all areas had created some form of partnership to promote co-operation between agencies. Two-thirds of these were called "Children's Trust Boards". Boards had found aligning their financial, physical and human resources easier than pooling them. The Audit Commission Report found that performance management systems were under-developed in this area.

Within Kirklees, it has been emphasised that effective multi-agency governance requires a strong strategic board, providing leadership for Children's Services and representation from all relevant partners. This function has been delivered through the Kirklees Local Public Service Board (LPSB) for Children and Young People, currently chaired by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Families. The LPSB's responsibilities include planning, commissioning, resources, systems and front-line practice, focussing on the *Every Child Matters* outcomes. The LPSB ensures the production of a Children and Young People's Plan, jointly owned by all

partners. The Board is required to establish effective links with other local partnerships, including the Safeguarding Children Board. The LPSB is expected to promote integrated working, including the Common Assessment Framework. Government expectations are that Children's Trust structures should aspire to achieve co-located multi-agency teams, available in localities, which could be based in Children's Centres or schools.

The LPSB held discussions in 2008 about how its role could be strengthened further with a view to establishing a Children's Trust. This would require formal consideration by Kirklees MC and NHS Kirklees.

Although the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board is not accountable to the LPSB, the relationship between the two is an important one. The LPSB, with its overall responsibility for the planning and delivery of services, is strongly placed to reinforce the priority attaching to Safeguarding across the Authority. The LPSB is also well placed to assess competing priorities, including, for example, resources required for prevention and early intervention, alongside resources to address safeguarding and child protection issues. Arrangements are now in place for the LPSB and the Safeguarding Children Board to exchange reports regularly, with the KSCB outlining overall progress within the *Stay Safe* outcome of the Children and Young People's Plan.

When reflecting on the relationship between the LPSB and the KSCB it was reported by a senior health representative that this was becoming more transparent; adding that whilst each board now receives regular updates on the agenda of the KSCB and LPSB there is still scope to strengthen the 'enquiring friend' relationship.

Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board: Constitution and Direction

The KSCB Constitution (April, 2008) is a detailed document which sets out its objectives and methods of work. Requirements for each Local Authority to establish a Safeguarding Children Board, replacing the previous Area Child Protection Committee, involving named partners, derived from the Children Act 2004. Its particular focus is on the *Every Child Matters* Staying Safe outcome, ensuring that

children and young people are protected from '*physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or harm caused by witnessing violence of abuse of another.*' Key functions include developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including Section 47 (Child Protection Investigations); and ensuring single and multi-agency training for all staff involved. Its role includes monitoring and responding to unexpected child deaths; and undertaking Serious Case Reviews where a child has died or been seriously harmed in circumstances where abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

The Constitution requires that the Chair of the KSCB will be the Director of Children's Services or an independent person; and that the Vice Chair shall not be a representative of the same agency as that of the Chair. Members of the Board, all senior managers, are required to commit their organisation to policy and practice matters, and to hold their organisation to account, and act as the named Safeguarding Champion for their agency. The KSCB works to a three year Business Plan which has 6 key objectives:

- to strengthen and develop the partnership approach and promote the welfare of children:
- to minimise the incidence of child abuse and neglect:
- to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the Local Authority and Safeguarding Board partners:
- to communicate the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- to review and investigate all child deaths:
- to develop the skills and knowledge of workers in relation to safeguarding children.

Much of the Board's work is delegated to Work Streams, usually chaired by members of the Board, covering Evaluation and Effectiveness, Learning and Development, Communication, Serious Case Reviews, a Child Death Review Panel, and themed practice work streams including Voluntary Groups, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, Substance Misuse and Education.

The fourth objective is led by the Communication Work Stream, which has developed and launched the KSCB website. This features information on 'what to do if you are

worried about a child' and has specific information sections for children and young people, parents and carers and professionals. These sections include issues such as bullying, internet safety and safety in the community. In addition the KSCB has recently re-issued the 'what to do if you are worried about a child' to partner agencies for front line staff, and also issues regular newsletters, which are also available on the KSCB website.

From the 1st April 2008, the Government required all Local Safeguarding Children Boards to review the deaths of all children (up to the age of 18) who die in their area. The purpose of the process is to collect and analyse information about these deaths, with a view to identifying any matters of concern affecting the health, safety, and welfare of children or any wider public health issues.

In accordance with requirements, Kirklees set up arrangements to enquire into and evaluate each death, and a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) to consider each case. Where it is considered appropriate the CDOP can refer a case for consideration as a Serious Case Review. The first annual report of the Panel was due to be presented to the KSCB on 22/6/09.

Discussion between the Commission and members of the KSCB (April 2009) highlighted the following issues:

- (i) There was a high level of confidence from Board members about the commitment of partner agencies, demonstrated by very good attendance levels, and representation being at an appropriate level from most agencies. Meetings had been increased from quarterly to monthly to meet the additional pressure resulting from Lord Laming's recent report, and attendance had remained consistently good. Members of the Board shared responsibilities for chairing work streams. The Kirklees Board was considered to compare favourably with those in other authorities by members from Health and Police who sat on other neighbouring Safeguarding Boards.
- (ii) The Board had a commitment to seek an Independent Chair, and funding had been identified for this; a job description and person specification had been

prepared. To progress this, the Board had approached an external agency and made contacts throughout West Yorkshire. Members of the Board observed that this had coincided with an intensification of the national focus on Safeguarding Boards. The Board had so far not identified a suitable candidate. This seemed not to be an appropriate time to pursue the issue, but Board members were committed to revisiting this in the future.

Members of the Board expressed a high level of confidence in the direction provided by the current Chair, the Director of Children's Services. The position of Vice Chair was held by a senior NHS Kirklees professional. Their leadership ensured an appropriate degree of challenge and support, and put a premium on open discussion.

- (iii) The Board worked to a three-year Business Plan. Board members anticipated that 75% of its workload had been completed, or was on target, which was considered to be a positive outcome in a challenging year. A Section 11 Audit (see below) of all the statutory agencies' involvement in the KSCB had been completed and Action Plans would be put in place.
- (iv) Members of the Board's views on Serious Case Reviews are described in a later section of this report.
- (v) The Board had identified funding to appoint a dedicated officer to assist with monitoring of Action Plans and training arising from Serious Case Reviews.
- (vi) Members of the Board were concerned that the KSCB was at the point of overload and this had resulted in several pieces of preventative work having to be put on hold.
- (vii) The relationship between the KSCB and the LPSB was acknowledged to be a challenging area, and one where Government guidance had not been clear. However, the KSCB's representative on the LPSB was now well placed to ensure that Safeguarding was appropriately located on the LPSB's agenda.

- (viii) As regards funding, the KSCB had received a recent increase in their budget, together with additional funding from the PCT and from the Localities Service to improve training. Government insistence on appointing both an independent Chair and an independent Author for Serious Case Reviews had placed a significant strain on the Board's budget during the last twelve months. Budgetary pressures would increase if the volume of Serious Case Reviews continued at the current level. Budgetary shortfalls had so far been met by the Local Authority, but this was acknowledged to be impacting on other services.
- (ix) Board representatives considered that relationships between Adults and Children's Services had improved; and that the development of themed work streams, for example, those for Domestic Violence, Substance Misuse, which involved both Adults and Children's Services had helped in this regard. More could have been done in this area, if other demands e.g. Serious Case Reviews had not needed to be prioritised.

Policies and Procedures

KSCB adopted standardised safeguarding procedures which have been developed on behalf of the five West Yorkshire authorities. These are accessible via a web link (www.proceduresonline.com/westyorksrb/). Board representatives advised that a West Yorkshire Procedure Group met regularly to review procedures and produce updates. Newsflashes are sent out when changes are made. Bradford Safeguarding Children Board was understood to have commissioned an Independent Review of the procedures following the Baby P trial and they had been assessed to be of high quality. Social workers, family support workers, team managers and locality managers (March - May 2009) all advised that procedures were easily accessible, and that they were regularly consulted. Guidance was clearly laid out and relevant information could be found without difficulty. Social workers also advised that they would welcome refresher training with regard to accessing policies and procedures. Some social workers consulted said that they would have liked paper copies of updating amendments, and this was a view shared by a number of head teachers (meeting on 01.06.09). Representatives of other agencies consulted (May 2009)

confirmed that procedures were easy to access and benefited from being held electronically.

Team managers from Duty and Assessment and Care Management Service considered that staff were becoming more willing to use electronic procedures, rather than ask for paper copies, which could quickly become out of date. They commented that KSCB could perhaps do more to promote the policies and means of access, and to draw attention to the purpose of changes and updates which could be made during the course of a year. It was important that procedures were consistently improved and consolidated to make them easier to use. The Commission heard from team managers who said that there could be scope for some procedures to be less prescriptive, to allow managers and staff to use their own judgement in dealing with children and their families, although the reasons for emphasis on compliance with case management requirements were readily understood given heightened public awareness about child protection issues.

The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision advised the Commission that an independent company had been commissioned to regularly update the West Yorkshire procedures. Newly recruited social workers were given advice on accessing them. Training could be provided through e-learning. Staff's understanding of basic procedures was satisfactory, and advice was available as required.

Section 11 Audit 2008

Safeguarding Boards are required, under the provisions of Section 11 of *Working Together* (2006), to complete a comprehensive Audit of policies and procedures. Evidence is required in relation to all aspects of the Board's work.

