

# BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda Item

no. 7

**TO: CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE  
PANEL**

**DATE: 25 JANUARY 2011**

**RE: REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

## **Purpose**

To receive the report of the Review of Safeguarding Services for Vulnerable Children working group established by the Panel at its meeting on 15 June 2010.

## **Background**

The Panel had been made aware by officers of particular pressures faced by Children's Specialist Services, with an increase in referrals and in turn more Initial Assessments, together with a rise in the number of Child Protection Investigations and a corresponding increase in the number of Looked After Children (LAC) and Child Protection Plans. At the same time the workforce has become less experienced compounded by difficulty in recruiting experienced social workers. This led to there being a number of LAC and Children in Need children without an allocated social worker. It was apparent that established working methods were not delivering the required outcomes.

The Panel are asked to consider the final report and approve the recommendations for submission to Cabinet.

## **Recommendations**

**That**

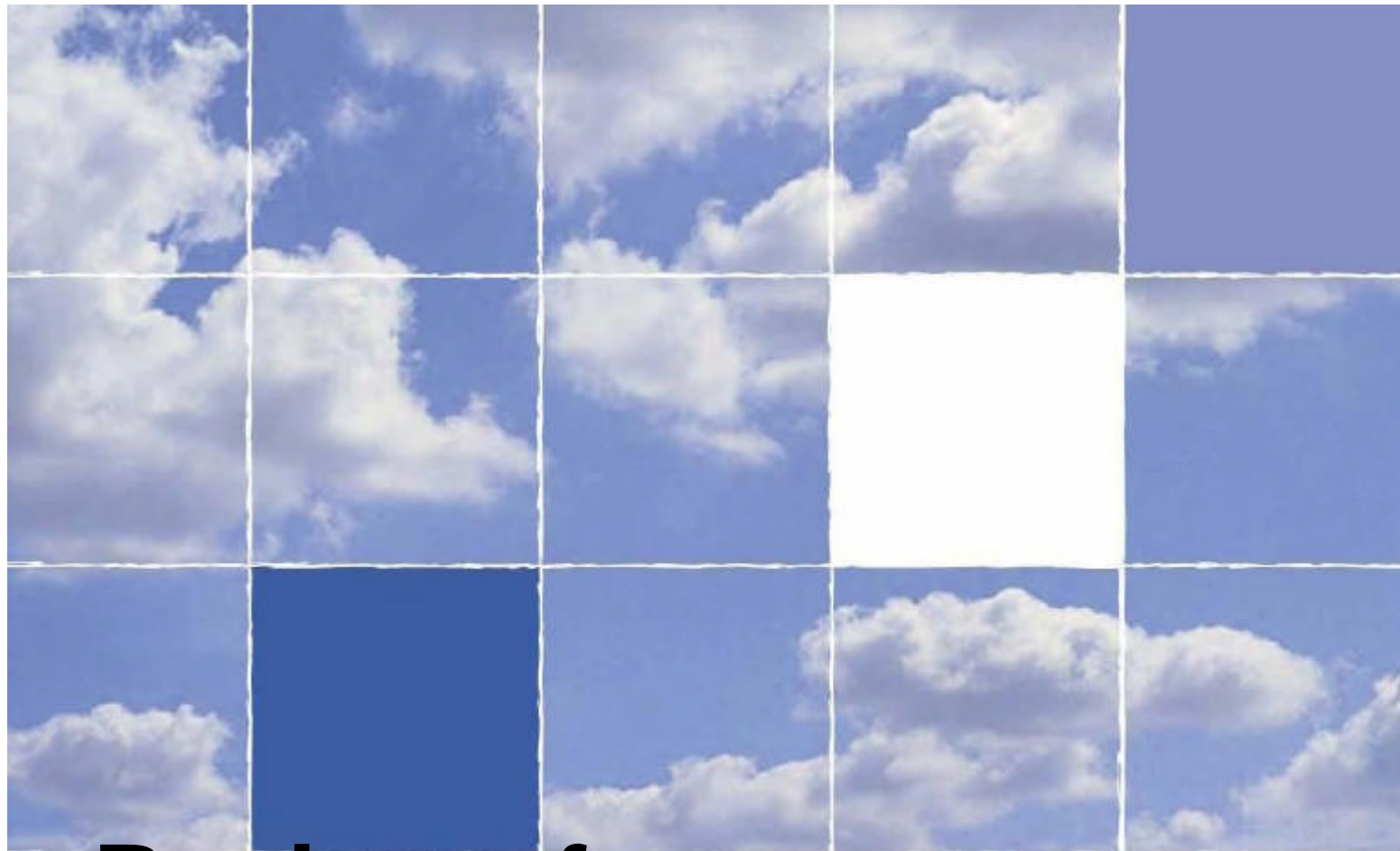
- 1. Children's and Young People Scrutiny & Performance Panel Members are identified on an annual basis to act as Leads as part of Children's Specialist Services visits and inspections activity;**
- 2. the role of Members as Corporate Parents is strengthened. This should include representation from each of the main political parties on the Corporate Parenting Board;**
- 3. Officers continue to Work Smarter, including the identification of the most effective methods for ensuring that social workers have manageable caseloads in support of the delivery of services;**
- 4. Officers continue to strengthen the risk assessment process and first line management provided to staff in support of the delivery of services.**

