

Additional Paper – Item 6

Agenda

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 22 November 2016, 2.00 pm
County Hall, Worcester

All County Councillors are invited to attend and participate

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বাংলা। আপনি যদি এই দলিলের বিষয়বস্তু বুঝতে না পারেন এবং আপনার জন্য অনুবাদ করার মত পরিচিত কেউ না থাকলে, অনুগ্রহ করে সাহায্যের জন্য 01905 765765 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন। (Bengali)

廣東話。如果您對本文檔內容有任何不解之處並且沒有人能夠對此問題做出解釋，請撥打 01905 765765 尋求幫助。 (Cantonese)

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Türkçe. Bu dokümanın içeriğini anlayamazsanız veya dokümanı sizin için tercüme edebilecek birisine ulaşamıyorsanız, lütfen yardım için 01905 765765 numaralı telefonu arayınız. (Turkish)

اردو۔ اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی مضمولات کو سمجھنے سے قاصر ہیں اور کسی ایسے شخص تک آپ کی رسائی نہیں ہے جو آپ کے لئے اس کا ترجمہ کر سکے تو، براہ کرم مدد کے لئے 01905 765765 پر رابطہ کریں۔ (Urdu)

كوردی سۆزانی. نەگەر نەتوانی تێبیگی له ناوچەزکی نەم بەلگهیە و دەستت بە هیچ کەس نەگات کە و ههیهگێزێتۆه بۆت، تکلێه تەلفۆن بکە بۆ ژمارە 01905 765765 و داوای رێنۆینی بکە. (Kurdish)

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਨ ਸਮਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ 01905 765765 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ। (Punjabi)

DISCLOSING INTERESTS

There are now 2 types of interests:
'Disclosable pecuniary interests' and **'other disclosable interests'**

WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3rd party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
 - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
- You must **declare** them at a particular meeting where:
You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have a **pecuniary interest** in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests OR** relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorded' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
 - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 22 November 2016, 2.00 pm, County Hall, Worcester

Membership

Councillors:

Ms L R Duffy (Chairman), Mrs F M Oborski (Vice Chairman), Mr R W Banks, Mr P Denham, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mr I Hopwood and Mr J W R Thomas

Co-opted Church Representatives (for education matters)

Bryan Allbut (Church of England)

Parent Governor Representatives (for education matters)

Ms C Richardson (Parent Governor) and Vacancy

Agenda

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Agenda produced and published by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. To obtain further information or hard copies of this agenda, please contact Alyson Grice 01905 844962/Samantha Morris 01905 844963 email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website [here](#)

Date of Issue: Monday, 14 November 2016

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

22 NOVEMBER 2016

CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE: SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE UPDATE

Summary

1. In August 2016, the Panel received a report from the Chairman of the Worcestershire Children's Safeguarding Board. This report concluded that whilst improvements were being made the Board did not feel able to give assurance that child protection systems were sufficiently robust.
2. Effective and robust child protection and safeguarding practice relies on a range of interrelated activities led by the Local Authority (LA) Children's Social Work service and implemented with the support of partners who have a duty and responsibility to support the LA to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
3. Work has been undertaken under the Service Improvement Plan to address the concerns identified in our Internal Quality Assurance processes and in the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review 2015. Key developments are outlined below in the background section.

Background

4. Refreshed Thresholds Guidance was re-launched as Levels of Need Guidance on 4 July 2016. In recognition of the difficulties with thresholds as formulaic 'eligibility criteria,' the Levels of Need follow the Munro Review in emphasising the application of professional judgement and of conversations amongst partner agencies involved, including where appropriate the Social Workers in the Family Front Door (FFD). There has been a series of events and communications to partnership agencies between June and October reaching over 400 partners.
5. The new FFD came into effect 4 July 2016 and is currently subject to a three month review of Phase One. Contact with the Children's Services FFD is now made by telephone if concerns require immediate action, or by the online Cause for Concern Notification form.
6. For professionals, we now have a dedicated cause for concern professional portal for them to both register their cause for concerns forms and check details of children open to Children's Social Care.
7. In line with development of the FFD, Phase One of the Locality Safeguarding Teams re-design began with a large scale review of case work to address drift and delay in plans for children. This work is informing our final organisational design.

8. There has been service development in performance information and practice standards for social workers. Standards relating to the process and timeliness of practice have been completed and there is now consistent performance management in place throughout the levels of management.