Agencies mainly recorded high scores for their core Safeguarding and Child Protection responsibilities, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place. Scores were also mainly high for all staff in the organisation knowing what to do if they believed a child was in need of services. Similarly, scores were mainly high in relation to staff understanding when to share information if they had concerns

that a child might be being abused. Scores for having identified training strategies were very high. Overall scores for training provision were somewhat lower indicating that implementation of training programmes lagged behind strategic developments.

An area identified for further development is indicated by lower scores for staff implementing the Common Assessment Framework, when needs were identified.

Recommendations

43. The KSCB should ensure that Children in Need, who may be equally as vulnerable as children who have been subjected to significant harm, receive the support they need.

44. The KSCB should oversee and contribute to the review of practice in relation to children who are neglected.

10. Multi-Agency Training

This section reviews the arrangements for interagency and single agency safeguarding training, and also social work training issues in relation to pre and post qualification. The Commission has had access to the KSCB Learning and Development Strategy, minutes of the Learning and Development Workstream, the ChYPS training programmes, the draft Newly Qualified Social Work Programme and progression arrangements for Social Workers. The Commission has heard views of managers and staff in partner agencies about the available training.

Overview

Working Together (2006) stipulates that it is the responsibility of the LSCB to ensure that single-agency and inter-agency training on safeguarding and promoting welfare is provided in order to meet local needs.

The Laming Report, 2009, recommended that Children's Trusts should ensure that all staff who work with children receive initial training and continuing professional development which enables them to understand normal child development and recognise potential signs of abuse. It also recommended that Children's Trusts should have sufficient inter-agency training in place to create a shared language for understanding of local referral procedures, assessment, information sharing and decision making across early years, schools, youth services, health, police and other services who work to protect children.

a) Inter-agency Safeguarding Training

The Joint Area Review in Kirklees in 2007 identified good access to safeguarding training, including an effective e-learning package, as a major strength. The Commission received evidence that training continues to be recognised as a key Board and individual agency responsibility and resourced appropriately.

Since the JAR, Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board has further developed interagency training, agreeing a Learning and Development Strategy for the period April 2008 until March 2011, and establishing a Learning and Development Work

Stream to carry out training responsibilities on its behalf. The Divisional Manager of Children and Young People has been appointed to the KSCB and she chairs this Work Stream.

The role of the Work Stream is to identify interagency child protection and learning needs, develop a strategy and a programme to address these, determine the budget, commission training events, evaluate learning and provide an annual report to the Board. The Work Stream also considers recommendations from Serious Case Reviews and plans any training needs arising from the recommendations.

The Board's strategy includes the establishment of a training panel and training pool, to enable delivery of both multi agency and single agency training events. The training panel has been established and so far six people have been recruited to the training pool. Training is targeted at the Foundation level, and at staff with a wide variety of skills and experience (Levels 1 – 4), in recognition of the different responsibilities of front line and more specialist staff. The range of training is published on the Board's website. Courses available in 2009/10 are:

- Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect – a half day multi agency course for groups 1-4 (5 courses). This is also provided as a foundation e-learning package but is temporarily unavailable whilst a new updated package is recommissioned.
- Working Together – one day course for groups 2-4. (7 courses)
- Preparation for Case Conferences – half day course for groups 2-4 (8 courses)
- Making a Positive Contribution to Core Groups – half day course for groups 2–4 (8 courses)
- Child Death Review Process – specialist one day course (1 course)
- Internet Safety Awareness – specialist one day course (2 courses)

A Learning and Development Officer was appointed to a vacancy in May 2009, and work is underway to develop 13 advanced training courses for 2009/10.

Other multi agency training has taken place outside the programme. In response to OFSTED's focus on Serious Case Reviews, training has been provided to partner agencies in the preparation of Internal Management Reviews. Also sessions have taken place to disseminate lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews. The Learning and Development Workstream is leading this, but it would be helpful if this had a specific and explicit focus in the KSCB training strategy. Furthermore, although training has been provided in the past on neglect, the Commission has found that thresholds and the impact of neglect are not clearly understood across partner agencies. This needs to be part of the training strategy, and addressed beyond the current basic awareness training.

Work has begun on identifying the current level of staff trained within the member organisations and also to identify levels of staff that require certain levels of training. Work is yet to start on collecting performance data on training needs and feeding this into the Work Stream on a three-monthly basis.

The Board has ambitious plans to develop evaluation of training which covers feedback, learning, performance and results, and progress is being made on this already, although this was initially seen as a longer term goal for the Board.

The Commission heard positive comments about the foundation level e-Learning package, which has enabled a wider reach to front line staff, whilst reducing costs and overcoming problems of releasing staff in core work time.

Positive evidence was obtained about the quality of inter-agency training. Managers believe that the demand for inter-agency training is growing and commented on its importance in raising awareness and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each agency and its staff. However, some staff across a number of agencies found that the mix of experience in multi agency training sometimes reduced the quality of the learning.

Conference chairs had noted increased confidence and effectiveness in contributing and participating in conferences and core groups, as a direct result of the current training. Practitioners felt that more training is needed, particularly at the advanced/specialist level. This will be provided in 2009/10 now that the Learning and Development Officer vacancy has been filled with a brief to develop and deliver this.

Overall, interagency training is well developed and well received and continues to be a strength in supporting safeguarding work in Kirklees.

b) Single Agency Safeguarding Training: Education, Police, Health and Social Work

Education

The Policy and Training Documentation for schools provides a good foundation to underpin single agency training for education staff. The post of Safeguarding Officer for Schools and Learning, established in 2008, has already made a positive contribution which has been widely welcomed. Its purpose is to design and deliver single agency training for whole school staff and governors, and provide a resource for advice and support on safeguarding issues. The Safeguarding in Education Training Strategy 2009/10 sets out plans to comply with Government guidance by providing safeguarding training for all new staff, and to provide full day, more in depth courses for newly qualified teachers and for graduate teacher programmes. There are plans to deliver specific training for designated safeguarding roles, and to shape this training in consultation with education staff.

As at 31st March 2009, thirty-six schools had received 'whole school' basic awareness training, which has been received very positively. There is a rolling programme for newly qualified teachers and a range of briefings and half day courses for specific groups or functions.

Head teachers commented on difficulties in getting access to designated teacher training, in knowing when refresher training is required, and then accessing it within the required timescale. They also felt this training should be at Level 3. With staff

turnover, a school can find themselves with no trained designated teacher; they wanted to be able to access training as a priority in those circumstances. Head teachers also felt that refresher training should be geared towards experienced people and not just a repeat of the original training.

The Safeguarding Officer has recently (June 2009) completed a draft information pack for the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding in Schools, which will assist in resolving some of the concerns raised by head teachers. As yet the Safeguarding Officer has not been able to meet all schools training needs, but is seen as a positive step towards doing so. The possibility of a second post which would enable increased support and training is being explored subject to funding.

Police

The Laming Report 2009 recommended that the Home Office ensure that police child protection teams are well resourced and have specialist training.

West Yorkshire Police has an extensive training programme for all Officers working with the Child Protection Units. All Officers are now nationally accredited Detectives or are currently undergoing the Trainee Investigator Programme, and Officers receive specialist interview training. In addition all staff receive specialist training in investigating child abuse. West Yorkshire Police have created a new post to ensure lessons are learned / implemented from Serious Case Reviews.

Health

The Laming Report 2009 recommended that the Department of Health work with partners to develop a national training programme to improve the understanding and skills of the children's health workforce (including paediatricians, midwives, health visitors, GPs and school nurses) to further support them in dealing with safeguarding and child protection issues.

In Kirklees, the Primary Care Trust has a clear safeguarding children training policy, which has been reviewed very recently to include the Common Assessment

Framework. The policy sets out a mandatory requirement for child protection training for all staff every 2 years, including non-clinical administrative and clerical staff, and clinical staff. There is also bespoke training aimed at those who work with children, which focuses on issues such as domestic violence, risk assessment and issues from Serious Case Reviews.

The policy outlines expectations of what training should be undertaken and this is monitored through appraisal.

Similar arrangements are in place in the Acute Trust and in the Mental Health Trust.

b) Social Work Training – Pre Qualification

The Laming Report 2009 recommended that the General Social Care Council, together with relevant government departments, higher education institutions and employers, work to raise the quality and consistency of social work degrees, and to strengthen their curricula to provide high quality practical skills, and to develop specialist skills in children's social work. The Social Work Task Force letter to the Secretary of State in May 2009 referred to evidence received that new entrants to social work can lack the mixture of practical, analytical and report writing skills which they need to become effective professionals; and also to complaints about the extent to which initial training courses failed to prepare social workers for the workplace. The letter also mentioned concerns about the availability and quality of statutory practice placements during social work training.

The Commission heard concerns from Kirklees social workers and managers about the suitability and relevance of social work training and placements for the reality of safeguarding / child protection work. One Practice Teacher gave the example of a third year student in a final placement, who had never previously undertaken an assessment, whilst another cited a student who had not met a social worker (working) until year 3. Other examples provided were a newly qualified worker whose final placement had been as a classroom assistant, and another who had undertaken care support for adults. Many newly qualified social workers are therefore arriving without the experience they need in statutory child care work and have to be trained

and supported on the job by managers and colleagues. This impacts on the capacity of the service to respond to demands, especially in a time of increased referrals/workloads. Mentoring roles are included in experienced social workers' job descriptions. Staff provided positive examples of mentoring roles to assist new social workers in learning on the job skills, although workload pressures made this system difficult to maintain. The Commission was also made aware of initiatives with local universities, where practising social workers/managers go into universities as practice educators, and where year one students shadow practising social workers in the field.

