

AGENDA FOR

SAFEGUARDING SUB-COMMITTEE

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To: All Members of Safeguarding Sub-Committee

Councillors : R Caserta, J Grimshaw, M Hankey,
N Jones, Susan Southworth, J Walker and M Whitby

Dear Member/Colleague

Safeguarding Sub-Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Safeguarding Sub-Committee which will be held as follows:-

Date:	Tuesday, 8 January 2019
Place:	Committee Room A, Bury Town Hall
Time:	5.30 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 MINUTES (*Pages 1 - 6*)

Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2018 are attached.

4 CARE LEAVER SERVICES (*Pages 7 - 16*)

S. Harris, Strategic Lead, Placement Services will report at the meeting.
Presentation Attached.

5 LGA PEER REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (*Pages 17 - 28*)

Tony Decrop, Interim Assistant Director and Bart Popelier, Strategic Lead, Safeguarding, will report at the meeting. Presentation attached.

6 QUESTIONS TO THE INTERIM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SOCIAL CARE AND SAFEGUARDING

7 URGENT BUSINESS

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 16 October 2018

Present: Councillor Susan Southworth (in the Chair); Councillor Caserta; Councillor Grimshaw, Councillor Hankey, Councillor N Jones, Councillor J Walker and Councillor Whitby.

Also in attendance: Karen Dolton, Interim Executive Director Children's Services
Bart Popelier, Strategic Lead Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Ahmed Ajmi, Projects Manager
Leigh Webb – Democratic Services

Apologies for absence:

CS.01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Walker declared a prejudicial interest in Minute CS.06 below, Troubled Families Update, as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Communities. Councillor Walker left the meeting during consideration of this item as the issue is an area of policy that falls within his portfolio area.

CS.02 OFSTED VISIT UPDATE

The Interim Executive Director of Children's Services presented a report setting out the findings of a recent focussed visit to Children's Services. The visit had taken place on 25 and 26 July 2018.

The Inspectors had reviewed the local authority's arrangements for contacts and referrals in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) for children who need help, including safeguarding. Inspectors also considered thresholds for early help and statutory services for children in need, including those in need of safeguarding.

A wide range of evidence was considered, including case discussions with administrators, social workers, managers, representatives from partner agencies, and senior staff responsible for quality assurance and performance management. Performance data and management reports were also reviewed, and children's case records were sampled.

The Interim Executive Director reported on the following positive findings:

- That the MASH is an effective multi-disciplinary service which

provides clear pathways for members of the public and professionals to raise concerns about children. Contacts are prioritised and processed in a timely way by skilled and experienced staff. Management oversight is robust and all recommendations for next steps are reviewed prior to authorisation.

- That Contacts and referrals are authorised promptly by managers and there is no backlog. Partner agencies routinely use the agreed referral form. Consent is sought from families, and referrers are informed of the outcome of their referral. This ensures that families' rights are fully considered, and that referrers know what is happening in response to their referral and what to do if they disagree.
- That information-sharing by those partner agencies in the MASH is a strength. If a child needs specialist services, this triggers swift information-gathering from a range of agencies. Responses are generally prompt, and all gaps are followed up.
- That decision-making and information-sharing is supported by co-location and effective joint working between children's social care, police, health and education staff. Information from different providers is gathered and analysed by the health specialist, ensuring that the significance of health information is understood.
- Strategy meetings in the MASH are convened swiftly and have improved significantly since the internal audit at the end of 2017. Composition, chairing and minuting have all improved. However, the MASH health and education specialists are unable to participate in all meetings, although background information from their service area is gathered and shared. Strategy meetings held in other teams are well attended and minuted, and the rationale for decisions made is set out.
- Children who may have complex safeguarding needs, such as children who go missing from home or care and those who may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation, benefit from prompt consideration by staff in the specialist complex safeguarding team. Contacts are swiftly routed from the MASH to the appropriate service.
- Children who require social work assessments are allocated promptly to staff in the initial response teams. The social workers know their children well and can articulate the strengths and difficulties in families, which means that the right support can be put in place.