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# **Review of safeguarding services for vulnerable children**

**Report by the safeguarding services for  
vulnerable children working group**

**To be presented to the Children's & Young People  
Scrutiny Panel – 25 January 2011**



**Walsall Council**



## Chair's Foreword

The working group was established to consider a number of issues related to the safeguarding of vulnerable children by the council.

I would like to thank all those who have assisted the working group over the last few months including, the other members of the working group, officers from within Children's Services.



*Councillor Eddie Hughes  
Lead Member, safeguarding working group  
Chair, Children's & Young People and Inclusion Scrutiny  
and Performance Panel*



*Councillor  
Barbara Cassidy*



*Councillor Rose  
Martin*



*Councillor Doreen  
Shires*



*Councillor Alan Paul*



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## Introduction

In the July 2010 the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel were aware that there are particular pressures that have been placed on Children's Specialist Services, with an increase in referrals of 29.8%, 50% more Initial Assessments, 24% more Child Protection Investigations and a corresponding rise in the numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) to 508 and Child Protection Plans from 197 to 279 in March 2010. At the same time the workforce has become less experienced and it is very difficult to recruit experienced social workers. This led to there being a number of LAC and Children in Need children without an allocated social worker. It was apparent that established working methods were not delivering the required outcomes.

## Terms of Reference

The working group held an initial meeting to consider its terms of reference.

The agreed terms of reference were:

1. To input into the Working Smarter for Looked After and Vulnerable Children working draft. The aims of which are:
  - 1) Fewer children becoming Looked After or in need of a Child Protection Plan;
  - 2) Securing a confident, competent and stable workforce (including Learning and Development, Recruitment and Retention, Supervision and Leadership;
  - 3) Customer focussed Service Delivery Models (able to manage fluctuations in demand);
  - 4) Learning and continuous improvement;
  - 5) A demonstrably Economic and Effective Service.

## Membership

Councillor Eddie Hughes	Lead Member, <i>Conservative</i>
Councillor Barbara Cassidy	<i>Labour</i>
Councillor Doreen Shires	<i>Liberal Democrat</i>
Councillor Rose Martin	<i>Conservative</i>
Councillor Alan Paul	<i>Conservative</i>

The working group's investigation was assisted by a number of witnesses:

Michelle Whiting	Assistant Director for Children's Services
Colleen Male	Interim Head of Safeguarding
Sam McDonald	Operations Manager, Vulnerable Children
Anne Thompson	Head of Vulnerable Children

## Methodology

In order to complete their work the working group held three meetings between August and November 2010.

## Report Format

The report is a summary of the evidence the working group received along with comments and suggestions for future action.



# **Safeguarding in Walsall**

**The specialist children's social work service in Walsall is divided in to two parts:-**

## **1) Vulnerable Children's Services**

They are responsible for initial assessments on children for whom there are concerns. They may support universal and targeted services where children do not meet their criteria or sign post children into appropriate community provision. Where there are sufficient concerns children may be treated as Children in Need or they may warrant a child protection plan and in some cases may be Looked After.