9. Work is progressing to address the quality of practice and learning and development needs of the organisation.

Updated Assurance

Effectiveness of Early Help

10. Worcestershire's Early Help offer is subject to review to ensure services are appropriately targeted at the most vulnerable children and hard to reach families. Work on this programme is summarised in Appendix A.

Family Front Door (FFD)

11. As part of the FFD Phase One evaluation, further developments have taken place to improve information sharing, understanding and application of thresholds:

- Development of the Concern Contact Form to identify concerns for the welfare of children in order that these can be identified without delay and be passed to the qualified Social Workers at the FFD for a decision on the most appropriate level of response.
- Implementation of a Referral Outcome letter to professionals that identifies the rationale and the determined level of need. This will give partners clear understanding of the rationale and promote a focused professional conversation using the level of need where there are any disputes in decision making attached at Appendix B.
- Review of the Domestic Abuse (DA) triage processes to include agreed descriptors of risk and a single record of outcome from triage for each agency attached at Appendix C.
- Apportionment of a dedicated Initial Screening and Contact Officer (ISCO) to manage DA notifications to schools to ensure they receive timely information and outcomes of all notification received and managed through the triage process. These developments have been communicated directly to all schools; a copy of the letter is attached at Appendix D.
- Development of a Single Social Work Assessment as opposed to Brief and Extended Assessments. This will reduce duplication and "stop start" social work.

Locality Safeguarding Services

12. A whole system approach has been adopted as we progress our back to basics Service Improvement Plan. The attached updated Service Improvement Plan on a page seeks to ensure each priority has a clear link to the Strategic plans of the Council and the priorities for operational delivery attached at Appendix E.

13. A priority in this work is to establish a stable and permanent workforce. A Workforce Strategic Board has been established and a dedicated social work

recruitment service for Children and Adults came into operation on 14 November 2016.

14. We have developed a new process for the authorisation of Legal Planning Meetings (LPM) and Care Proceedings to ensure there is a clear line of accountability for decision making and consistency in good practice processes. This will prevent drift and delays where children are subject to child protection plans are not achieving outcomes and where children in our care under S20 Voluntary Arrangements are not achieving permanency in a timely way.

15. We have developed new processes for the authorisation of children entering and those under s20 leaving the care system to ensure we have a clear evidence of rationale for how decisions have been made in the best interests of children and ensure we have clear accountability at each management level.

Conclusion

16. As a continuous learning organisation, continuous actions are being taken to improve our child protection and safeguarding systems, process and practices.

17. Our aim is to ensure vulnerable children and those at risk of harm, are identified in a timely way and achieve sustainable outcomes following interventions from early help or specialist safeguarding services.

18. Establishing a stable and permanent workforce who work to high standards for practice and clear lines of accountability is a foundation building block in our work to become an outstanding service. We are taking proactive action to address our weaknesses and build on our strengths.

19. We currently have the following in interim arrangements but will appoint to them on a permanent basis in December 2016:

- Principal Social Worker for standards and performance
- Dedicated Quality Assurance and Audit officer
- Legal Case Tracking Officer

20. There is still more to be done to achieve our aim.

21. The further developments will take into account the FFD Phase One evaluation, our service re-design plan and the findings of the Ofsted SIF inspection which took place 24 October 2016 – 17 November 2016.

Purpose of the Meeting

22. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- consider the information in the report
- determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny, and
- agree whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children, Families and Communities

Supporting Information

Appendix A - Worcestershire's Early Help Offer

Appendix B - Referral Outcome Notification Letter

Appendix C - EVODA – Responding to Domestic Abuse – Screening Tool

Appendix D - A copy of the letter sent to all schools regarding Apportionment of a dedicated Initial Screening and Contact Officer (ISCO) to manage DA notifications to schools

Appendix E - Updated Service Improvement Plan

Contact for the Report

Alyson Grice/Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Officers 01905 844962/844963

Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and Minutes of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 31 August 2016

All council agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website [here](#)

Worcestershire's 'Early Help' Offer

- Local Authority commissioned/provided early help offer (services with * are jointly commissioned with CCGs)