These were viewed as positive, but clearly time needs to be made available for this, which can be difficult when there are workload pressures.

Social workers described their qualification training as satisfactory in terms of self awareness and reflective practice, but inadequate in preparing social workers for the reality of child protection work, including handling violent and aggressive parents, developing assessment skills and learning to prepare cases for care proceedings.

c) Social Work Training - Post Qualification

The Laming Report 2009, identified that new social workers are not consistently well supported in their first year of practice, and that clear national progression routes are needed for social workers.

The Social Work Task Force reported in May 2009, that social workers have raised concerns about the extent to which employers support continuing training and education of social workers throughout their careers. Social workers told the Task Force that they want to develop specialist skills and expertise, and would like to have more access to research and academic learning, so that this can be incorporated into their practice and shared with the wider social work community. The view of the Task Force is that the social work profession needs clearer progression routes linked to training and development opportunities.

The Government has announced the Advanced Social Work Professional status,

from October 2009, which will create senior practice-focused roles for excellent and experienced social workers, and a practice-based Masters Degree in social work from 2011.

Staff who met the Commission spoke positively about induction, in terms of gaining an understanding about the organisation and resources in place in Kirklees, and also about the learning and support they received on the job, immediately post qualification. Staff recognised that newly qualified social workers had considerable learning needs which had to be met on the job, and felt that supervision and mentoring went some way to meeting these needs.

Good Practice: Mentoring and the Newly Qualified Social Work programme

Kirklees has already promoted mentoring of newly-qualified social workers by experienced staff.

This will be advanced through Kirklees' involvement in developing the Newly Qualified Social Work Programme. In 2008 the DCSF launched the Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) pilot programme, which will be available to all new social workers from September 2009. Kirklees has been involved in the NQSW pilot, and has developed a comprehensive NQSW Programme (seen in draft), which focuses on:

- Line management and supervision
- Managed caseloads
- Personal Development Programme
- Individualised training (including mandatory training)

Workers will be required to produce detailed competency portfolios across 11 outcomes.

ChYPS publishes an internal training and development manual called '*Development Matters*' annually, which sets out the courses available to social work staff, as well as additional information about good practice forums, criteria for funding of short

courses and for accessing external courses and conferences. It also describes how social workers can progress up the earnings scale through demonstrating their competencies, or by way of qualification.

It is compulsory for social workers to undertake the Introduction to Child Protection (e-Learning) and Working Together within their first 6 months in post, and within 18 months to have taken a further 8 courses, (including child protection in relation to issues such as domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health) provided through the KSCB.

Social workers commented that having completed the required minimum safeguarding training, there is a lack of further more advanced safeguarding training. The KSCB plans to provide an advanced programme this year, following the Learning and Development Officer post being filled in May 2009. Social workers commented favourably on a three-day course they had accessed on section 47 investigations,

Good Practice Seminars took place throughout 2008 covering permanency and court work, along with training provided by the Barristers Chambers on court skills and giving evidence. There are links with Huddersfield University with a view to providing accreditation for Level 2-3 social workers' progress which can count towards academic qualifications, and similar arrangements are being considered in relation to Level 3 Senior Practitioners.

Kirklees will need to address the implications of the Government's Newly Qualified Social Worker programme, Advanced Social Work Professional status and practice based Master's degrees. The Authority will need to assess its capacity to release staff when the service is already under pressure, the costs of the schemes themselves, and also potential backfilling.

Recommendations

45. KSCB should further develop and prioritise training around issues of neglect.

46. KSCB should ensure the lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews are made explicit in the Learning and Development Strategy.

47. ChYPS should consider the cost and impact of improving post qualification training and development for social workers, with a view to planning its effective implementation.

48. KSCB and Schools should consider appointing a second Safeguarding Officer for Schools for the training and support of education staff, in particular primary head teachers and designated child protection staff in secondary schools.
Cross reference with recommendation 32 on page 83.

49. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should sustain and further develop good practice being developed in mentoring, particularly for newly qualified staff linked to Kirklees' involvement in the NQSW pilot.

11. Serious Case Reviews

Members of the Commission read three Executive Summaries of Serious Case Review Reports completed recently. Information about seven Serious Case Reviews, either completed or currently, in process, is analysed. The main evidence available to the Commission on Serious Case Reviews was provided by the Safeguarding Manager. Other staff groups and witnesses also commented on Serious Case Reviews in the evidence they provided.

“The formal purpose of Serious Case Reviews is to learn lessons for improving individual agencies, as well as for improving multi-agency working.”
(Lord Laming, 2009, p65).

Guidance on SCRs in the recent Laming Report

In his recent Progress Report, Lord Laming observed that Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are generally well established and have, in principle, support from all services. Their purpose had previously been defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006) as identifying lessons about how professionals and agencies work together to promote and safeguard the welfare of children, and ensuring multi-agency working is improved. The Progress Report has emphasised that Serious Case Reviews must also identify weaknesses within individual organisations, initially through Internal Management Reviews. Lord Laming has also recommended that Serious Case Review Panel Chairs should have access to all relevant documents and staff to conduct a thorough and effective learning exercise. Local Safeguarding Children Boards should not wait until SCRs are completed in order to implement necessary changes in practice or procedure. LSCBs also need to take an imaginative approach to help practitioners and managers learn from completed Serious Case Reviews.

The Progress Report stresses the importance of confidentiality, not least because SCRs depend on the co-operation of witnesses. Lord Laming therefore recommends that full Serious Case Review Reports should remain confidential except for

immediate partners involved in the case and Government bodies. This makes the completion of high quality publicly available Executive Summaries particularly important.

No changes have been recommended in the Laming Report about when SCRs should be initiated. However, the role of Government Offices in challenging SCR Panels and LSCBs where inappropriate decisions have been made is highlighted. Lord Laming states '*that the cost and complexity of carrying out an SCR should not influence the decision of whether to conduct one.*' As SCRs are part of a learning process, the culture should be to encourage the undertaking of an SCR and no criticism should be made of an LSCB that chooses to carry out more of them.

The Progress Report stipulates that the Chair of an SCR panel must be independent of local agencies involved, and the role should be supported by appropriate training. The Report also states that SCR authors should also be independent of local agencies, and that an SCR author may or may not be the same person who chairs the SCR Panel. Government Offices have been charged with ensuring that there are enough trained SCR Panel chairs and authors, who must complete training provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Much emphasis is placed on learning from SCRs needing to be shared quickly so that lessons are learned across different areas and agencies promptly. Executive Summaries should be shared with other Local Authorities, Health Authorities and Trusts, and the Police.

Comment

Prior to the publication of Lord Laming's report, the Children's Minister had written to local authorities requiring that separate Panel Chairs and Authors should be appointed for Serious Case Reviews.

The tenor of the Laming Report is to encourage Safeguarding Children Boards to maintain the current level of investment in the production of Serious Case Reviews. For authorities with higher numbers of SCRs, this places a considerable burden on Safeguarding Boards giving rise to serious cost implications, and placing limits on opportunities for focusing on other priority areas.

Current Position in Kirklees

Seven SCRs have been commissioned in Kirklees since 2006. Kirklees has also contributed to two other Serious Case Reviews commissioned by other SCBs during this period. Three of the seven have been completed, and executive summaries have been placed on the Kirklees website. The other four are still underway. Further information is provided in **Table (ix)** below:

Table (ix): Analysis of recent Serious Case Reviews in Kirklees

Case No.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Reason for SCR	Death	Death	Public interest	Injury	Death	Injury	Death (younger child) Injury (older child)
Date SCR started	7 / 08	10 / 08	12 / 08	5 / 08	11 / 06	3 / 08	9 / 07
Gender of child	F	F	F	M	F	F	M (younger child) F (older child)
Ethnicity of child	British Pakistani	White British	White British	White British	Asian/White British	White	White
Age of child	2 yrs 5 mths	4 weeks	9 yrs 3 mths	5 days	4 yrs 3 mths	11 weeks	Younger child 4 yrs 6 mths Older child 14 yrs
Independent Chair	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independent Author		✓	✓				

SCR completed					✓	✓	✓
SCR Underway	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Number of Internal Management Reviews	9	9	22	5	6	7	5

Key

SCR = Serious Case Review; yrs = years; mths = months; f = female; m = male

Notes

- i. Four of the Case Reviews followed child *deaths*; two were prompted by child *injuries*; and one was prompted by *public interest* considerations.
- ii. Five of the SCRs were for girls, and two for boys.
- iii. Three of them were for infants aged up to about a year old; the other four were for older children.
- iv. All of the SCRs have had an Independent Chair. Two of them have also had an Independent Author.
- v. Larger numbers of Internal Management Reviews in **Table (ix)** indicate greater complexity, and potentially longer timescales.