During discussion of this item, the Interim Executive Director acknowledged the areas for concern which had been highlighted, including the need for more work to be done in respect of the "voice of the child". With regard to the issue of Early Help through the Oasis team it was reported that issues and improvements were being addressed through the transformation process and auditing. On the wider issue of auditing, the Interim Executive Director explained how robust auditing had now been implemented through internal departmental audits which include effective follow up to create a cycle of improvement.

In response to a question concerning administrative duties, the Interim Executive Director acknowledged there was a lack of support in this area, but highlighted that often Social Workers did want to perform their own writing up of case conferences in order to provide the correct context in relation to the meetings and the issues discussed.

The Chair, Councillor Susan Southworth, highlighted the issue of the weight given to the view of parents. The Interim Executive Director explained that at the early help phase there was a balance to be struck between trusting the family and intervening. It was reported that the issue had been addressed and systems were in place to challenge and look at where families sit in the system and that the system supported professional judgements.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

CS.03 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Bart Popelier gave a presentation setting out Children's Social Care Performance in respect of the key performance indicators for children's safeguarding. Performance information was set out in respect of the following indicators:

- Number of Contacts
- Number of Referrals
- Number of Repeat Referrals
- Number of S47 Enquiries
- Children in Need
- Child Protection
- Public Law Outline
- Edge of care – Start of Care
- Children with Disabilities
- Workforce

Questions were asked and responses given in respect of the presentation, however a number of causes for concern remained for the Group, which can be summarised as follows:

- Whilst acknowledging that a number of new systems had been introduced and would take time to bed-in, the Group had serious concerns over a lack of improvement in terms of performance across the indicators. Members felt that they were receiving similar responses to those received 12 months ago.
- IT systems were not as advanced as they could be, resulting in staff not being able to work efficiently. The Group felt that improved technology and agile working would free up staff to make more efficient use of their time and produce improved quality in their work.

- With regard to recruitment and retention, the Group expressed concerns in relation to workloads and case load numbers. Members highlighted the correlation between staff turnover and performance as a result of cases having to be re-allocated. Issues were also raised about the use of agency staff.
- Concerns were expressed in respect of relatively high levels of sickness, with much of the long term sickness being stress related. The Group highlighted the issue of capacity and workloads as potential contributory factors.
- In respect of children in need, the Group expressed serious concerns about children not being seen.

It was agreed:

That the Chair of this Group, meet with the Interim Assistant Director (Social Care & Safeguarding), with a view to raising the issues above in advance of a formal response to the next meeting.

CS.04 TROUBLED FAMILIES

A report was submitted from the Interim Executive Director for Communities and Wellbeing outlining how the Council safeguard the most vulnerable families in Bury, an overview of the programme, the successes of interventions and how residents are safeguarded.

Bury Council's response to the programme has been the SCIL (Supporting Communities and Improving Lives) team. The team comprises of Family Co-ordinators and a member of staff from DWP. There are two analysts that also provide data support for submissions to central government and also the GMCA.

Greater Manchester, on behalf of the 10 districts, has signed up to the Troubled Families 2 (TF2) programme and has committed to improve the lives of 27,200 families over the next 5 years. Bury's contribution is 1297 families.

Troubled Families is at Greater Manchester (GM) level, part of a wider package of reforms (Public Sector Reform) to help individuals and families. This includes supporting 50,000 people into employment, reducing reoffending, implementing the Early Years New Delivery Model and greater integration of service provision through Place Based Integration.

The report set out information in respect of numbers on the programme; actions undertaken and risks within the programme. Ahmed Ajmi, Projects Officer, attended the meeting and briefed the Group on a number of positive interventions which highlighted how well Bury had performed to date, which was backed up by positive feedback comments from partners. Included within the report were a number of case studies setting out the issues faced by families and the outcomes achieved.

