

SLOUGH CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD - Meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd September, 2009 at Connexions, High Street, Slough.

Present:-

Name	Representing
Clair Pyper (Chair)	Strategic Director of Education and Children's Services, SBC
Bill Alexander	Assistant Director, Raising Achievement, SBC
Rafiq Chohan	Assistant Director, Economic Development, SBC
Robin Crofts	Assistant Director, Inclusion, SBC
Jesal Dhokia	Slough Council for Voluntary Service
Cilla Dorman	Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals Trust
Janine Edwards	Homestart Slough/SCVS
Kate Ford	Thames Valley Police
Katherine Horler	Connexions Berkshire
Bob Jones	Slough Business Community Partnership
Dennis Kitchener	Senior Advisor, SBC
Rebecca Lacey	Berkshire East PCT Community Health Service
Jacqueline Laver	Slough Primary Heads
Jessi Loftus	Connexions Berkshire
Councillor Natasa Pantelic	Commissioner for Education and Children's Services
James Priestman	Head of Drugs and Community Safety, SBC
Peter Quinn	School Workforce Advisor, SBC
Jeff Richardson	Slough Secondary Heads
Jean Robertson	East Berkshire College
Flick Schofield	Interim Assistant Director, Children's Social Care, SBC
Mary Shannon	Business Manager CT/LSCB
Elaine Coleridge Smith	Independent Chair, Slough Local Safeguarding Children Board
Sandra Storey	Performance and Projects Manager, SBC
David White	Learning and Skills Council

Apologies for Absence:- Nadiya Ashraf, Judeline Nicholas, Karen Proctor, Shereen Sameresinghe and Jane Weller.

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12. Welcomes

Clair Pyper (CP) welcomed Elaine Coleridge-Smith, Flick Schofield, Councillor Natasa Pantelic and Jeff Richardson to their first meetings of the Board.

13. Chair's Opening Comments

CT Away Day – CP thanked all of those who had attended the Away Day on 15th September for their very valuable contributions. A large amount of information had been obtained which would help inform the Children and Young People's Plan and participants had been positive about being engaged in outcomes planning. The ownership and engagement of

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individuals not included within the Board's membership was particularly evident and welcomed.

Feedback from CT Executive Board – 10th September, 2009

– Noted.

Unannounced Ofsted Inspection – CP reported on the Ofsted unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in front line social work services which had taken place on 4th and 5th August. CT Board members considered the feedback letter, and CP stressed that the findings were not solely a matter for SBC but were of equal relevance to all partners involved in children's services. Ofsted's initial findings did not properly reflect the significant increase in the number of referrals and the rise in children with child protection plans. As a result of subsequent discussions with them, Ofsted had amended their view and had recognised the significant increase in their final letter.

One area for priority action had been identified - that in a significant number of cases seen, there was a delay in the completion of assessments and in the recording of key actions, such as, importantly, whether the child had been seen, and of the decision that had been made. This lack of evidence raised potential concerns for the welfare and safety of the children. CP informed CT Board members that an action plan was in place to address this, but increased caseloads had depleted the time available for social workers to carry out recording. The Council was already putting additional funding into recruiting new social workers although this was against a background of a national shortage in social workers.

Five areas for development had been identified as follows:-

- Capacity within the service is not sufficient to ensure a responsive and robust assessment and support service for children in need. Caseloads are often excessive.
- Chronologies and genograms are not routinely maintained on files - this was an electronic recording problem which has been addressed.
- Some managers do not have access on the electronic recording system to the full range of information that they need in order to ensure that cases are being managed efficiently – this was addressed on the day that it was identified.
- Participation of children and young people in child protection conferences is low. Availability of social workers' reports for parents in advance for initial child protection conference has reduced, making it more difficult for families to contribute effectively when they