Key Findings from SCRs

The Commission was able to read executive summaries for the SCRs in respect of cases E, F and G. A key finding from Case E was the need to improve access to assessments made by other Authorities where the client family had previously lived. Recommendations for both Case E and Case F highlighted the need for implementation of the Common Assessment Framework. Case F also had stressed the importance of a clear focus on the needs of children, on the impact of parental learning disability, and the need for a quality assurance system that monitored decision making for both Section 17 (Children in Need) and Section 47 (Child Protection Investigation Assessments). Recommendations from Case G focused on children’s vulnerability related to domestic violence and parental separation, and on the importance of the assessment of risks of unsupervised contact with a non-

resident parent.

Changes in Practice following Serious Case Reviews in Kirklees

Serious Case Reviews in Kirklees have prompted a number of changes in practice, listed below:

- Police prioritisation of domestic violence incidents for families with children: instead of notifying Children's Services of all domestic violence incidents (which could be over 100 per week), Police now make referrals only where a minimum of medium risk is identified. This model is to be rolled out across West Yorkshire.
- New procedures implemented to ensure that bail conditions regarding contact with children have to be imposed, using MARACs (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) where perpetrators have been arrested for serious offences against their partners.
- Highlighting the importance of seeing children at all levels in the assessment process.
- Notification to Health professionals when children attend Accident and Emergency departments.
- Responsibility for pre-birth assessment issues has been transferred from Care Management Services to Duty and Assessment, so that they can undertake an assessment of risks involved (this followed recommendations from a number of Serious Case Reviews focusing on pre-birth assessment issues).
- The identification of the importance of CAF implementation is highlighted in two Serious Case Reviews, E and F (see above), has led to a re-launch of the CAF in the Authority and a major training initiative across all localities.
- The importance of all agencies providing reports in advance to Initial Case Conferences, to ensure sufficient time to focus on the Child Protection Plan.

- A publicity launch within the Kirklees community and local hospitals advising members of the public on what to do if they have concerns about child protection.

Information and Views from KSCB Members and the Safeguarding Manager

The number of current and recent Case Reviews has required members of the KSCB to allocate additional time to this function. The Board receives regular Performance Management Reports on the status of Serious Case Reviews. Each one is scrutinised by the Vice Chair. Final reports are submitted to a single-item meeting of the full board to ensure rigorous challenge.

The Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board Manager is responsible for managing the work of the KSCB. Her accountability is to the Head of Safeguarding, within the Council's Safeguarding and Specialist Provision Service. Her role requires her to offer a degree of challenge to the KSCB, and for her to act independently of the Local Authority on behalf of the Board (similar officers within the Yorkshire and Humber region are also located within Councils). The KSCB Manager is responsible for ensuring appropriate membership, and for drafting a constitution for the Board. She has an overview of the work of each Work Stream and managed Serious Case Reviews, and a small staff team, including a Safeguarding Officer for Learning and Schools, a Safeguarding Co-ordinator for the Child Death Review process, a Training Officer and administration staff. A new post has been funded for a Safeguarding Co-ordinator to drive forward the work of Serious Case Reviews and to focus specifically on the monitoring of Action Plans. Recruitment to this post has so far not resulted in an appointment, possibly because funding was available only for twelve months, which could be a deterrent.

The Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board's expectation is that Internal Management Reviews are mainly completed within two months. *Working Together* stipulates that Serious Case Reviews should be completed within four months. In Kirklees, the Serious Case Review workstream made recommendations about cases where SCRs should be undertaken and established appropriate terms of reference. The Overview Panel had access to appropriate expertise, for example, relating to domestic violence

or learning disabilities. Internal Management Reviews could take longer than the prescribed period depending on the length of time of the Review, and the number of family members involved. Individual agencies are required to submit Action Plans to the SCB as soon as recommendations have been accepted. The Safeguarding Board Manager meets regularly with the Regional Safeguarding Adviser at Government Office which has responsibility for monitoring Action Plans.

Key Issues Identified by the Safeguarding Board Manager

- (i) No clear guidance had been provided by Government on the different roles and responsibilities of the Independent Chair, the Independent Author, and Overview Panels, nor on how to resolve possible differences between them. The Safeguarding Manager's view was that it was time-consuming to find an additional person; there was a substantial cost implication, and the Independent Chair was able to author the report.
- (ii) As a matter of good practice, staff and families involved were always offered feedback on the content of SCRs prior to publication of executive summaries.
- (iii) Wherever Internal Management Reviews identified practices that needed changing, the KSCB's expectation was that they would deal with this straight away, and not wait for the SCR to be completed.
- (iv) National research had found that 55% of SCRs involved mental health issues; 57% involved substance abuse; 66% involved domestic violence; and 34% involved a combination of all three.
- (v) In Kirklees three cases had involved domestic violence; in one case substance misuse was a significant issue, and in another it was a peripheral issue. Although none of the cases since 2006 had involved mental health issues, three cases overseen by the previous Area Child Protection Committee had specifically involved mental health issues with parents. The KSCB had established themed groups focusing on domestic violence, substance misuse and mental ill health, reflecting their significance both locally and nationally.

- (vi) National research had identified a series of professional and agency factors from surveys of Serious Case Reviews. These included **agency context, capacity and organisational climate; preoccupation with thresholds; professional anxiety and reluctance to act** (particularly relating to work with potentially violent offenders); the importance of **professional challenge**; the key role of **supervision; understanding and dealing with neglect and the “start again syndrome”** (for cases of long-term neglect where the Assessment Framework was not helpful and new assessments had to be done); **communication issues; keeping track of families**, for example where children changed school or were not enrolled for school; and finally **children not being seen or heard** – concerns related particularly to cases where domestic violence was an issue, and the focus was often on the victim and not the perpetrator.
- (vii) Overall, the Safeguarding Board Manager considered the Serious Case Review process provided added value to Safeguarding and Child Protection in Kirklees. Her concern was that ensuring compliance for OFSTED processes could detract from ensuring procedural and practice improvements and promoting change.

Recommendations

50. The KSCB should make vigorous representations to oppose the requirement for both an independent author and an independent chair in the Serious Case Review process.
51. The KSCB should ensure that good practice already achieved in disseminating lessons from SCRs promptly, and including these in training programmes, is maintained.
52. The KSCB should ensure through its regular reports to the Local Public Service Board (LPSB) that Safeguarding is accorded appropriate priority in overall planning for services for children; and that the LPSB is encouraged to take a leading role in promoting Safeguarding and the reputation of staff involved.

12. Conclusions

This section highlights key issues and concerns identified in previous chapters.

The Commission deliberately adopted a strength-based approach to its work.

Consultation processes developed as part of the work of the Commission provided face to face opportunities for discussion between elected members and children's services for staff, appreciated on both sides. Members of the Scrutiny Commission became well informed about the Authority's safeguarding remit. These processes should be consolidated and further developed.

Recent external inspections of child protection / safeguarding services in Kirklees have been consistently positive about standards of work. The conclusion of the Joint Area Review (October 2007) that children felt *safe and experienced good safeguarding services* in Kirklees provided a positive starting point. We welcome and endorse the findings of the OFSTED Reviews. The Commission found that many of the building blocks required to further develop these services were in place. The staff we met from all agencies, and at all levels, demonstrated professional commitment to service users, and to working in Kirklees. Our evidence confirmed that the Children and Young People's Service in Kirklees is well led. We were impressed by the quality of the management of Child Protection social workers. There was agreement from a number of standpoints that the quality of supervision, provided in ChYPS described by Lord Laming as *the cornerstone of professional practice*, was of high quality. Multi-agency training and the delivery of much single-agency training is progressing well. The Kirklees Children's Safeguarding Board is soundly established and fit for purpose and is coping well with its daunting responsibilities for completing Serious Case Reviews.

In this section, we are focusing mainly on a small number of key issues where we consider that changes in direction or in practice should be considered. Most of the issues highlighted are currently being experienced as challenges by other Children's Services Authorities. As such, solutions are unlikely to be easily identified. But we

believe that giving them serious attention should pay dividends in the longer term.

Members of the Commission, both independents and councillors, had a variety of backgrounds in social work, social work management, health and education. We recognise the depth of both expertise and experience amongst the professionals and the service managers whom we met. The Commission did not include experts in safeguarding from the BME community. Kirklees may wish to consider commissioning additional work in this area.

Examination of case files was not included in the Commission's brief and the Commission did not interview service users and therefore did not accumulate direct evidence about the care and support provided through Child Protection and Safeguarding Services.

Protection Arrangements

Our view is that the Child Protection system in Kirklees has been soundly developed. As argued below, we suggest that planning and training to improve the quality of work to engage and elicit the views of children and young people involved in the Child Protection system will be beneficial. Specifically we recommend work to improve the quality of work undertaken with younger children. Overall, Child Protection Conferences are well managed; here we identify opportunities for improving the quality and focus of Conference minutes. Ensuring that both parents and professionals are enabled to maximise their contributions are also key priorities. Agency attendance and contribution at Conferences is crucial to Conferences' success, and a review of Police participation is proposed, along with a continued focus on training agencies who work with adults to ensure the focus remains foremost on the protection of the child

In the light of the relatively low number of children under 1 with a Child Protection Plan, it is suggested that attention is given to ensuring that arrangements amongst front line workers for identifying potential risks to this vulnerable group of children are robust. Furthermore, in the light of geographical clusters of child protection cases, it is important to ensure that thresholds for accessing services are consistent.

The need for improved access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), to support children in need, including children with learning disabilities and looked after children, and also to support schools, was also highlighted in evidence received.