In response to a question from the Chair, Ahmed undertook to provide the number of re-referrals to the programme from phase 1.

With regard to the voice of the child, Ahmed explained about the tools and initiatives in place to ensure this is captured. An undertaking was given to provide copies of the feelings wheel toolkit.

During discussion of this item, Members of the Group acknowledged the good work being undertaken in respect of the Programme.

It was agreed:

The an update on the programme be provided to this Group in 12 months time.

CS.05 NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed:

That the next meeting of the Group be held on 8 January 2019, to consider the following items:

- **Performance Report Response** - Interim Assistant Director (Social Care & Safeguarding) to be invited.
- **Leaving Care Service**
- **Healthy Young Minds**

COUNCILLOR S SOUTHWORTH

Chair

(Note: the meeting started at 5.30pm and ended at 7pm)

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Safeguarding OPG

Leaving Care Services

Susan Harris

Strategic Lead Placement Services

Care Leavers

- The Bury Through Care Team provide services to Care Leavers and ensure they assist with developing life skills for independence and provide ongoing support to young adults once they have left care.
- The staff at Bury Through Care Team provide a statutory service and are governed by The Children and Social Work Act 2017, The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and The Children Act 1989.
- **The service offered to care leavers includes:**
- Allocation of a Personal Advisor (PA), who offers support to care leavers through their transition to independence and adulthood. Support will cover education, employment, training, housing, health, finance/benefits and advocacy.
- A pathway plan - each young person's needs will be assessed and plans and targets to meet those needs and aspirations will be set out in this plan.
- Maintain a relationship/keeping in touch - personal advisors have a duty to keep in touch with a young person until they reach the age of 21, or up to 25 if the young person remains open to the service.
- Financial support - young people who have left care, and are not subject to a Care Order and are aged 16 or 17, are not eligible for benefits. They receive income maintenance from children's services via the Through Care Team.

Performance/data

	Aug	Sep	Oct
CL's with up to date Pathway Plan	91.2%	92.1%	91.3%
CL's in touch	93.8%	87.8%	93.3%
EET (Care Leavers)	56.5%	56.6%	56.3%
Suitable Accommodation	91.8%	88.8%	87.4%

- There are **135** Care Leavers open to the Through Care Team, performance data is reported on a monthly basis at the Performance Management Meeting which is chaired by either AD Tony Decrop or Director Karen Dolton. Along with a number of areas of performance compliance with Pathway Plan's (6 monthly basis), in touch (every 2 months), education, employment and training and accommodation deemed as appropriate and suitable are all routinely reported on.
- Information and performance data is also regularly shared at the Corporate Parenting Board.

Performance

EET Care Leavers= October 56.3%

Education, Employment and Training (EET) is an area of 'performance weakness' for the service.

16-17 year old's EET= 74.5% (41/55)

18+year old's EET= 48.9% (66/135)

Work is being undertaken with officers and partners to improve the number of young people accessing employment, training, work experience and employment opportunities.

- 'Breakthrough' programme to support engagement of young people and introducing a
- Mentoring scheme with the Youth Service and Connexions offer extra support
- Data is now collated and shared routinely regarding the young people who are NEET to look creatively at ways to target this cohort.

Suitable Accommodation = 170/190 89.4%

- 170 is the whole of the age 16-21 cohort. When separated, 16-17 year old figures **2/55**, 1 relates to a young person living in an unregulated placement and 1 who is in custody.
- 18 year+ this relates to **118/135** living in suitable accommodation.
- **17** deemed to be living in unsuitable accommodation 8 are in custody, 7 Other young people are living in unstable living arrangements such as between friends, or in temporary accommodation provided by housing which cannot be assessed as suitable. 1 young person is living with parent where there is domestic violence in the parent's relationship. 1 young person is residing in the USA and refusing to return to the UK with their visa and passport having expired. In all instances there is evidence of ongoing work with the PA to provide appropriate advice around accommodation options or advocacy where a young person has exhausted all housing options.