If the plan is that a child is to remain Looked After beyond their second statutory review case, responsibility for the child will be placed with the Corporate Parenting team.

## **Looked After Children (LAC) Service at Walsall Council**

The working group heard that the LAC service was responsible for meeting the needs of all children and young people who are being looked after. This could mean children and young people in care homes, those who are waiting to be adopted and those who are waiting to go into foster care.

The LAC service is comprised of three Corporate Parenting social work teams based in Tameway Tower. The service is responsible for children subject to care orders, interim care orders and those voluntarily accommodated.

## **Supporting LAC & Care Plans**

All LAC are visited on regular basis. Officers explained that when appropriate these children will be seen alone to talk about their situation and their wishes and feelings.

Each child has a care plan and it is the LAC services responsibility to ensure that each child's or young persons care plan was followed. The working group heard that a care plan is a written report stating what support had been agreed for the child or young person. For example, this could mean assisting a child to become adopted or helping a child to become part of a foster family. It might also mean the provision of support to assist a child in staying with his or her parents.

The plans are reviewed every six months at a multiagency statutory review where related plans, including the personal education plan (Pep) the child's health plan and the placement plan are also considered. Children are encouraged to participate in the process and their views are taken into account.

## **Initial Assessment of Need (IA)**

The IA is an assessment to determine whether a child is a child in need, the nature of any services required, and whether a further, more detailed core assessment should be undertaken. The IA forms the basis for a child's plan if it is needed. The IA should be completed and signed off within 7 days. It is a key performance indicator (% of IAs completed within the 7 day timescale) as it gives an indication of how timely the service is in responding to assessing new children in need.

Officers explained that Walsall's percentage performance had dropped on this indicator to 50%. This was a direct result of the 40% increase in referrals over the last 12 months. In fact, the same number of IAs were completed within timescales, the issue was that the number of children requiring an initial assessment had risen considerably.

## **Protection Plans**

Officers explained children who have a child protection plan are considered to be in need of protection. This includes protection from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The plan will detail the main areas of concern, what action will be taken to reduce those concerns, how the child will be kept safe, and how the Child Protection Case Conference will determine if sufficient progress to protect the child is being made. The working group heard that in certain circumstances when other means of protection had been exhausted it might be necessary to protect children by the commencement of legal proceedings.

## **Looked After Children**

The working group heard that the main purpose of the service was to promote permanent care for children. If it is felt birth parents are unable or unsafe to care for their children the wider family is always the first consideration. If neither of these are a possibility the service will seek permanence through adoption or foster care. Where appropriate, children will be encouraged and supported to keep in contact with their parents and siblings.

A very small number of children (about 6 %) at any one time have needs that cannot be met in a family setting. Approximately half of these children are cared for in Walsall's own children's homes and the others in external residential care. The aim is always to work with the children to enable them to move back into a family situation at the earliest opportunity.

Officers explained that the overriding objective of the service is to make sure that LAC have the best chances in life. The service works in partnership with other agencies, including the health services and education in support of this aim.

# The delivery of Safeguarding services in Walsall

## Current pressures - August 2010

The working group heard that there were 141 Children in Need (CIN) who were unallocated. This meant that although they had met the threshold to have support services it had not been possible to allocate a social worker to their case. Difficulties were also experienced with increases in caseloads of social workers making it difficult to establish effective relationships with families to enable proper assessment.

- Officers explained that social workers caseloads were too high, It was felt that a reasonable case load was in the region of 22 cases for full time staff and 15 for part time staff. However, some social workers had case loads in excess of 50;
- The number of LAC is impacted by economic deprivation and is therefore likely to increase in difficult economic periods;
- the service has had to manage an increase in referrals, an increase in LAC and an increase in children with a protection plan;
- While social workers are motivated and committed to safeguarding in Walsall, pressures on staff have resulted in high levels of sickness. Staff shortages had resulted in £1.5m being spent on agency social workers last year

### *View of the working group*

The working group were concerned to hear of the previously high workload experienced by the most experienced social workers and the corresponding high sickness and absence levels. However, the group was pleased to note that sickness levels had been reduced from thirteen to four in the LAC service over the last year. In addition, all sickness is now effectively monitored using the Bradford Model. (The Bradford model is a robust tool used to monitor short and long term sickness absence via a clear process).