The Commission was satisfied through the evidence received that lessons from Serious Case Reviews are being learned and that all partner agencies are accessing interagency training and also have in place internal arrangements for training and development in respect of safeguarding.

Direct Work with Children

Both the recent Laming Report and evidence from the Social Work Task Force have prioritised the issue of increasing the amount and the quality of work directly undertaken by professionals with children and young people in the safeguarding arena. The Commission found this focus to be particularly relevant in Kirklees. Much concern stemmed from the relatively small amount of time available for social workers and other professionals to spend directly with service users, including children. Bureaucratic constraints are described in the chapter on Social Care Workloads and Processes. While we are satisfied that children are regularly seen as part of Child Protection assessments, we are aware that time available for this part of the social worker's role is much less than required. Social workers and other professionals make positive choices to work with children and young people, but frequently find that this is crowded out by administrative and bureaucratic requirements. Social workers need the time to develop advanced therapeutic skills in working with children. Without this opportunity, there is the danger that they will become de-motivated, or that they will seek other work settings providing more opportunities of this kind. Current research for Kirklees (Ghaffar et al, 2009) has found a particular shortage of opportunities for therapeutic work involving both parents and children.

Our proposal is that Kirklees should set a performance target to significantly increase the amount of professional time spent with children and young people. Kirklees

should aim to become known as an Authority where direct work of this kind is prioritised. This will be linked to strategies to increase the overall proportion of time spent by social workers and other professionals in direct work with service users. This issue brings into focus the importance of efficient IT systems, and the value attaching to administrative support which can help to free up time spent by social workers with service users. We believe that enhanced performance in this area will make an important contribution to the vexed issue of the recruitment and retention of skilled staff within the Children and Young People's Service.

Direct Work with Parents / Carers

The "Baby P" case has added renewed emphasis to the importance of social workers' skills in recognising the extent to which some parents can be manipulative or deceptive in drawing attention away from their harmful or neglectful behaviours towards their children. Social workers' skills in this area need to be continually reinforced and supported through effective supervision and training. Social workers' standpoints need to be rigorously independent and uncompromisingly resistant to unsubstantiated reassurances about children's welfare and progress.

Other parents caught up in the Child Protection / Safeguarding system need high quality support from relevant agencies to be helped to improve their children's life chances. While some parents find that having their children subject to Child Protection Plans can help them access relevant support services, others find the experience of attending Child Protection Conferences daunting and confusing, and require much patient help to make sense of the processes in which they are involved. We place much emphasis on ensuring that parents / carers always have sufficient time to prepare for Case Conferences, including reading and understanding the content of reports written about them. Doing so greatly improves the chances of positive outcomes for their children. Most parents in the Child Protection system understand the importance of the role of social workers, and the role and contribution of other agencies – areas where they develop considerable expertise. The role of parents and extended families in decision making in Child Protection in Kirklees has been a fairly limited one so far. Where families have been entrusted in other Authorities with developing Child Protection Plans, through the Family Group

Conferencing process, positive outcomes have been recorded. This is a route which Kirklees may wish to explore further.

Neglect

Re-focusing and reviewing practice in relation to neglect emerges as a key priority from the Commission's work. Neglect is the highest single category of child abuse cases in Kirklees. In the light of messages from research about the long term impact of neglect, the status and management of neglect cases needs a rethink to ensure that all agencies have a shared understanding of the thresholds and impact of neglect. Typically, children can be neglected over extended periods often of several years. Evidence may come in dribs and drabs and its cumulative impact may only become apparent through reading chronologies and case histories which enable patterns of behaviour to be revealed. As we have noted, assessment of neglect seems to fit uneasily with the shorter term focus of most initial assessments carried out by Child Protection social workers. Evidence from the case history and from a range of different agencies will almost always need to be taken into account. Assessment of neglect will always require difficult judgements.

A further reason for our concern is that it can be predicted that the most vulnerable children and young people in Kirklees, as elsewhere, are those at the periphery of the Safeguarding / Child Protection system. Children with injuries or subject to specific allegations are likely to receive concentrated and focused attention from Child Protection services. Children who are neglected are likely to be known to schools, locality services and other statutory and voluntary agencies, all of whom have experienced some difficulties in referring cases to Safeguarding and Specialist Provision within ChYPS. For all these reasons, we recommend that the Kirklees Children's Safeguarding Board gives particularly high attention to the promotion of effective assessment and interventions for this group of children.

In the same spirit, we have recommended that particular attention should be paid to re-examining cases of neglect and significant harm amongst infants aged 12 months or below, who are known from national research to constitute almost half of those children whose cases have eventually required Serious Case Reviews.

Assessment and Prioritisation

We wish to focus attention, perhaps surprisingly, on the high number of Initial Assessments currently being carried out by Kirklees. The hypothesis which we would suggest is explored is that higher quality assessments may be achievable if their numbers are somewhat reduced, with potential for improved longer-term outcomes for children involved.

OFSTED has commended Kirklees' performance in this area and Laming has proposed Initial Assessments for all new referrals. Kirklees has consistently conducted higher numbers of Initial Assessments than comparable Authorities.

Treading with some care, we would like to invite Child Protection Managers, including Team Managers, to contribute to a re-assessment of practice in this area. There seem to be no intrinsic reasons why Kirklees should carry out many more Initial Assessments than Authorities with a similar profile. We are very aware of evidence received that social workers have too little time to prepare adequately before undertaking these assessments, particularly through reading of chronologies and case histories; and we have made insistent recommendations around improving practice in this area without compromising the need for urgency in protecting children. We have been impressed with the quality of oversight by Team Managers in both Duty and Assessment and Care Management in relation to prioritising cases for immediate attention, and accepting responsibility for cases which cannot be allocated straight away. We consider such practice to be carefully thought through. However, the Commission has been concerned that only the most serious Children in Need cases can be prioritised within resources available. Use of the CAF approach, and liaison with other agencies could identify support for families who are awaiting interventions.

Delegation and Experience Levels

While commending the level of responsibility taken by Team Managers in ChYPS and other managers in the Child Protection system, we would also wish to propose a

review of the philosophy and detail of delegated authority for front-line professionals. Within ChYPS, Team Managers have made a high quality contribution to decision making on Child Protection issues. At a transitional stage in the establishment of the still new statutory children's service in Kirklees, this level of involvement by senior staff can be seen as appropriate and supportive. Social workers valued professional advice from their Team Managers and had a clear understanding of their accountability.

In the longer-term, the Commission's view is that opportunities for further delegation of decision making to front-line social workers should be positively explored. While new social workers will obviously require more direction, staff experienced in their role should aspire to framing key decisions about the welfare of children for whom they have responsibility. Advice and assistance in urgent or complex areas will always be needed. Social work has long put a premium on accountability and supervision. Within that framework, independence and professional autonomy are also important, and social workers are more likely to experience job satisfaction if they are encouraged to take responsibility up to the hilt of their level of professional competence.

What we are suggesting here is a direction of travel, and opportunities for enhancing the professional role of front-line workers within a framework that effectively safeguards the welfare of children.

A related issue here is the balance of newly-qualified and more experienced staff within Safeguarding and Specialist Provision. Managers had justifiable concerns about the shortcomings of professional training in preparing staff for the realities of child protection social work. Evidence supplied by ChYPS has shown considerably higher levels of inexperienced staff within Care Management. The Duty and Assessment Teams have higher proportions of more experienced staff. Managers are only too aware of this imbalance, and their energies will need to continue to focus on strategies to improve levels of experience for this part of the service.

Safeguarding and Specialist Provision and Locality Services

Kirklees traditionally has invested in preventative, and more recently in Locality Services, as well as in high profile Safeguarding and Child Protection services. Its recent record in boosting funding for safeguarding and for looked after children is commendable. Notwithstanding budget pressures, the Authority has not wished to concentrate resources on Safeguarding / Child Protection at the expense of preventative investment. The Commission fully supports this approach.

Although the Locality structure and Safeguarding and Specialist provision were both established at the same time, relationships between the two services have not always been close, or mutually enhancing. The Commission firmly believes that Children's Centres and Family Support Workers have the potential to contribute on an equal basis with Safeguarding and Specialist Provision towards ensuring the welfare and safety of children in Kirklees. The Locality structure supports higher numbers of families and children, some with complex needs. Safeguarding and Specialist provision supports smaller numbers of children at higher levels of risk. Improving communication levels, ensuring close contact between Locality-based workers and Safeguarding and Specialist Provision, and ensuring that families can benefit from the resources of both Locality services and Safeguarding and Specialist Provision, depending on their needs and circumstances, are amongst the highest priorities we have identified. To assist with this we have recommended a protocol for joint working and case transfers, and clarification about the location of responsibility for the assessment and support of the range of cases with the Children in Need definition. There also needs to be attention given to the gap in early intervention and prevention services for 5 – 11 year olds.

Multi-Agency Work and the Localities Model

The Commission particularly commends initiatives in recent months to re-launch the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The CAF has the potential to enable children and young people to benefit from the skills of different service providers, a principle already established within safeguarding / child protection. CAFs have a potential contribution to make to improving the welfare of children experiencing

neglect over longer periods, about whom concerns have already been noted. The recent contributions of Education and Health professionals to CAF implementation and service development have been particularly welcome. Scope has been identified for Locality-based Family Support Workers to make enhanced levels of contribution to CAFs, including as lead professionals.