Targeted work continues to ensure that care leavers are provided appropriate accommodation -

- Monthly 16 + Forum meetings are held with housing
- Tenancy ready courses
- Successful bid with the Homelessness Reduction fund
- Increase in Staying Put arrangements
- Recruitment drive to increase Supported Lodging Hosts

Service Developments

- The Through Care Team and the Children and Young People in Care Team are to be integrated following a formal 188 consultation process with staff.
- It is proposed that the integrated team will be based at New Kershaw Centre where Through Care Team and other services are already based. There will be no negative impact on community groups or youth groups who also use the centre.
- Utilise the space and services at the Hub for a wider group of Children in Care and Care Leavers.
- Build on service developments and practice improvement work with regards to children in care and care leavers.

The Hub

- The Hub is a space for Care Leavers at the New Kershaw Centre which provides:-
- Participation/consultation events
- Tenancy ready course
- Get ready for adult life course
- Access to a computer, kitchen, laundry, bathroom
- BOOM volunteering activities
- Cooking on a budget
- Careers advice
- Breakthrough programme
- Health and well-being drop in
- Fundraising/Charity cake sale
- Access to the specialist Nurse
- Health Trainer – diet, healthy lifestyle, smoking cessation, drug and alcohol advice, exercise and mental health (sign posting)
- Mentoring (targeted youth service)

Care Leaver Offer

- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 established that each local authority should consult on and publish a local offer to its care leavers.
- Bury have developed a Local Offer for Care Leavers which sets out the services for care leavers available in the borough. Regular meetings have been held with officers, partner agencies, corporate parents and young people to develop the offer. In July Mark Riddell MBE, advisor for the Department of Education also met with officers across the council to review progress and offer advice and guidance in regards to the preparation and implementation of the Bury Care Leaver offer.
- Task and finish groups have been facilitated by Strategic Leads on the following areas to develop the care leaver offer :-
 - Health and Well-being
 - Accommodation
 - Education, Employment and Training
 - Community Engagement (participation and relationships)

- Six main areas outlined in the DfE Local Offer guidance clearly sets out how councils should assist care leavers with:
 - Health and Well-being
 - Relationships
 - Education and Training
 - Employment
 - Accommodation
 - Participation in Society
- The responsibility of the Care Leaver offer sits with the Council's Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, both must ensure the offer document reflects the breadth of services offered by the Council and partners and demonstrates our Corporate Parenting has strong leadership.
- The Care Leaver offer is being updated on the council website to ensure it is accessible for Bury care leavers.

GM Care Leaver Offer/Trust

- Meetings have been held with representatives across the 10 Greater Manchester authorities regarding developing a GM Care Leaver offer and Trust. This will remove geographical barriers for carer leavers in the GM authorities and ensure that a fair and transparent offer is provided. An area of success in this consistent approach across GM is the Council Tax exemption. Other areas being considered are travel passes and access to leisure activities/gym passes.
- Plans are also underway to develop a Greater Manchester Care Leaver Trust, this is to create a wider system that considers data/performance, strategic commissioning and a practical offer to care leavers that 'does not recognise' LA boundaries, a system that works together in the interests of all Care Leavers.
- Sharing best practice, expertise, ideas and experience.

Safeguarding OPG

Peer Review and Performance Update

Tony Decrop
Bart Popelier

Interim Assistant Director (Social Care & Safeguarding)
Strategic Lead Safeguarding

Peer Review Focus

The Peer Review Team focused on front line practice relating children in need, those subject to a child protection plan and protection of disabled children including:

- Effectiveness of management and supervision
- Public Law Outline
- A validation exercise of internal audit methodology