## The workforce

The workforce is less experienced than previously, with the majority of social workers having less than 2 years post-qualification experience. The service is able to recruit newly qualified social workers who are required to have a decreased case load and extra management support and training in their first year of practise.

## Recruitment & Retention

During the last five years only one experienced senior practitioner has been recruited externally. The working group heard that social workers and senior practitioners are able to earn up to £6,000 more for doing



the same job in neighbouring authorities. There were forty vacancies and significant difficulties remained in retaining social workers.

Officers explained that attracting those in education to opt for a career in social work did not present difficulties. In fact, since the Peter Connelly case there has been an increase in applications nationally (6%) to become social workers, with applications in Walsall slightly higher (7%). However, the challenge faced by the service is that because of the lack of experienced practitioners the few that there are are under pressure because they are constantly responsible for cases which cannot be allocated to newly qualified social workers. As a consequence of these pressures experienced staff often choose to leave.

The working group heard that at present there were fourteen newly qualified social workers. This meant that they had reduced workloads. The number of trainees will reduce to around six next year and this will ease some of the existing pressures on the service.

### **The Social Work Task Force**

Officers explained that the social work task force had made national recommendations for improving retention of social workers. This included providing a more structured career path for social workers to ensure greater stability within the work force.

### **Health & Safety of social workers**

The working group heard that for social workers certain types of behaviour from clients, such as verbal abuse, almost became part of the normal types of behaviour experienced. Social workers are trained to check for ways to exit a property and to ensure that they never allow an individual to be between them and an entrance/ exit door to a property.

Officers explained that an effective relationship had been established with the Police, who understood how vulnerable social workers can be in certain situations. For example, the Police now provide a fast response to incidents where social workers are at risk.

### **Paperwork/ Information Communication Systems**

The working group heard that significant streamlining of paperwork was required. It was clear that there is an issue nationally with the level of paperwork or computerised records completed by social workers, which in some instances could be undertaken by administrative staff. The Integrated computer system brought in to help standardise processes has been found nationally and locally to have increased time spent recording, with no discernable benefit for children.

Officers explained that the fostering team undertakes manual recording, whereas some front line teams do make use of electronic recording.



The working group heard that work has been undertaken into supporting practitioners electronically. This included a mobile technology pilot which enabled practitioners to undertake work e.g. write reports in settings other than the office.

The working group heard that in order to meet inspection findings the whole service needs to be computerised. The relaxation in the rules around ICS gives opportunities to make PARIS more practitioner friendly, while mobile working and use of administrators will be explored in the Smarter project as a way of maximising social work time.

### **Accommodation**

The working group heard that recent council-wide action to maximise the use of premises had impacted on service provision. For example, there was an absence of appropriate space for private meetings with children. There was also a need for secure storage space for case files.

### **Court proceedings**

The working group heard that courts are increasingly demanding independent assessments – with the costs borne by the council. This is also having the effect of delaying the completion of cases and creating a backlog. The working group observed that the lives of young children awaiting adoption are further disrupted by these delays and while they remain within the social work system place further pressure on services.

#### *View of the working group*

The working agreed that a wide-ranging set of issues and challenges had been identified that needed to be addressed to ensure that effective services were delivered in the borough.

### **Child Protection Plans: case study**

The working group received a case study which demonstrated the degree of complexity that can often be experienced. This case was in relation to a four year old girl and a seven year old boy who were living in a refuge in the borough. The initial difficulty for Walsall's children's services lay in determining which council was responsible for the case. This was as a result of the family having moved around different regions and being known to respective children's services in each locality. However, as the family now resided in Walsall the council accepted the case.

Social workers were concerned that the mother was displaying low levels of cognitive function and a referral to child protection was made. This would include making provision for health and education. A further concern expressed by social workers was that the 7 year-old boy might have been sexually abusing his 4 year-old sister. This prompted further investigation by experienced professionals trained to distinguish

between types of behaviour associated with normal development and more concerning behaviour.