Our view has been that the centralised Safeguarding and Specialist Provision service sitting alongside the de-centralised Locality service does little to enhance integrated working in children's services. We are advocating a "close contact model" between partner agencies, localities and schools on the one hand and Duty and Assessment / Care Management services on the other, to improve communication, break down barriers and harness all the resources and expertise available to support Children in Need. Additionally, we are asking the Director of Children's Services to make a statement on the medium / longer-term structural development of ChYPS within six months of the publication of this report.

Integrated Working: Health and Education

Health professionals have major contributions to make to enhancing children's welfare. The Commission has welcomed the prioritisation of support to families involved with Child Protection / Safeguarding within Kirklees. Liaison between Health professionals and Child Protection / Safeguarding seemed reasonably well established. In some cases social workers have not prioritised seeking health visitors' contributions to children in need assessments, and health visitors were not always enabled to contribute optimally to Child Protection Plans. On the other hand, there was still evidence of health professionals seeming to pass much the greater share of responsibility to social workers in Child Protection cases, and social workers reported that they continued to feel unsupported in their role. There is scope here for closer liaison between social workers and health professionals in assessment and planned interventions, and we would urge practice improvements in this area. We have therefore recommended that particular attention is given by Duty and Assessment/Care Management to accessing information held by partner agencies when undertaking assessments and to ensuring feedback to referring agencies.

Both Health and Education have experienced the effects of the rapid expansion in the ambit of Child Protection noted in Chapter 2, closely related to recognition of the impact of domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health problems on children's well-being. Schools in particular have experienced the impact of these concerns. We have been impressed by the seriousness and the energy with which schools in Kirklees have addressed their responsibilities for Safeguarding and Child Protection, which have been evidenced in their commitment to training and policy development.

Although Education and Safeguarding had been brought together within an Integrated Children's Services Department for approaching three years, relationships between these two arms of the service had not yet reached a settled position. Partly the issue seemed to be that schools are increasingly conscious of the weight of responsibility now falling on them in relation to surveillance of children's welfare on the one hand, and the relative scarcity of professional resources within Safeguarding and Specialist Provision on the other. Schools have responsibility for the day to day care of large numbers of vulnerable children; Safeguarding and Specialist Provision (SSP) have focused their attention on ensuring the safety of a smaller number of very vulnerable children with complex needs. Again, we would urge a close contact model between schools and SSP, with an emphasis on SSP ensuring high quality advice to deal with complex issues, when needed.

We further propose a more radical shift in emphasis, acknowledging the experience, expertise and resources now available within schools to bring to bear on improving children's emotional well-being. This is based on our view that schools have long recognised the importance of improving children's emotional well-being so that they are more ready to benefit from the curriculum. Of course, schools will continue to need specialist help, and their role specifically does not extend to investigating child abuse allegations. Our assertion is one of confidence in schools' ability to respond well to the needs of vulnerable children, and on the importance of strengthening partnerships to assist them in this task.

Performance Management

We welcome systems recently introduced for File Audits by team and unit managers. Outcomes from these new systems were starting to come on stream by the summer of 2009. Our observation here is that the scheme should be developed to include a role for very senior managers, so that their experience is available to improve the quality of File Audits; and also to complete the feedback loop so that very senior managers are continually kept in touch with case work issues.

Recruitment, Retention and Training

The Commission found much to commend in the volume and quality of Safeguarding training being provided or developed. Positive progress has been achieved in ensuring that basic levels of training are widely available across the agencies involved in safeguarding / child protection. Overload is apparent in some areas, including tiered training for school-based staff; and a strong case can be made for prioritising a second Safeguarding Officer for Schools with a training and support role.

More difficult for Authorities like Kirklees is to make good shortcomings in qualification training for social workers, issues now being addressed following the 2009 Laming Report and the appointment of the Social Work Task Force. Kirklees' involvement in developing the newly-qualified Social Work Pilot Programme is extremely welcome, and should produce benefits for the Authority and for the workforce.

None of the issues considered by the Commission ranks higher in importance than further development of Kirklees' recruitment and retention strategies for social workers. Although Kirklees has performed as well as most Authorities in this area, more strategic focus is required for Kirklees to be successful in attracting the highest quality staff available. Progress here is closely linked to ensuring Kirklees' continuing reputation as a good Authority striving for excellence in the delivery of Child Protection social work. Favourable conditions of service are important, as is Kirklees continuing to provide high quality support and training for its workforce.

Beyond Kirklees

The case of 'Baby P' reverberated throughout the Child Protection world while the Commission was working. The Laming Progress Report and the Government's Response delineated the national context for the Commission's work. Other local authorities have, like Kirklees, been concerned to review the standard of their safeguarding services in recent months.

While it is incumbent on authorities like Kirklees to do everything in their power to achieve improvements, progress also depends on the contributions of central government and other national bodies. Crucially, funding for both safeguarding and for preventive services needs to be maintained, at a time of unavoidable financial constraints.

The Commission wishes to highlight the importance of three issues in particular:

- Improvements in the quality of prequalification training to better prepare social workers for the realities of working in the Child Protection field;
- Enhancing the reputation and image of social workers and their professional standing, linked to the urgent requirement for authorities like Kirklees to improve recruitment and retention of high quality staff;
- Re-focusing and re-shaping the professional role of social workers to reduce bureaucratic demands impacting on them, and to enable them to focus on providing high quality, direct services to families, with more time for face to face engagement, particularly with children and young people themselves.

With these key priorities in mind, it is important that Kirklees shares this report, and in particular those aspects relating to nationwide concerns, with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, OFSTED, Government Office, and the Social Work Task Force.

And Finally...

The two independent members of the Commission have been extremely impressed

by the dedication and expertise of elected members involved in its work: in particular by their grasp of the issues and their respect and appreciation for those professionals involved in keeping children safe in Kirklees. Positive promotion of the work of social workers and other professionals involved in the Child Protection system is an urgent priority in Kirklees, as well as nationally. This will require the full resources of the Council, the Local Public Service Board, KSCB, partner agencies and by the Director of Children's Services and her staff.

Recommendations

53. Kirklees should consider establishing annual consultation processes involving the Cabinet Portfolio Holder, and other elected members, with safeguarding staff in children's services. Kirklees should also consider how its scrutiny function can be further strengthened in this area, for example, through the Cabinet Portfolio Holder reporting annually on her/his overview of safeguarding issues to the Council.

54. This report should be forwarded to the Department for Children, Schools and Families, to OFSTED, to Government Office, and to the Social Work Task Force, highlighting in particular the need for action at a national level to address training and recruitment issues, and issues relating to the professional role, status and reputation of social workers.

13. Recommendations

Prevention and Early Intervention

1. The Director of Children's Services and the KSCB should clarify the location of responsibility for the assessment and support of Children in Need (Section 17) within ChYPS, and more widely within the Authority.
2. The Director of Children's Services should commission work within ChYPS, to develop mutual understanding and respect for roles undertaken by family support workers in Localities and in Duty and Assessment/Care Management.
3. The Kirklees LPSB and the Programme Management Board for Integrated Working should develop a strategy to address the perceived gap in early intervention and prevention service provision for 5 – 11 year olds.
4. The Director of Children's Services should clarify expectations about the contribution of locality-based family support workers as Lead Professionals within the Common Assessment Framework.
5. The Director of Children's Services should consider developing a protocol for joint working and case transfers between Locality Services and Duty and Assessment / Care Management.
6. The Director of Children's Services and the KSCB should provide reinforcement and advocacy of CAF at a senior level, to ensure progress continues to build on the successful re-launch and training programme.
7. The Programme Management Board for Integrated Working should investigate and make recommendations on the following issues:
 - The appropriate level of seniority for undertaking CAFs in schools.
 - The capacity for schools with high levels of child protection to undertake CAFs.

- The support needed for different agencies to enable lead professionals to complete the whole process of CAF, MAST and review.
- Ensuring that CAF is not a prerequisite for referral to statutory children's services.

Child Protection Conference System and Child Protection Plans

8. The KSCB should look into the issue of the relatively low number of children under one year with a Child Protection Plan, to satisfy itself that there is appropriate identification of risk in this age group by front line practitioners.
9. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should develop plans to further improve the quality of work undertaken to engage and elicit the views of children and young people who are involved in the child protection system.
10. The KSCB should further develop and prioritise mandatory training around issues of neglect, and undertake a review focusing on how neglect cases are handled within the child protection system with a view to improving practice in this area.
11. The KSCB should review how services and support systems are aligned to fit the geographical areas where child protection issues feature most strongly, ensuring that areas do not develop a different threshold of intervention than less deprived areas (not least with regard to neglect cases).
12. The Manager of CPRU should review training and development needs of chairs/IROs, develop an action plan for improving the quality and focus of case conference minutes and put in place arrangements/protocols for taking up practice issues which emerge at conferences with relevant agencies.
13. The KSCB should look at the issue of attendance and contribution to initial and review conferences to ensure appropriate prioritisation, and timely submission of reports by partner agencies; and in particular to ensure that parents have sufficient time to read and understand the content of reports written about them.

14. The KSCB should lead a regional approach to reviewing Police attendance at Child Protection Conferences and Reviews, taking account of best practice elsewhere in the country.
15. The KSCB should continue to focus training on agencies who work with adults to ensure their understanding of the priority to protect the children.
16. The KSCB should ensure strategy meetings are held and recorded in accordance with procedures.