Peer Review Method

- Spent 5 days onsite at Bury Council (plus 2 days in advance file auditing)
- Spoke to more than 90 people
- Attended more than 35 meetings, focus groups and site visits
- Reviewed documents and performance analysis
- Collectively spent nearly 300 hours (plus extensive reading time)
- Reviewed 30 case files plus 9 audited cases
- Interviewed 13 allocated social workers/managers
- Observed 3 child protection case conferences

Key Messages

- The Local Authority has good insight and understands its strengths and weaknesses.
- There has been a gradual improvement in performance and practice following a decline which has been aided by a robust Quality Assurance & Performance Management Framework.
- Plans were not always consistently SMART or sufficiently outcome focused.
- Partnership working on the whole was found to be strong and effective both operationally and strategically.
- Staff consistently fed back that Bury is a nice place to work with good team working and a management culture that is open and supportive, morale was high.
- No cases reviewed resulted in escalations because all children reviewed were deemed to be safe and secure.

Key Findings – Part I

Case Planning

- Plans are not consistently SMART – template does not help

Visits to Children & Families

- Visiting frequencies are not adhered to consistently
- The purpose of the visit is not always clear

Public Law Outline

- There is drift in PLO cases; the process needs to be reviewed

Multi Agency Working

- There are good working relationships
- The use of 101 phone number to contact the police to arrange a Strategy Meetings was seen as an issue

Key Findings – Part II

Thresholds

- The application of thresholds by Social Care and partners is not always appropriate and can be overcautious

Resources

- There is a need for a Social Work Practice model
- Underdeveloped IT arrangements are a “blocker” to effective agile working
- Bury is seen as a good place to work – there is high morale

Management Oversight

- Some work is signed off by Managers when it is not clear that our own standards have not been met
- Managers are seen as approachable and supportive

Response to Peer Review

Continuing with what we were doing

- A number of issues raised were known and in the process of being addressed; this will continue (i.e. review of template for Plans; new PLO process; improvements to case management and planning process; quality assurance audit template)

Improvement Plan

- An Improvement Plan has been drawn up and shared
- Weekly progress meetings chaired by DCS and AD

Resources

- Funding for Social Work Practice model (Signs of Safety)
- Discussions regarding IT; infrastructure and agile working

Update on Performance

Item	August 2018	November 2018
Contacts progressed within 1 working day	63.9%	74.1%
Referrals progressed within 2 working days	38.1%	44.7%
% of Referrals which were repeat Referrals	25.0%	33.5%
CiN Visits – child seen in last 6 weeks	56.5%	81.2%
ICPCs which resulted in a CP Plan	64.9%	95.8%
CiN Visits – child seen in last 6 weeks	56.5%	81.2%
CLA Visits – child seen in last 6 weeks	66.4%	72.4%

Workforce

- Current Social Work establishment:

- 11 x Team Managers

- 5 x Assistant Team Managers

- 2 x Advanced Practitioners

- 55 x Social Workers

- 7 x Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's)

Use of Agency Staff:

- 1 x Team Manager (covering sickness)

- 13 x Social Workers (covering 4 vacancies, 5 secondments and 4 maternity leave)

Recruitment

- Local Authorities across England are struggling to recruit experienced Social Workers.
- Bury has a fairly stable workforce who report feeling supported by Managers.
- Successful targeted recruitment has taken place during 2018 resulting in 8 experienced Agency staff being appointed to permanent positions. This approach will continue.
- Bury continues to offer good quality student placements and students have moved into permanent posts once qualified.

Retention

- Increased support to newly qualified Social Workers during their first year in employment.
- SMART phones provided to all staff – all will have IT equipment for mobile working shortly.
- Advanced Practitioner posts used to support less experienced workers.
- Monthly staff consultation group with the Principal Social Worker.
- Caseloads monitored by Team Managers/Strategic Leads.
- Alignment between practitioners and Workforce Development – Research in Practice (RIP) launched and practice forums established.
- National Assessment & Accreditation System (NAAS) – Bury was one of 5 LA's to pilot the scheme. Staff embraced this opportunity and with support from Management 16 of our Social Workers are now accredited.

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