The working group heard that Walsall Council, together with all other authorities within the Black Country have a contract and Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the National Society Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to assess this kind of case and the level of associated risk. Following a session with the NSPCC the boy disclosed sexual abuse of the sister. At that stage the level of overall concern relating to the family prompted the decision to remove the children.

#### *View of the working group*

The working group agreed that the case study demonstrated the difficulties faced by staff in complex cases. These difficulties are accentuated by having a workforce made up of a significant number of newly qualified social workers, together with the most senior social workers having no more than two to three years experience. The group challenged officers to provide reassurances that these issues were being addressed.

## **Identifying the right solutions**

### **Early intervention**

The working group agreed that it would be important to consider developments to upstream services which should contribute to preventing children entering the care system – particularly the early years prevention agenda.

Officers explained that Walsall's Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) had proved successful in identifying levels of domestic violence. Since 2007 there had been an increase in the number of referrals to children's social care for domestic abuse, with DART referrals almost doubling over between 2008/09 and 2009/10 from 4.5% to 8.7%. DART is composed of a number of specialist officers, including representatives from the Police and safeguarding. However, the success of this initiative creates further pressures on safeguarding services. Other public sector professionals, for example teachers, receive training using the Child Concern Model (CCM). The CCM is a focused early intervention (involving more than agency) information sharing platform to discuss and identify additional need, jointly with parent/ carer and the young person, where age appropriate.

### **Innovative practice: The London Borough of Hackney Council Model**

The working group heard that the model of practice for safeguarding services developed by Hackney Council had proved successful. However, the spend per child is significantly higher than the spend per child in Walsall. Key aspects of the Hackney model included small, highly supervised teams working in an intensive way with families. The borough had decided on a Systemic Family approach and had a high

degree of support from Children and Adolescent Health Practitioners. The majority of the recording was undertaken by administrators.

### **Member role as Corporate Parents**

The working group agreed that it was important for the role of Members as Corporate Parents to be highlighted. This would mean that in whichever capacity they were acting on behalf of local residents e.g. the delivery of leisure services, that they are conscious of their role as corporate parents and that the needs of the borough's children are reflected in decision making.

### **Other issues**

The working group was also keen for officers to progress work in relation to the development of career pathways to support the retention of experienced social workers so that Walsall became the council of choice in the West Midlands.


## **Delivering Improvements – November 2010**

### **Tackling caseloads**

The working group heard that in terms of managing the caseloads of social workers in the safeguarding and vulnerable children teams significant improvements have been made. This includes the provision of access to additional resources and increasing the capacity of some workers within the service. This has resulted in more time for social workers to concentrate on demanding cases, while non-specialist, but skilled and experienced staff are able to provide ongoing support for those LAC cases which are established and stable. Legal advice has been received and the staff involved, including family centre workers, possess NVQs, have significant experience and are particularly skilled at working with young children and families. However, in each LAC case, the children are given the option of speaking directly with a social worker whenever they choose. A key benefit of this approach is that individuals receive a much more consistent approach.

Officers explained that as a consequence there has been a significant reduction in average caseloads, which having previously ranged from 30– 55, were now around 21 -22. The working group observed that while still higher than the preferred number this represented a significant improvement. Non-social work qualified staff undertake initial assessments with proper support. This practise has been observed by OFSTED who were happy with the quality of assessment and levels of oversight given. The quality of services are maintained through support, including regular meetings with managers. This is supplemented through spot audits and other activity. All staff also receive training and participate in the setting of standards.

The working group heard that there is a slight risk given that technically each case should be assigned to a social worker. However, a number



of authorities have previously introduced the approach now being undertaken at Walsall and this seems to have been deemed acceptable by OFSTED with councils in some instances enjoying high performance ratings following review.

### **Identifying poor practice**

The working group heard that in terms of identifying poor working practices under the new strategy, no system would be without problems. In fact, the service would be just as vulnerable to this type of concern with agency social workers, where it is equally difficult to control the quality of services. However, it is anticipated that the new way of working will improve overall standards.