Assessment and Care Management

17. The Director of Children's Services should consider whether to reduce the number of Initial Assessments undertaken by social workers through prioritisation, with a view to improving the quality of these assessments.
18. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should ensure that chronologies are in place on social care files and that they are routinely consulted in all assessment processes.
19. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should ensure that relevant professionals, particularly those from health, are routinely consulted in the preparation of Initial Assessments.
20. The Director of Children's Services should further develop the capacity, skills and expertise of social workers in direct work with children, with a view to Kirklees having a reputation for excellence in this aspect of practice.
21. The Director of Children's Services should clarify the location of responsibility for the assessment and support of Children in Need within ChYPS and more widely within the authority.
Cross reference to recommendations 1 and 4 on page 43 regarding thresholds and section 17.

22. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should ensure that looked after children who are placed with parents are reviewed, visited, seen and spoken to (alone if appropriate), to at least the same standard as those in care placements.

23. The KSCB should investigate the role that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services plays in supporting children in need, including children with learning disabilities and looked after children.

Cross reference to recommendation 9 on page 54.

24. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should explore the feasibility of developing a process within the electronic recording system, for identifying (“flagging up”) children who have not been seen by a social worker.

Multi-Agency Working

25. The Integrated Working Programme Management Board, the KSCB, and the Director of Children’s Services should establish a ‘close contact model’ between partner agencies, the Localities and schools and Duty and Assessment/Care Management Services, to improve communication, break down barriers and harness all the resources and expertise available to support Children in Need.

26. The Director of Children’s Services should develop a new strategy within ChYPS to improve liaison between child protection services and schools. A conference to cement a closer working relationship could be seriously considered.

27. The Director of Children’s Services should lead a radical shift towards further empowering schools in managing the welfare of children in their care. To help achieve this, schools should be provided with access to timely, high quality advice on child protection and children in need issues, and opportunities to develop reflective practice.

28. The Director of Children’s Services, in consultation with the Council’s Chief Executive and the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Children’s Services, should make

a considered statement within six months of the publication of this report about the medium / longer-term structural development of ChYPS. The statement should address tensions between the centralised Safeguarding and Specialist provision and the de-centralised Locality Services; and issues arising in ensuring support to children in need and their families. This statement should include examination of potential moves towards establishing co-located Multi-Agency Children's Services teams.

29. The KSCB should explore opportunities for further enhancing the role and contribution of health professionals, including health visitors, midwives and school nurses, to the development and implementation of Child Protection Plans.
30. The KSCB should continue to pay attention to improving information sharing, to achieve an all encompassing system which makes it easy to share information.
31. The Director of Children's Services and the Head of Learning should encourage schools to prioritise the completion of the Safeguarding Audit, which assists schools to assess progress in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities.
32. Head teachers, the Head of Learning and the Director of Children's Services should explore possible funding sources, with a view to establishing a second Safeguarding Officer for Schools post.
33. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should lead further initiatives to ensure social workers provide routine feedback to referring agencies.

Social Care Workloads and Processes

34. The Director of Children's Service should review the issues potentially impacting on social worker workloads as outlined above, with a view to releasing more time for direct work with children and families, and for improved quality of work. The role of administrative support should be further reviewed with a view to reducing the administrative burden on social workers.

35. The Director of Children's Services should review the decision making framework with a view to:

- (a) Ensuring, over time, an increase in the level of responsibility carried by social workers in decision making.
- (b) Reducing where appropriate the number of decisions at a senior level, and ensuring these decisions are appropriate for purpose.

36. The Director of Children's Services should ensure that case and supervision files are audited regularly and that this process should include a role for very senior managers.

Social Care Workforce Issues

37. The Council Leader, Cabinet Members (Children and Families), Chief Executive, and Director of Children's Services should develop a strategy for enhancing the understanding of the social work role and improving its image, including a programme of engaging with the local media, courts and other opinion formers, and utilising local communication systems.

38. The ChYPS Management Group should simplify the Personal Review and Development record and re-launch the PRD process, starting with senior managers and cascading down the structure. Managers should routinely audit the completion and quality of PRDs.

39. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should develop a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy for managers and workers in child protection, including consideration of additional remuneration for front line child protection work.

40. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should develop a strategy to strengthen experience levels within Safeguarding and Specialist Provision and in particular Care Management Services.

41. The Director of Children's Services should continue to monitor and review travel arrangements for social workers to ensure children's welfare and the welfare of staff is not compromised.

42. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should consider providing mobile communication systems to all staff who are potentially working in dangerous situations.

Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board

43. The KSCB should ensure that Children in Need, who may be equally as vulnerable as children who have been subjected to significant harm, receive the support they need.

44. The KSCB should oversee and contribute to the review of practice in relation to children being neglected.

Multi-Agency Training

45. KSCB should further develop and prioritise training around issues of neglect.

46. KSCB should ensure the lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews are made explicit in the Learning and Development Strategy.

47. ChYPS should consider the cost and impact of improving post qualification training and development for social workers, with a view to planning its effective implementation.

48. KSCB and schools should consider a second Safeguarding Officer for Schools for the training and support of education staff, in particular primary head teachers and designated child protection staff in secondary schools.

Cross reference with recommendation 32 on page 83.

49. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Provision should sustain and further develop good practice being developed in mentoring, particularly for newly

qualified staff linked to Kirklees' involvement in the NQSW pilot.

Serious Case Reviews

50. The KSCB should make vigorous representations to oppose the requirement for both an independent author and an independent chair in the Serious Case Review process.

51. The KSCB should ensure that good practice already achieved in disseminating lessons from SCRs promptly, and including these in training programmes, is maintained.

52. The KSCB should ensure through its regular reports to the Local Public Service Board (LPSB) that Safeguarding is accorded appropriate priority in overall planning for services for children; and that the LPSB is encouraged to take a leading role in promoting Safeguarding and the reputation of staff involved.

Governance

53. Kirklees should consider establishing annual consultation processes involving the Cabinet Portfolio Holder, and other elected members, with safeguarding staff in children's services. Kirklees should also consider how its scrutiny function can be further strengthened in this area, for example, through the Cabinet Portfolio Holder reporting annually on her/his overview of safeguarding issues to the Council.

National Implications

54. This report should be forwarded to the Department for Children, Schools and Families, to OFSTED, to Government Office, and to the Social Work Task Force, highlighting in particular the need for action at a national level to address training and recruitment issues, and issues relating to the professional role, status and reputation of social workers.

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Terms of Reference

Effectiveness of the Board

- Is there appropriate senior representation, is attendance good, chairing effective and are members of the Board effectively engaged?
- Does the Board have a work programme giving focus to its work, clear relationship to the Local Strategic Partnership and arrangements to mentor progress?
- Are serious case reviews appropriately commissioned, conducted with objectivity and lead to clear actions which are monitored?
- Are Child Death Review Panel arrangements in place, analysis conducted and information available to the Board?
- Are effective support arrangements in place for supporting the work of the Board, including budget and staffing?

Identifying and Preventing Maltreatment

- Is information, advice and guidance available to guide those with concerns about a child?
- Are appropriate arrangements in place to deliver training to all agencies' staff?
- Are appropriate policies and procedures in place?

Scrutiny and Accountability

- What evidence is there of the external evaluation of safeguarding and child protection arrangements, what does this indicate in terms of standards?
- What oversight has the Council maintained of safeguarding and child protection issues via senior officers, Lead Member and Cabinet and Scrutiny?
- What oversight have the key agencies, senior managers and Boards maintained over safeguarding and child protection matters?

Council Child Protection Services and Practice

- Are Council services appropriately resourced and staffed?
- Do front line staff have appropriate qualifications and training, managed workloads and appropriate supervision?
- Are decisions appropriately made and reviewed by fieldwork staff, their managers and the Independent Reviewing Officers?
- Are the arrangements for child protection case conferences appropriate and effective?
- What measures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of front line worker practice, including conducting assessments, developing children protection plans, and the monitoring of the welfare of children subject to child protection plans?