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	<p>attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Supervision does not always occur regularly and evidence of management direction on case files is often not visible – an audit of this area had been undertaken in March and the issue was now being addressed.	
	<p>Following the inspection, immediate action was taken on managers' access to the electronic recording system. CP was following up the comment on supervision with Ofsted who were unable to evidence their statement with specific details.</p>	
	<p>Action plans had been drawn up to address the issues identified in capacity and participation.</p>	
	<p>Reference was also made to the strengths identified in the inspection with the comments about good partnership working and services across the partnerships being particularly welcomed.</p>	
	<p>JL asked whether a decision had been taken that social workers should no longer attend multi-agency meetings. CP understood that their attendance had been withdrawn due to high caseloads but she will discuss this with FS and Karl Davis and let JL know. CP stressed that other professionals present at the multi-agency meetings would need to refer concerns about safeguarding to front line social care.</p>	<p>Clair Pyper/ Flick Schofield to discuss with Karl Davis</p>
	<p>The new Ofsted regime also included announced inspections of safeguarding and looked after children. A small number of local authorities had already been inspected, and Slough would be at some point within the three year cycle. FS commented that it was important that preparation work was done for the announced inspection so that the authority was fully prepared and had carried out any necessary self-assessment and improvement work. It would also be necessary to ensure that those areas identified in the unannounced inspection were fully followed up. A report would be made to the next CT Board meeting on the preparations for the announced inspection.</p>	<p>Clair Pyper/ Flick Schofield. Mary Shannon to agenda plan</p>
	<p>It was also noted that far more partner agencies would be involved in the announced inspection and the project plan would outline what was expected of them.</p>	<p>All to note</p>
	<p>In respect of social worker capacity, CT Board members discussed how children, young people and families could be offered services through other agencies when their needs were not assessed at the threshold for social care intervention, and the contribution of multi-agency locality working to support for vulnerable families.</p>	

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In response to a question, CP advised that there were approximately 46 social workers employed to work with children. Lord Laming had recommended no more than 18 cases per social worker but the current situation in Slough was that each social worker had between 26 and 30 cases. Additional funding had been made available to recruit the equivalent of five newly qualified social workers although those recruited to date were being inducted before they were ready to take on a full workload. There was regular turnover within the service, resulting in a continuing need to recruit.

RL referred to the difficulties which the PCT was having in respect of its health visitor capacity. A recent survey showed that the number of health visitors in Berkshire East was amongst the lowest in England and the matter was on the agenda as a priority area for the coming year although the PCT faced extreme financial pressures.

Commissioner for Education and Children's Services

CP advised the meeting that Councillor Natasa Pantelic had recently been appointed to the Council's Cabinet with responsibility for Education and Children's Services.

14. Review of Outcomes Plans from Outcomes Leads, including Updates from CT Away Day

CP referred to the work undertaken at the Away Day on 15th September, with particular reference to the aim of engaging and informing the wider audience of the Outcomes Plans and seeking their contributions and suggestions. The Outcomes Leads had looked at their key areas, the actions required to achieve them and the work that needed to be undertaken over the coming year. She asked each of the Outcomes Leads to update the meeting.

CP reminded the meeting that whatever actions were included within the plans, they needed to make a measurable impact for children, young people and their families.

Achieve Economic Well-being

RCh reported that a great deal of additional information had been obtained from the Away Day but advised that the high level actions already included were appropriate. The plan needed to take into account the increase in young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). East Berkshire College and the schools were taking in unfunded additional young people to ensure that they have continuing opportunities in education and employment. RCh suggested further work with

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	<p>employers and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Particular reference was made to the recent reduction in the number of places available for young people between the ages of 16 and 18 on apprenticeship schemes and the low level of job vacancies.</p>	All partners to action
	<p><u>Enjoy and Achieve</u></p> <p>BA reported that the plan had been refreshed and he was currently working through the output received from the Away Day. He was working closely with those schools which might be judged as satisfactory in the future and a key stage 2 group has been established.</p> <p>School attendance had been identified as being a particular issue in the primary sector with Slough in the bottom quartile nationally and this was a critical issue for all partners who had been asked to ensure that their organisations did whatever they could to stress to parents how important it is that their children attend school.</p>	All partners to action
	<p><u>Make a Positive Contribution</u></p> <p>RC reported that the top level plan is being updated following the Away Day although he proposed to keep it as simple as possible. He was planning to develop a list of the various activities connected with this outcome and would be calling a meeting shortly focused on identifying planning and activities across the outcomes.</p>	
	<p><u>Be Healthy</u></p> <p>CP reported on behalf of NA that some additional outcomes had been included because of issues that had arisen since the plan was first prepared including Vitamin D deficiency and poor levels of oral health in Slough. NA to distribute the updated plan.</p>	Nadiya Ashraf
	<p><u>Stay Safe</u></p> <p>CP reported that FS and EC-S would be taking over as Leads from Nicky Rayner who had updated the Plan as far as possible before she left the authority.</p> <p>CP stressed that the Leads were not responsible for delivering all of the outcomes in the Plans but it was up to both the Leads and all members of the Board to ensure that they were aware of their own responsibilities or those of their organisations for picking up the various actions required.</p>	All partners to action