Officers were also confident that in those instances where services were dealing with more vulnerable children/ at risk children robust processes were in place. For example, the allocation decision is based on the overall position of all cases within a service. As, where possible, many cases are allocated to a permanent rather than temporary social workers.

### **Career pathways**

Senior officers and managers are developing a career pathway to help retain practitioners. This includes a reduced work load together with additional qualifications. A consultant social worker grade is also proposed which will enable very experienced practitioners remain in front line practise.

To retain experienced staff retention honorarium of £1,000 have been awarded to social workers with more than two years post-qualification experience. Clear job descriptions have also been developed to enable individuals to understand the various career paths available, these range from supervisory roles to consultant social worker. The working group observed that a structured career path would be important in the successful retention of staff.

A monthly review of the service's microsite is also undertaken with work to make the application process more straightforward carried out. Those who have visited the site are contacted to determine if they are interested in applying and temporary/ agency staff are asked whether they would wish to become permanent.

### **Supporting staff**

Officers explained that it was vital that effective support was provided for front line staff. Funding has been received from the Children's Taskforce and further ring-fenced funding is being committed to training, including financial assistance from the Children's Workforce Development Council which has supported the identification of gaps and improvement in the quality of services delivered. The working group heard that senior officers also ensure that managers have appropriate supervision skills. Supervision included direct observation and



monitoring. This ring fenced funding will mean that all team first line managers will receive the same training and thus ensure consistency of approach. Arrangements have been made to buy in the Tony Morrison supervision training which is specifically designed for those managing child protection work.

### **Risk assessments:**

It has been identified that the service needs to improve on its recording of risk assessments. A tool used by several authorities including Gateshead and Coventry called Signs of Safety is being introduced in February. This is a clear tool which can be easily understood by fellow professionals and the families themselves. It is very concrete and clear about the nature of concern and what needs to be done to mitigate those concerns. It is then agreed how the family will evidence that the source of concern has been reduced over time.

The children's charity Spurgeons have been contracted to work with teenagers at risk of becoming looked after and the successful Think Family pilot is being expanded to work with younger children at risk of care.

#### *The view of the working group*

The working group agreed that it would be important to ensure that risk assessments were child focused and set-out in a straightforward way what action needed to be taken to keep that child safe. The working group was relieved to hear that demonstrating effective writing skills was a key aspect of the assessment for new social worker recruits to the borough.

The working group agreed that the service needs the ability to keep children with their families. Discussions are underway with children's centres and the council's Integrated Young People's Support Services (IYPSS) to identify potential approaches to early interventions for when problems within families first become apparent.

### **Working smarter**

The working group heard that this year the service is currently forecasting a £2 million budget deficit. Action taken, as set out above, includes maximising the use of the resource offered by non-social worker staff, work to prevent the rise in LAC, as well as increased monitoring. The process will include working smarter and the stripping out of unnecessary activity and restructuring back office functions.

Officers explained that other key aspects of the service could be operated in conjunction with other council services. For example, the possible sharing of the Adult Social Care Access and Response Centre (ARC) resource.

## **Accommodation**

The working group heard that the working smarter approach had also been applied to the use of premises. This included senior officers working with the council's premises management service to address limited LACs/ vulnerable children interview room space through the re-arrangement of existing office space e.g. partition walls being moved. Space has also been established to enable 1:1 team meetings between supervisors and social.

## **Role for Members**

The working group considered a number of potential future roles for Members. For example:-

- 1) For each of the 5 children's homes to have a Member who has a copy of the homes annual Ofsted inspection report and visits twice a year to meet the children and staff;
- 2) One or two members to meet with a group of children placed out of borough on an annual basis ( recognising that this is a particularly vulnerable group of children);
- 3) To participate in an intense 1 day 'appreciative enquiry' event interviewing staff and service users to test out their experience of the service.

It was agreed that a structured approach should be used, for example, the use of pre-agreed questions during visits which would be triangulated and cover areas for action identified by previous inspections and audits.