Service area	Lead Provider	Notes
0-19 Public Health Nursing	Worcestershire Health and Care Trust	The service is currently being re-focused to meet national statutory obligations and to target more support for those that need it most. It will meet the requirements of the national healthy child programme and includes school health nursing, health visiting and breast feeding services.
Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service*	Worcestershire Health and Care Trust	This is a new service and will form part of the 0-19 public health nursing service. It will also include an online service delivered by KOOOTH.
Parenting and Family Support (in place by 1 st December currently in transition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barnardo's (Wyre Forest) Redditch and Bromsgrove District Council Action for Children (South Worcs) 	Services are being re-focused to provide evidence-based parenting support that will be predominantly focused in areas of disadvantage along with prevention services that build community capacity. They will also deliver targeted family support and support to those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. The parenting and community capacity services will be integrated with 0-19 public health nursing and EWBB service as part of the Starting Well vision.
Targeted Family Support Across full range of provision capacity to support approx. 2000 families over a year.	As above and Worcestershire County Council (Stronger Families/Early Intervention Family Support) & ContinU Trust (Wyre Forest)	<p>Family support workers often work closely with social care and are the main users of early help assessments/plan. Services are being re-focused and re-targeted as part of the Connecting Families approach.</p> <p>Connecting Families Approach is beginning to provide case evidence and data to illustrate what gets in the way of early help and intervention. These are system blocks and barriers which we are attempting to solve through a more thorough partnership approach</p>
Young Carers Support	YSS	YSS are commissioned to support children and young people aged 7 to 25 years who help to look after a parent, guardian or sibling within their home. This includes caring for people who have issues with drugs or alcohol or have a mental health difficulty. Key service in working with the local authority to implement Young Carers pathway.
Community Short Breaks*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family based residential and 1:1 support workers Specialist holiday playschemes (schools & VCS) 	These services are commissioned to complement voluntary and community offer and are accessed following assessment and/or self-referral. They are provided in addition to specialist residential short breaks that are exclusively accessed after a social care assessment of need.
Positive Activities	Various district-based providers	Re-commissioned from April 2016 - March 2019 with a focus on prevention of NEET, improving emotional wellbeing and mental health and reducing anti-social behaviour

Service area	Lead Provider	Notes
Housing Support	Various providers	Re-design of services is taking place to prepare for funding reductions in April 2017. Current range of provision can be summarised in four bundles Bundle A - provision of support for 16-17 year olds living in specialised accommodation. Bundle B - provision of support for vulnerable 16-23 year olds, with children, living in specialised accommodation and with support needs to maintain a tenancy Bundle C - provision of support for vulnerable 18-23 year olds living in young people's accommodation and requiring support to maintain a tenancy Bundle D - provision of tenure neutral 'floating' support for vulnerable 18 – 23 year olds who need support to maintain a tenancy
Family Front Door	Worcestershire County Council	Single contact route into targeted and specialist support services for children and families covering both early help and social care thresholds. Service has been designed to focus on meeting need at the earliest stage with the community social worker role being crucial in the interface between universal, targeted and specialist services.
NEET Prevention	WCC and external teaching providers	Three main aspects to the service 1. Get ahead programme (aimed at year 11 students most at risk of becoming NEET) 2. Springboard (16-18yrs Re-Engagement Programme)) 3. 2 Counties (16-18 foundation learning programme)

- **Wider early help services**

These services are provided or commissioned by others including schools and the voluntary sector. Work is in progress to develop a virtual family front door that is able to share information about these services as well as provide access to a range of information, advice and guidance. Other work that is in development included the development of a schools toolkit for emotional health and wellbeing (see attached). The Early Help Assessment is still available for wider Early Help services to use to help agencies to work together.



REFERRAL OUTCOME NOTIFICATION – Worcestershire CHILDREN’S SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

Referrer’s name.....

Agency.....

.....

Child referred..... DOB:.....

Thank you for your recent contact.

Your referral has been considered alongside information held by Children’s social care and in line with the agreed SSCB levels of need. The following action will be taken as an outcome to your referral:

Level 1 Threshold - Universal

Key Features: Needs met within universal provision; May need limited help within setting to prevent needs arising; Children, young people and parents/carers can access these services directly

- 1. No further action will be taken but your referral is recorded for information only.

Level 2 Threshold – Children in Need of Early Help

Key Features: Requires additional support, usually within the setting; Needs are well established and can usually be met within identified resources; Children, young people and parents/carers can access these services using the EHAF assessment process

- 1. You continue to offer single agency support and you may consider completing an EHAF with the parent/carer and child/young person to identify what additional supports are needed.
- 2. An offer of early help needs to be made in the first instance and to support this a Social Worker will be in touch with you to progress this.

