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Date: 11 October 2010

Dear Member

COUNTY COUNCIL - THURSDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2010

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Thursday, 14 October 2010 meeting of the County Council, the following report(s) that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item
12	<u>Progress Report in response to Safeguarding Children in Kent: Defending and Developing the Service (Pages 1 - 6)</u>

Yours sincerely



Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership

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Unannounced Inspection Action Plan – September 10

Ofsted finding	Action taken/required	Lead/s	By When
Area for priority action			
<p>1. Some children in need of protection do not receive an adequate and timely assessment of risks and needs, leaving them at risk of harm. A significant shortfall in the capacity of qualified, experienced social workers and weaknesses in the quality of team manager oversight on child protection cases in some duty and assessment teams contribute to these serious concerns</p>	<p>1. Baseline auditing has already taken place and reported on to the Director of Specialist Children’s Services</p> <p>2. External audit plan developed and submitted to the Director of Specialist Children’s Services setting out how quality assurance process will be strengthened. Cases to be independently audited every fortnight, with feedback given to local managers, as part of a programme of continuous improvement</p> <p>3. The quality assurance process will include a baseline assessment of the systems in place across the 12 Duty & Initial Assessment Teams (DIAT’s)</p> <p>4. Use of Duty tracking sheet has been made mandatory and will form part of District Manager quality assurance process</p> <p>5. Coordinated work to take place to review and respond to capacity issues</p>	<p>Donna Marriott, Safeguarding Unit</p> <p>Donna Marriott, Safeguarding Unit</p> <p>Donna Marriott, Safeguarding Unit</p> <p>District Managers</p> <p>Helen Davies, Director, Specialist Children’s Services</p>	<p>Completed September 2010</p> <p>Commencing Sept 2010 – review Dec 2010</p> <p>For completion by end of September</p> <p>Immediate effect</p> <p>Commencing Sept 2010</p>

Ofsted finding	Action taken/required	Lead/s	By When
Areas for development			
1. Arrangements for prevention and early intervention through the common assessment framework are inconsistently applied by agencies in the county. Some referrals for social care intervention, seen by inspectors, could have been dealt with through coordinated work by universal services	<p>Arrangements to be made for improving implementation of the common assessment framework, which is a key priority for the 12 Preventative Services Managers (PSMs) who took up their posts in each district on 1 September</p> <p>Clarity about the responsibility of the PSMs for ensuring that appropriate referrals are made to Children's Social Services (CSS), by coordinating a range of early intervention services for vulnerable children to divert them from CSS</p>	<p>Helen Davies, Director, Specialist Children's Services</p> <p>Helen Davies, Director, Specialist Children's Services</p>	<p>Process to be agreed 23 September</p> <p>Process to be agreed 23 September</p>
2. The record of agreed actions from strategy meetings between children's social care and the CAIU in child protection matters is not always shared in a timely way between the agencies and delays of several weeks can take place before the formal record is shared	Additional administrative capacity for DIATs to ensure that strategy meetings are recorded and shared promptly between agencies	Helen Davies, Director, Specialist Children's Services	Posts advertised by end of September
3. The reliability of performance management information is undermined by a variable and inaccurate application of the statutory guidance on the commencement and completion of some initial assessments by managers	Current performance for the completion of initial assessments in timescales is 69%. Guidance has been issued to all DIAT managers and District Managers reminding them of statutory guidance about timescales of initial assessment.	Donna Marriott, Acting Head of Safeguarding / Helen Davies, Director, SCS	Completed 13.09.10

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4. The quality of analysis in assessments is variable with some lacking sufficient focus on key risk factors.	<p>Administrative and social work assistant (and possibly trainee social worker) capacity in DIATs to be increased, once teams have clarified how they will be used effectively. The aim is to provide maximum assistance to enable qualified social workers to focus on the completion of thorough, good quality assessments.</p> <p>Quality assurance process to be strengthened to include independent, random case auditing as part of a programme of continuous improvement with regard to the quality of assessments.</p>	District Managers	Adverts to be in place by end of September
5. Children's wishes and feelings are insufficiently evidenced in assessments or impact on plans. In many cases recording is unclear whether children are seen alone or that their home environment and sleeping arrangements have been considered.	<p>Director of Specialist Children's Services has met with all Heads of Service, District Managers and DIAT Team Leaders to set out expectations in relation to the need to ensure a child focused approach; seeing the child, ascertaining their views, wishes and feelings.</p> <p>Focus on the child, their wishes and feelings to form part of the training programme addressing practice issues.</p>	DIAT Team Leaders and Principal Social Workers	<p>Immediate effect – to be subject to ongoing audit and quality assurance</p> <p>Training programme commencing October 2010</p>
6. Attention to identifying and responding to the diverse needs of some children and their parents and carers is inconsistent, although	To be addressed through supervision as part of the quality assurance process relating to assessment.	DIAT Team Leaders	Ongoing

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there are individual examples of good work.			
7. Management oversight and decision making are inconsistently applied and there is a lack of locally generated performance management information at team level. There are examples of inappropriate decision making by managers.	<p>Use of the tracking sheet (used to track progress of cases in the duty system) by DIAT team leaders is mandatory. District manager will oversee implementation of this requirement as part of their quality assurance work in each District.</p> <p>Increased administrative and social work assistant (and possibly trainee social worker) capacity in DIATs to enable Team Leaders to focus on oversight of casework and risk management.</p>	<p>Team Leaders & District Managers</p> <p>Heads of Service</p>	<p>Use of tracking sheet to be consistently applied by all districts with immediate effect</p> <p>Adverts to be in place by end of September to increase Team capacity</p>
8. Team managers and principal social workers have responsibility for a number of children's cases; some are held on the basis that there are insufficient qualified and experienced social workers to whom these can be allocated. This leads to delays in undertaking assessments and delivering services.	<p>Review of social worker caseloads and agreement on an 'acceptable' workload (in October)</p> <p>Review of workload/practices in Children and Families teams, with focus on closing unallocated children in need cases</p> <p>Continuation of robust social worker recruitment and retention strategy, with particular emphasis on retention, considering market premiums, long service payments.</p>	<p>Heads of Service</p> <p>Heads of Service</p> <p>Heads of Service</p>	<p>Completion by October/ November</p>
9. The frequency and quality of staff supervision	Increase in number of principal social workers	Heads of	Recruitment by

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are insufficiently evidenced in key areas such as identifying development needs, enabling critically reflective practice, ensuring the implementation of plans, and progressing the timely throughput of work.	in DIATs to enable reflective supervision of staff. Comprehensive training programme on the new supervision policy launched in August (starts in October).	Service Head of Service – CSS professional development	December Programme to be in place by December
10. Children's records are stored in three different forms that are not linked or integrated within a single information and data platform. This leads to potential gaps in practitioners having a full understanding of children's assessments and plans.	Further review of ICS functionality (by December) and immediate review of records being stored on G-Drive with view to ending this in October.		ICS Review to be completed by December 2010 Discontinuation of G Drive by end October 2010

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