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	Once all of the plans had been updated, they would be put on the website and circulated to all Board members.	Mary Shannon
15. Reports on Key Areas		
	<u>Performance</u>	
	SS updated the meeting on the performance report as circulated with the agenda.	
	On NI 72 (Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication) results had improved overall, although in one area the target had not been met. With regard to NI 92 (Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest) the situation was improving.	
	SS referred to a letter received from Ofsted stating that they would be taking all new inspection information into account in their CAA submission. Recently received benchmarking information from Ofsted (Ofsted Local Authority Profile) was currently being analysed and would be sent to the Board.	Sandra Storey
	It was agreed that a detailed analysis of the data sets be presented to the next meeting in November.	Mary Shannon
	<u>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment</u>	
	RC made a presentation to the meeting on the JSNA, outlining the duty on local authorities and PCTs to undertake this exercise to identify the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the local population. This would be used as part of the assessment made under the Comprehensive Area Assessment and all partners have a contribution to make. The JSNA was developing year on year and children's needs were better represented in the current document. It would increasingly be used as the basis for planning delivery of services.	
	<u>Commissioning Update</u>	
	RC updated the meeting on the current position advising that the Commissioning Sub-group had re-started and Sure Start funding was being utilised to fund ten parcels of commissioning which would be going out to tender shortly. Commissioning needs to take a higher profile in Slough and in comparison to other local authorities who have their own commissioning units, Slough had a very limited capacity. It was therefore important that partners were involved in creating the capacity required in	Robin Crofts

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	Slough to give commissioning a higher profile.	
	Slough was receiving the benefit of 20 days support through the DCSF national commissioning support programme and this would include a self analysis exercise and a planning programme which would need to be discussed at the next CT Board meeting in November.	
	RC to circulate the documents to Board members and report back at the next meeting on the current position.	Robin Crofts. Mary Shannon to agenda plan
	JL asked for clarification as to whether any commissioning had yet taken place and was advised that to date the commissioning had been in Sure Start and parenting and that further areas based on the Children's Trust priorities would be agreed through the Commissioning Group.	

Children's Workforce Development Sub-Group

Dennis Kitchener and Peter Quinn updated the meeting on the current position as set out in the circulated report.

With regard to the induction programme, it was suggested that it would be helpful to circulate something for all Board members explaining the induction levels and content.

Dennis
Kitchener to
circulate

Update on Locality Working

CP advised that the previous proposals for locality working were not sustainable within the budget and therefore the emphasis would be on utilising the existing facilities such as the Children's Centres, extended schools and the youth services co-ordinated by Council staff. The Board would be kept updated on progress.

Clair Pyper
Mary Shannon

KF commented that this approach tied in well with the Police's neighbourhood approach.

16. Items for Update and Information

Increase in Child Protection Numbers

CP reminded all members that she had reported at the last meeting on the large increase in child protection numbers and had asked all partners to provide information about the effect this was having on their services as she was due to report to the Local Strategic Partnership on 29th September. While CP had received a comprehensive update from RL re the effect on the PCT provider services, most partners had not provided the information requested. CP emphasised the importance of

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	providing hard evidence of the impact the rise in child protection numbers is having, whether anecdotal or factual.	
	KF stated that whilst she had police information relating to Berkshire East it was not broken down any further. There was a peak of referrals in East Berkshire during January but it had dropped back since. KF undertook to ask colleagues to disaggregate the information and pass it to CP by the 29 th . She commented that the police had already recognised that they had not had enough police officers in the Child Abuse Unit so numbers had been increased.	Kate Ford
	No information had been forthcoming from the Hospitals Trust and CD undertook to pursue this urgently.	Cilla Dorman
	All partners to urgently provide information to CP by 29 th September.	All partners to action urgently

Family Intervention Project

JP reported on the FIP which is funded by the DCSF and managed through the Drugs and Community Safety Team. It aimed to work with the most disadvantaged families and reduce offending amongst young people and would operate on referrals from the Integrated Offender Management system. It was targeted at serious persistent offenders involved in such activities as anti-social behaviour and vehicle crime. It would involve drawing up a contract on standards of behaviour with the family.

CP requested that the CT was more fully informed about FIP to know about the project and how to link with it as well as receiving updates on how successful it was proving. JP undertook to circulate details and report back on its success.

James
Priestman.
Mary Shannon

Take-up of School Lunches

BA reported that this indicator was in the lowest quartile and he was addressing this through the Be Healthy Plan.

Bill Alexander

Increase in the Number of Unemployed between 16-25

RCh and JR reported. JR commented that the College was taking on additional students to keep the number of NEETs down and this was putting the college retention figures at risk. Schools were in a similar position with sixth form numbers. JL was setting up a 16-25 group to look at practical steps to engage young people in employment and training, and would be inviting partners to attend or contribute to the plans.

All partners to
action

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17. Next Meeting

CP advised that she would not be present at the next meeting taking place on 24th November. The meeting will be chaired by a colleague acting as Director of Children's Services.

(The meeting opened at 11.00 a.m. and closed at 1.05 p.m.)