Level 3 Threshold – Children with complex needs

Key Features: Requires co-ordinated multi-agency response; Lead professional required; High level of unmet need

- 1. An offer of targeted early help needs to be made in the first instance and to support this child / family a COMPASS worker will be in touch with you to progress this.

- 2. Social work assessment (child in need)

Level 4 Threshold – Targeted - Children with acute specialist needs/child protection

Key Features: At risk of becoming, or has become, a child in care; Multi-agency plan failing; In need of a formal Child Protection Plan; Often poor co-operation

- 1. Social work assessment (child in need)

- 2. A strategy discussion/meeting was held and the following outcome was the result:
 - Social work assessment (child in need)

 - Child protection enquiries (child protection)

 - An offer of Early Help to be made to the family

 - Police only investigation (no action under taken by social care)

 - No further action for either police or social care

Where it has been decided that a social work assessment will be undertaken a Social worker from our Initial Safeguarding Teams will be in touch to discuss and agree your involvement in this assessment. If you do not receive contact you can call () to follow this up.

Thank you for your call, if dissatisfied with the outcome or require more specific rationale, please contact me

**Name:
Social Worker:**

FFD contact number is: 01905 822666

EDT contact number is: 019057 768020

EVODA

RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

SCREENING TOOL

The Home Office Definition of Domestic Violence: *Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: **psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional.***

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

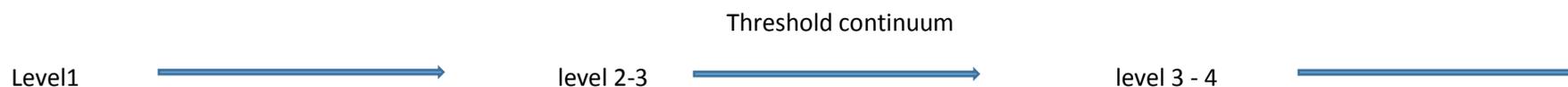
This screening tool is based on the **Barnardos' Domestic Violence Matrix**. The tool is an aid to reflect on thresholds of domestic abuse and when to consider a referral to Children's Social Care Services. It is not a comprehensive list of risk and protective factors but acts as guide of what may need to be considered when assessing potential levels of harm.

In addition to the specific risk indicators the following factors should also be taken into consideration when assessing risk.

- **Duration, Severity and Frequency** – When looking at potential harm from domestic abuse it is important to consider the duration of the abuse, the severity of the incident and the frequency of the abuse. A referral to Children’s Social Care services will be necessary if there is prolonged abuse (duration) though a single incident of abuse might be so severe that a referral to Children’s Social Care is required immediately. When considering frequency it is also important to be alert if the incidents are becoming more regular and escalating in harm.
- **Escalation of Harm** – This relates to when there is a noticeable increase in the frequency and/or severity of domestic abuse incidents and there is an increase in risk. In these circumstances consideration is to be given to making a referral to Children’s Social Care Services.
- **Toxic Trio** – Research from Serious Case Reviews (reviews of child deaths and serious injuries to children) indicates that there is an increased risk where there are elements of domestic abuse, mental illness and substance misuse. Particular attention needs to be paid where all three issues are evident within the family. A referral to Children Social Care services should be made.

Universal Services (low – universal services to lead)	Targeted Support (medium – targeted support to lead/respond)	Child in Need or in need of protection (high – refer to Children’s Social Care)
Intense Verbal Arguments.	History of minor/moderate incidents of domestic abuse.	Escalation in severity, frequency and/or duration of incidents
Evidence of low level harassment via texting or ‘Facebook’.	Evidence of intimidation/bullying behaviour e.g. pushing, low level texting, destruction of property.	Stalking and harassment behaviours.
	Risk of isolation/fixed gender roles/attempts to control behaviour.	Victim and/or children reporting that they are fearful of the abuser.
		Threats of serious harm and/or to kill the victim and/or child/ren.
		Child/ren are witness to the abuse.
		Child/ren become involved with the domestic abuse e.g. trying to protect the victim, abuser’s assistant and/or harmed during the incident.
		Evidence of coercive behaviours.

		Evidence of controlling behaviours.
		Reoccurring or frequent requests for police interventions.
		Victim has sustained injuries from the abuse.
		History of violence with current or previous partners.
		Criminal history of abuser.
		Violence towards pets/animals.
		Cultural – honour based violence, FGM or forced marriage.