Work Programme

Meeting	Theme / Activity / Witnesses
<p>10 February 2009 Informal</p>	<p>To agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - governance arrangements - terms of reference - priorities and areas of expertise - schedule of meetings - list of witnesses - background documents
<p>24 February 2009, Huddersfield Town Hall.</p>	<p>Presentation and Discussion of a Case Study illustrating procedural practice and legal issues</p> <p>(Alison O’Sullivan / Paul Johnson)</p>
<p>10 March 2009, Huddersfield Town Hall.</p>	<p>Workshop session with social workers to explore the delivery of child protection services from the practitioner view point.</p> <p>(Five social workers)</p>
<p>24 March 2009, Huddersfield Town Hall.</p>	<p>Workshop session with team managers</p> <p>((Seven team managers)</p>
<p>7 April 2009, Huddersfield Town Hall.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council’s Safeguarding Officer for Schools and Learning - Representatives from Child Protection Unit - Council’s Legal Services
<p>21 April 2009, Huddersfield Town Hall.</p>	<p>Discussion of emerging themes from evidence gathered so far.</p> <p>Discussion of inter agency aspects of the terms of reference with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CAFCASS - Kirklees Children & Young People Service - Kirklees PCT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West Yorkshire Police - Kirklees Adult Services - Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board Manager
24 April 2009	Site visit to Oakmead
5 May 2009, Brian Jackson Centre	<p>Kirklees PCT including: health visitor, named nurse, school nurse</p> <p>West Yorkshire Police</p> <p>Connexions</p> <p>Family Support Managers</p>
11 May 2009	Site visit to Westfields
19 May 2009, Huddersfield Town Hall.	<p>Discussion with Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Role of the Safeguarding Board. - Handling Serious Case Reviews, focussing on learning and practice.
27 May 2009, Heckmondwike Library	Meeting with Children's Centre Locality Managers
1 June 2009, Huddersfield Town Hall	Meeting with Head Teachers (10 Primary, 2 Middle, 5 Secondary & 2 Special school)
2 June 2009, Cliffe House	<p>Discussion with Alison O'Sullivan / Paul Johnson re key themes informing content of final report.</p> <p>Formulating the final report.</p>
5 June 2009, Huddersfield Town Hall	Meeting with Barry Sheerman, MP
7 July 2009, Huddersfield Town Hall	Meeting with Head of Localities and Acting Integrated Children's Services Manager

Sample of Questions

The following are examples of the questions the Safeguarding Commission asked witnesses:

- How far are Kirklees safeguarding and child protection services appropriately resourced and staffed? Please comment on the level of experience of your staff and on their qualifications and access to training.
- Please comment on the frequency, content and recording of supervision sessions for your staff; and also on the implementation of the annual performance review development.
- How do you manage your staff's workloads?
- How effective is the case conference system, including attendance and multi-agency contributions?
- Are the Child Protection Unit and Independent Reviewing Officers/Case Conference Chairs able to contribute effectively to ensuring optimal standards of safeguarding work?
- How far do Kirklees safeguarding/child protection policies and procedures contribute to the effectiveness of frontline practice?
- How can Kirklees better retain experienced and well qualified staff in high risk areas of safeguarding/child protection work?
- How far does multi-agency practice in Kirklees contribute to safeguarding children, for example joint investigations with Police; development of integrated childcare teams; development of CAF and multi-agency support teams; implementation of multi agency protections plans (MAPPAS)?

- Is there appropriate senior representation on the KSCB, is attendance good, chairing effective and are members of the Board effectively engaged?
- How is the KSCB's accountability to the Local Public Service Board implemented? Are there shared priorities, or any areas of conflict, between the Board and the LPSB?
- Please comment on experiences of referral for child protection/safeguarding? What are your views about thresholds for intervention?
- Can KSCB representatives contribute their experience of information sharing between agencies, for children in need (section 17) and for children who have suffered significant harm (section 47)?
- What is your experience of the implementation of CAF arrangements in Kirklees; and of CAF's contribution to improving children's well-being?
- Please comment on the quality of decision-making and Child Protection Plans, including Case Conferences, Strategy Meetings, Core Groups and Reviews.
- The Commission have listened to concerns about the capacity of the safeguarding/child protection service to respond where children have been neglected or experienced emotional harm; and about the cumulative impact of these factors on children's well-being. Please comment on your experience in this area.
- What lessons have been learnt from Serious Case Reviews in Kirklees, so far?

Appendix 4

List of Background Papers

Letter from Social Work Task Force to Secretaries of State, *First Report of the Social Work Task Force* (5 May 2009)

The Lord Laming, *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report* (March 2009)

The Lord Laming, *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry – Summary Report of an Inquiry* (2003)

Children's Workforce Development Council, *Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People – Frequently Asked Questions*

Working Together to Safeguard Children: Executive Summary (2006)

Reaching Out: Think Family (2007)

Every Child Matters – Summary of Green Paper (2003)

Every Child Matters – Change for Children (2004)

Professor B. Featherstone, University of Bradford, *Review of Safeguarding Procedures in Bradford Metropolitan District* (2009)

Bradford City Council, *Safeguarding Review – Bradford Children's Services* (2009)

Haringey Local Safeguarding Children Board – *Serious Case Review 'Child A' – Executive Summary* (2008)

Haringey Council, *Joint Area Review – Haringey Children's Services* (2008)

HM Government, *The Protection of Children in England: Action Plan – The Government's Response to Lord Laming* (2009)

Kirklees Specific Documentation:

- Kirklees Children & Young People Plan 2008-2011
- Children & Young People Service Safeguarding & Specialist Provision, *Children and young people with a Child Protection Plan Management Information Report for Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board Quarterly Review* (October – December 2008)
- Safeguarding in Schools Policy
- Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board, *Section 11 Audit* (2008)
- Annual Performance Assessment of Services for Children and Young People in Kirklees (2008)
- Joint Area Review – Kirklees (2007)
- Sample of Three Serious Case Reviews – Executive Summaries

- Sample of Minutes – Child Protection Review Conferences and Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board
- Job Description – LADO and Safeguarding Improvement Officer
- Development Matters
- Details of Seminars and Training Sessions – Sept 2008 – June 2009
- ChYPS Learning Matters for Social Workers and Community Care Officers – Details of Compulsory Training for Social Workers and Community Workers
- Social Workers' Progression – Competency Based Route – Handbook for Candidates
- Social Work Career Pathway linked to Qualification and Competency Route

Documentation Resulting from the West Inquiry:

- Kirklees Education Access Service – Identifying, Tracking and Engaging Children who are (or are at risk of becoming) Missing From Education – A Handbook of Procedures and Processes
- Revised Statutory Guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education (new CME guidance)
- Children & Young Person's Missing from Home and Missing from Care Procedure Protocol between West Yorkshire Police and Children's Social Care

Written Briefings:

- Statistical breakdown of the number of Looked After Children in Kirklees, the number of children who have a Child Protection Plan, the number of cases considered through the assessment process, numbers of staff involved in the management and provision of these services
- Report on the financial management of Looked After Children in Kirklees
- Constitution of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board
- Membership of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board
- ICT Systems in the Safeguarding & Specialist Provision Service
- Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board – Chairing Arrangements
- The SWEET Project/Sweeties
- Lifeline
- Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board - Voluntary Sector Workstream extract
- Preventative measures implemented by Kirklees
- Statement on unallocated work in respect of child protection
- Role of the Independent Reviewing Officer
- Safeguarding Audit of Kirklees Schools
- Submissions from West Yorkshire Police and Kirklees Primary Care Trust
- Kirklees Safer Schools Partnership
- Locality ECM (Every Child Matters) Hubs

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICE (ChYPS)

Appendix 5

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICE – Alison O’Sullivan

LEARNING Caroline Gruen	LOCALITIES Karen Worrall	PLANNING, PERFORMANCE & COMMISSIONING Andrew Pennington	RESOURCES & SUPPORT Rosemary Gibson	SAFEGUARDING & SPECIALIST PROVISION Paul Johnson
SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE Consultation Programme Management Communications & Marketing	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT Performance Management Planning Project Management & Support Service Review Locality Working	INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY ICT Information Strategy Information Unit Technology Contact Point ICS/Supporting Safeguarding	FINANCE Budget Preparation & Monitoring Financial Advice Value for Money & Efficiencies Government Returns & Grants	FIELDWORK SERVICES Duty & Assessment Care Management Children with a Disability
STRATEGY, PLANNING & RESOURCES School Leadership & Management Support Strategic CPD Strategic ICT Business & Administration	ATTENDANCE & PUPIL SUPPORT Pupil Attendance Improvement Support for Schools Children Missing in Education	COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Media/Public Information Complaints Communication Customer Engagement Child Protection Review	HUMAN RESOURCES Single Status Implementation Change Management Employee Relations Staff Attendance Improvement	YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM Youth Inclusion Early Intervention Prevention
RAISING STANDARDS & EXTENDED LEARNING Extended Learning Performance & Assessment School Improvement Partners 11-16 Secondary Phase 5-11 Primary Phase	YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE Information, Advice & Guidance Duke of Edinburgh Award Youth Work Adventurous Activities PAYP Personal Advisors IYCE Outreach work	COMMISSIONING & MARKETING Children & Young People Plan Commissioning External Funding External Inspections & reviews Service review Children’s Rights Service Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	ASSET MANAGEMENT Public Private Partnership Contract Management Educational Visits Advice Project Portfolio Management Capital Programme Risk Management School Repairs & Maintenance Programme	LAC, CARE LEAVERS & FAMILY SUPPORT Residential Services Contact Team Looked After Children (LAC) Family Placement (Adoption & Fostering) Leaving Care Family Support
INCLUSION Social Inclusion SEN/LLD & Equalities	EARLY YEARS’ SERVICE Performance & Policy Business Management Quality & Inclusion Integrated Services Multi-agency Working Children’s Centres Parenting Strategy Play Strategy	WORKFORCE & PERFORMANCE Workforce Development & Planning Learning & Development Performance Management Project Management Local Area Agreement	PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTS School Transport Contract Management & Support	EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY & SPECIALIST OUTREACH SEN Admin Specialist Outreach Educational Psychology Child & Family Consultation Butterfly Project Portage Portex Sensory Impairment
14 - 19 & SKILLS Adult Learning Supplementary Schools Information Development Aim Higher Collegiates		COMMUNITY COHESION & DIVERSITY Community cohesion Prevent Equality & Diversity	EDUCATION ACCESS Free School Meals School Clothing Grants Hazard Warning Database School Planning & Admissions Student Support	157

SAFEGUARDING AND SPECIALIST PROVISION

