

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: CYP Scrutiny

Date: 9th October 2018

Report of: Glynis Williams Acting Director of Safeguarding

Report Title

Child protection plans- performance summary

Summary

There are three areas of performance that we monitor to ensure we are adequately safeguarding child. Firstly the number of children on child protection plans, ensuring this is in keeping with our statistical neighbours, secondly monitoring if children re-enter child protection for second or subsequent periods, and thirdly when they remain on plans for a longer period of time (over 2 years).

The number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP), has been generally steady this reporting year, in fact back to March 2017. We have reported monthly figures in the range +/- 4% of 250 from that point until August this year, where the number 'spiked' to 275, but has since returned to a level within the range we have been reporting.

The proportion of the cohort with a second / subsequent CP Plan is at 25.5%, equating to 70 children and young people. Whilst not the highest proportion this recording year, it has been generally higher this year than that recorded at the corresponding times last year.

With regard to child protection re-plans, we ended the year to March 2018 with 29% of plans that started in the year being a second or subsequent episode. At the time of writing, this is little changed so far this year (end of August) with 27% being a second or subsequent plan. This equates to 30 of the 112 CP plans that have started this year.

Q1 had shown significant improvement, being below 20%, but there have been 21 re-plans in the last two months and this has significantly negatively impacted this measure.

Our proportion of re-plans is therefore higher this year than the latest available figure (2016/17) for both statistical neighbours (20%) and the national average (19%).

The impact of this on children and their families is that they are potentially being supported at a more intense and intrusive level than they require. It can also be confusing for families to "bounce around" the thresholds of intervention (e.g. from child protection to child in need and back into child protection) and this can at times make sustaining positive working relationships more difficult.

Whilst we should be reassured that we are protecting the most vulnerable children in

Trafford we need to be confident that we are working at the most appropriate level and that our families are not becoming overly reliant on statutory services.

Working with families at CP level is time and resource-consuming to Trafford Council and our partner agencies. We need to ensure in future that when CP plans are ended there is a robust multi agency child in need plan in place to lessen the risk of future child protection concerns. The number of re-plans suggests that the current system is not working in the most effective and efficient manner.

The length of CP plans: both current, and those closing. We currently have 6.5% of plans that have been open 2 years+. It should also be noted that the proportion of CP closing that were open for 2 years + is 11%, approximately two times the proportion seen in statistical neighbours.

In terms of our wider plans to reduce CP numbers, length of time on a plan and number of re-plans, we believe that implementing a restorative approach will have a significant impact. There is evidence that this way of working leads to lower numbers of CP plans through a strength and asset based inclusive approach. In introducing a new model of practice, we aim to change the culture of referrals and escalation to rebalance the number of young people requiring social care services.

From 1st September 2018, our child protection conferences have been “restorative”. In preparation for this, physical changes were made to the environment to make it more inclusive and less threatening. Changes have also been made to assessment templates and correspondence to reflect a more restorative ethos. Early feedback from families is that this new way of working is less intimidating and they feel listened to. Professionals have commented that the new style of conferences is more strength-based and collaborative.

We have recently updated many features of our electronic case file recording system LCS (including the Child & Family Assessment, planning templates and introduced mandatory management oversight of assessments and plans) to reflect a more robust and restorative approach.

Our Independent Reviewing Officers and Service Managers are encouraging services to utilise professional thinking time to facilitate discussion where it is felt risks are not reducing as an alternative to escalating the concerns to ever higher levels of social care intervention.

We are in the process of refreshing and strengthening our Child in Need process as we feel that this area of work is not always treated with the same rigour as children in care or on child protection plans. Further down the threshold continuum, an Early Help Board, chaired by the DCS, has been established to create a cohesive vision for Early Help in Trafford.

In the short-term the outcome of pre-strategy meeting consultations must be shared with the Strategic Lead (Safeguarding and Front Door). By doing this we hope to be assured that a consistent threshold for child protection conferences is being applied.

We are going to meet with colleagues from Cheshire East who have a good performance record in this area to understand how they manage this issue and elicit any learning for Trafford.

Recommendation(s)

1. Child protection planning, in particular re-plans is one of two top priorities for children’s social care this quarter. It will receive a sharp focus from managers and leaders to address the concerns.
2. Domestic violence features heavily in reasons for a child protection plan and we need to understand what services and support we commission to target support to families.
3. I recommend that I return to the next children’s and young people’s scrutiny meeting to update you on progress.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers:

Implications

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	
Financial	
Legal Implications:	
Equality/Diversity Implications	
Sustainability Implications	
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	
Risk Management Implications	
Health and Safety Implications	