RISK FACTORS	RISK FACTORS	RISK FACTORS
Potential to escalate.	Consider age of child/ren.	Increased Vulnerability of child – under 12 months of age and/or child with a disability.
Potential for cumulative harm.	Child/ren were present in the home.	Mental health issues of abuser and/or victim – increases risk.
Consider age of child/ren.	Potential likelihood of emotional abuse of children.	Substance misuse of abuser and/or victim – increases risk.
Cannot speak, read or write English and has uncertain immigration status in the UK.	Disability issues within the family.	Recent suicidal/homicidal intent by the abuser.
Is living in a close-knit community and puts high value on family honour including recognising faith or community leaders as all powerful.	Mental health issues – not prolonged or serious.	Separation increases the risk.
Is socially isolated, living in temporary accommodation and nil recourse to public funds.	Cannot speak, read or write English and has uncertain immigration status in the UK.	Victim minimises risk posed by abuser and impact on the children.

	Is living in a close-knit community and puts high value on family honour including recognising faith or community leaders as all powerful.	Threats or attempts to abduct the child/ren.
	Is socially isolated, living in temporary accommodation and nil recourse to public funds.	Isolation e.g. from friends, family and/or supportive agencies.
		Child/young person has been harmed or injured during domestic abuse incident.
		Abuser shows lack of empathy/insight into behaviour.
		Abuser breaches any protective orders or bail conditions in relation to the abuse.
		History of childhood abuse and/or exposure to domestic abuse for the abuser and/or victim.
		Victim and/or child/ren is a vulnerable adult e.g. has disability.
		Victim is pregnant (in some cases increases incidents of physical violence).
		Child contact where domestic abuse is occurring at contact e.g. physical or controlling/coercive behaviours.
		Children subject to a CP plan and/or history of Children Social Care services intervention.
		Other forms of child maltreatment present e.g. neglect, physical or child sexual assault.
		Cannot speak, read or write English and has uncertain immigration status in the UK.
		Is living in a close-knit and puts high value on family honour including recognising faith or community leaders as all powerful.
		Is socially isolated, living in temporary

		accommodation and nil recourse to public funds.
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PROTECTIVE FACTORS (which may reduce the levels of risk)	PROTECTIVE FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS
Child/Victim relationship is nurturing, protective and stable.	Child/Victim relationship is nurturing, protective and stable.	Victim will seek positive support from family, friends or community.
Abuser accepts responsibility for abuse.	Significant other in child's life offering a positive and nurturing relationship.	Victim attempts to use protective strategies eg injunctions.
Abuser indicates genuine remorse and is willing to seek support for behaviour.	Victim prepared to take advice on safety issues and/or engage with agencies.	Victim is engaging with supportive services and seeks safety advice.
There are positive supports from family/friends and community.	Victim has insight to the abuse and impact on the child/ren.	Child/ren have a nurturing relationship with the victim.
Victim sought or is willing to accept support from other agencies.	Victim has positive support from family/friends and community.	Victim demonstrates insight into impact on child/ren.
Is living in a close-knit community.	Abuser is willing to engage in services to address abusive behaviour.	Abuser acknowledges abuse, demonstrates insight to the impact of the child/ren and seeks assistance in changing behaviour.
Has support from faith or community leaders.	Is living in a close-knit community.	Is living in a close-knit community.
	Has support from faith or community leaders.	Has support from faith or community leaders.
	Older child/ren use coping/protective strategies.	Child/ren have a supportive and positive relationship with a significant other.

Please follow the link for the home office domestic violence site:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/violence-against-women-girls/domestic-violence/>

Please follow the link for CAADA DASH Risk Indicator Checklist:

http://www.caada.org.uk/marac/RIC_for_MARAC.html

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Tina Russell
Assistant Director Safeguarding
Services
Children's Social Care
 Children, Families & Communities
 County Hall
 Spetchley Road
 Worcester
 WR5 2NP

Ref :TR/SG

4th November 2016

Dear Head teacher,

I hope by now that you have had the opportunity to read my first two communications, the first one being sent on 7th October 2016 which was my introduction letter and my second one sent on 21st October 2016 regarding the interim arrangements for the replacement of Sally Mills, both of which are attached for your information if you have not received them as yet.

I am writing to you today to share some information with you on two further areas of business that I know have been of concern to yourselves. Firstly the information sharing between police, the local authority and schools where there has been a domestic abuse incident in the home of a child and secondly a development on the process for referring case of concern into the Family Front Door.