## **Conclusion**

The working group agreed that safeguarding services for vulnerable children were critical to the success of the borough. They were satisfied to note the significant progress and developments made in a number of key areas during the life of the working group. They were also keen that officers remained innovative in delivering effective services in the context of increased demand and a challenging funding environment.

The working group identified a key potential role for Members, particularly as part of inspection activity and as corporate parents.

## Recommendations

That

1. **Children's and Young People Scrutiny & Performance Panel Members are identified on an annual basis to act as Leads as part of Children's Specialist Services visits and inspections activity;**
2. **the role of Members as Corporate Parents is strengthened. This should include representation from each of the main political parties on the Corporate Parenting Board;**
3. **Officers continue to Work Smarter, including the identification of the most effective methods for ensuring that social workers have manageable caseloads in support of the delivery of services;**
4. **Officers continue to strengthen the risk assessment process and first line management provided to staff in support of the delivery of services.**

<b>Work Group Name:</b>	Safeguarding Working Group
<b>Panel:</b>	
<b>Municipal Year:</b>	2010/2011
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor R Andrew
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Michelle Whiting
<b>Support Officer:</b>	Simon Corden
<b>Membership:</b>	<i>Councillor Eddie Hughes</i> <i>Lead Member, safeguarding working group</i> <i>Councillor Barbara Cassidy</i> <i>Councillor Doreen Shires</i> <i>Councillor Rose Martin</i> <i>Councillor Alan Paul</i>

<b>1.</b>	<b>Context</b>
	<p><b>Why has this work group been set up? Consider the main drivers behind it</b></p> <p>Members are aware that there are particular pressures that have been placed on the Children's social work service with an increase in referrals of 29.8% - 50% more Initial Assessments, 24% more Child Abuse Investigations and corresponding rise in the numbers of Looked After Children to 508 and Child Protection Plans from 197 to 279 in March 2010. At the same time the workforce has become less experienced and it is very difficult to recruit experienced social workers. This led to a number of LAC and Children in Need children without an allocated social worker. It was apparent that established working methods were not delivering the required outcomes.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
	<p><b>What do you want it to achieve? It is important to have clearly defined outcomes at the start to give the working group direction and ensure it adds value.</b></p> <p>2. To input into the Working Smarter for Looked After and Vulnerable Children working draft. Aims of which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Less children become Looked after or need a Child Protection Plan;</li> <li>2) Securing a confident, competent and stable workforce (includes Learning and Development, Recruitment and Retention, Supervision and Leadership);</li> <li>3) Customer focussed Service Delivery Models (able to manage fluctuation in demand);</li> <li>4) Learning and continuous improvement;</li> <li>5) A demonstrably Economic and Effective Service.</li> </ol>

<b>3.</b>	<b>Scope</b>
	<p>What should be included and excluded?</p> <p><u>Included</u></p> <p>Social work services High level targeted services aimed at preventing care or child protection</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Equalities Implications</b>
	<p>There is a legal and moral obligation to ensure that, when undertaking a scrutiny review, the impact of policies; procedures; strategies and activities is considered within the 6 strands of equality (Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion or Belief, and Sexual Orientation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the working group consult with each of these six groups regarding this review and its outcomes?</li> <li>• If an EIA has been carried out for this service\policy then what were its outcomes? Can this be mapped into the review? If no EIA has been carried out by the service is one required and can this be reported to the working group?</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Who else will you want to take part?</b>
	<p>Think about who else, other than lead officers and members, it would be useful to include either as part of the working group or to bring information at specific points. For example- partners, stakeholders, other authorities.</p> <p>The Project Board, service users, Practitioners and experts as appropriate.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Timescales &amp; Reporting Schedule</b>
	<p>Needs to be completed within the same municipal year and so should be able to report to full panel by the last meeting at the latest but consider the subject- is there anything else that it may need to tie into (e.g. academic or financial year or to coincide with national/sub-regional developments)</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Risk factors</b>

Are there any obstacles that can be predicted? For example, is it dependent on other organisations outside your control and duty to cooperate? Identifying these factors early and how they will be mitigated should help minimise their impact.

Risk	Likelihood	Measure to Resolve
Managing current operations	May slow change process	
Increase in referrals or decrease in experienced staff		