Management and Information Sharing on incidents of Domestic Abuse.

We have revised our domestic abuse triage processes in order to improve our ability to identify cases within standard, medium and high risk criteria and also to ensure that where cases are discussed at triage, there is a single record of the outcome of that discussion.

Attached for you is our criteria definitions chart. You will see that it identifies the types of cases that will be graded standard, medium and high risk. All standard incidents are recorded for information, Medium and High risk are presented to the daily triage meeting attended by a group of multi-agency professionals including health, probation, police and children's social care. Underneath each category there are some additional protective factors and risks factors that the triage meeting will take into consideration when coming to a final decision on the appropriate grading for the individual incident.

As you are aware, individual schools are not represented at the triage meetings. At this moment in time we manage between 80 and 100 medium and high risk domestic abuse incidents a week in triage and it would not be possible for us to liaise with individual schools on each one of those.

We have identified a dedicated information support office (ISCO) who will ensure that the notifications are shared directly with the schools if we have been able to identify a school that the child attends. The notification will include the detail for the incident, the assessed grade and for high and medium incidents will include information on actions agreed at triage.

Tel: • Fax: 01905 844524 • Minicom 01905 766359

Email: • DX 29941 Worcester 2

www.worcestershire.gov.uk

When you receive a notification, I ask that you review this against the information that you hold regarding the child and the family. If you are concerned that the grading given to the incident, in the context of the information you hold, is an inappropriate grading, and you have concerns for the welfare or the immediate safety of a child, please follow the Family Front Door referral procedures and complete the concerns contact form online, if it is an immediate concern for the safety of a child, call the Family Front Door on 01905 822666

If you are in agreement with the outcome of the decision the following processes apply:

Standard Grading : this will be information for you to retain on your records and schools, alongside the police, the local authority and health services will be able to retain this information enabling them to identify any patterns or a developing picture of concern for the child.

Medium / High Grading: If the outcome of the triage is that a social work assessment will be undertaken, or a strategy discussion undertaken, then you will be contacted as the responsible school to contribute to these processes.

Strategy Discussions

We have secured a telephone conferencing facility at all social care offices. If you are required to contribute to a strategy discussion we hope this facility will enable you to contribute more easily. We appreciate your flexibility in contributing to the strategy discussions. There is often relatively short notice of these discussions, and due to the volume and our requirement to undertake these meetings without delay, there is often very little flexibility in the time that the meeting can take place.

This new process will be in effect as of Monday 7th November 2016, and I hope that you experience quickly, an improvement in the information sharing on domestic abuse notifications.

The ISCO role is funded by the local authority and we will review how this works as a dedicated post to support the information sharing between the police, the local authority and education services.

Referrals to the FFD

We have also developed the initial concerns online form that you complete when making referrals. As you are aware the first three questions relate to identifying whether you as the referrer, have immediate concerns for the safety of a child. In order to support us to identify immediate concerns from non-immediate concerns for the welfare of a child, we have added two questions. Question 4 will ask you whether or not you have concerns for the welfare of a child that are not immediate safeguarding issues. Question 5 will ask if you are seeking advice and assistance on how to support a family with early help.

The community social workers role is to offer this advice and assistance to schools. If you have not been able to obtain this support and information from a community social worker, and have resorted to contacting the Family Front Door, please tick yes to Question 5.

We have also put I place an "outcome of referral" letter. This letter seeks to ensure all referrers are informed of the decision and how this has applied the Threshold Levels of Need. The new concerns contact form and referral letter are attached for your information.

I hope that you feel that we have listened to and taken action on the concerns that have been raised by schools. We continue to value the contribution you make to our assessments and our interventions with children.

In my short time here in Worcestershire, I have been able to review some excellent examples of schools supporting us, and I would like to pass on my thanks to you for your continued support.

As identified in my introductory letter I am keen to ensure that we can develop some local connections with me, but also with my Senior Group Managers. If you feel that you have a local network meeting that would be valuable for a manager to attend, please refer to my introductory letter and the contact details within.

Kind regards,



Tina Russell
Assistant Director – Safeguarding Services
Children's Social Care

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Children Services Planning Framework October 2016

Strategic Plans

<p>Our Vision: To ensure children in Worcestershire are happy, healthy and safe. We will do this by working with our partners, our communities and our families across the county. This is a golden thread priority through all our strategic plans.</p>		
<p>Worcestershire Future Fit 2013 - 2017 (Corporate Plan)</p>	<p>Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016 -2021 Health and Wellbeing Board</p>	<p>Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan 2015 -2018</p>
<p>Strategic Priority 2 : Children and Families</p> <p>2.1 Continue to make improvements to safeguarding</p> <p>2.2 Address causes of problems rather than the symptoms by strengthening our services to families at an early stage</p> <p>Indictors/Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of Families who can provide stable and loving homes for their children • The quality of our help and protection services • GSCE or equivalent attainment for the latest academic year with a focus on championing the needs of the most vulnerable • A-Level or equivalent attainment for latest academic year 	<p>Strategic Priority</p> <p>1: Improving mental health and well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School readiness: all children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception as a % of all eligible children by free school meal status. • Hospital admissions as a result of self-harm (10-24 years). • Referrals to Child and adolescent mental health services. <p>2. Increasing physical activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of children aged 4 - 5 classified as overweight or obese. • % of children aged 10 – 11 classified as overweight or obese. • Physical activity measures for children and young people <p>3.Reducing the harm caused by alcohol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol-specific hospital admission – under 18 year olds. 	<p>Strategic Priorities</p> <p>1. Robust core safeguarding practice, with a particular focus on domestic abuse, mental ill-health, substance abuse and all forms of exploitation</p> <p>1.1 Core Multi-agency child protection work</p> <p>1.2 Better provision for vulnerable children</p> <p>1.3 Healthy relationships/emotional resilience for CYP</p> <p>2. Effective partnership working</p> <p>2.1 Integrated Family front door development</p> <p>2.2 Effectiveness of multi-agency early help</p> <p>2.3 Learning results in positive practice changes</p> <p>3. Effective Board leadership</p> <p>3.1 Whole system leadership development</p> <p>3.2 Embed the board structure and monitor its effectiveness</p>

Worcestershire Children and Community Services Improvement Priorities 2016 – 2017

Our Aim: To ensure children, young people and families have access to early help and that for every child we become involved with, we make their lives better.

<p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an efficient family front door • Implement the back to basics safeguarding improvement plan • Improved placements and care provision for children and young people • Edge of care Strategy • Develop the medium term financial strategy including value for money decision making for placements • Implement effective workforce strategy • Redesign and refocus services for children with disabilities • Improve Educational Outcomes • Redesign and implement the prevention and intervention offer for children and families and implement the emotional wellbeing offer • Knowing ourselves and acting upon it (quality assurance) 	<p>Achieving our priorities through Back to basics Safeguarding Improvement Plan 2015 - 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting the gateway into children’s social care right. • Securing good quality and timely child protection and care planning to ensure children achieve permanence in care arrangements that enable them to be happy healthy and safe. • Building a confident and capable workforce - Investing in you so we are the employer of choice • Achive this at best value
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Safeguarding Improvement Plans

Workforce Strategy	Ensuring the conditions for good practice	Performance and Quality Assurance	Service user feedback Compliments & Complaints.	Family Front Door Thresholds and Assessments	Improving the quality of intervention for child in need of support or protection	Better outcomes for Children in Care	Voice of the child.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring we have the Capacity; Capability and the Corporate environment for our workforce to undertake their role efficiently and effectively Ensuring social workers have up to date policy, procedures, tools for assessment and standards to achieve high quality practice. Ensuring we have effective QA and Audit process in place to keep be a continual learning environments. Ensuring we have a fit for purpose SQA service to support and challenge the LA on the quality of its care and child protection planning Ensure we have useful management information and performance data to inform our service developments and measure the quality of our services 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting information sharing and joint decision making on risk and needs to ensure children get the right service at the right time to promote their happiness, healthiness and safety Ensuring we have high quality plans with regular review to monitor outcomes for children. Making their lives better. Ensuring children with disabilities and additional needs have coordinated planning 			
Lead Rebecca Windsor	Vel Kenny (PSW)	Brian / Tim / Neil ???	Di Brady					
Recruitment and retention of social workers.	Practice Standards Supervision ASYE support and development programme SW Practice Model	Performance Framework Data management QA and cases tracking Procedural and Policy Framework	Review internal process and standards for IRO/CP chairs	Sufficiency Strategy Virtual School Foster Placement Plus Permanency planning Health Assessments Missing in Education	Threshold MASH Missing Children CSE	Participation Advocacy , Children in Care Council	Legal Practice Standards Case Progression Tracking of PLO process Quality of Assessments Permanency Planning	

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