



Learning Together: Manager's Briefing

How do we know we are working together well to safeguard children & young people?

Network Meetings and Core Groups

One of the functions of the LSCB is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of both collective and individual agency arrangements for safeguarding children & young people and promoting their welfare

The focus of this multi-agency audit is to examine the effectiveness of multi-agency working through Network Meetings & Core Groups. It explores the areas of enquiry raised by members of the Monitoring & Evaluation Subcommittee including; agency attendance, agency reports, agency challenge, outcomes for the child and meeting minutes.

The lead officer for the audit is Tom Stibbs, Practice Development Lead, with support from Tina James, Quality Assurance Manager, BHCC.

The Network Meeting provides an opportunity for professionals involved with a family to come together not only to share information, but also to help determine the direction of a case and the Child In Need (ChIN) Plan for a child. Guidance on ChIN Plans and Network Meetings is provided in the BHCC Children's Services [Procedures Manual](#) in the Children In Need Practice Guidance Note for Social Work.

The Core Group is responsible for the formulation and implementation of the detailed Child Protection Plan, previously outlined at the conference. Statutory guidance contained within [Working Together 2015](#) and the [Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#) outlines the process and purpose of Core Group Meetings.

This short briefing is aimed at managers and designated leads who work with children and families in Brighton & Hove. It presents the key findings and recommendations from a recent **Network Meetings & Core Groups** multi agency audit. A full report is also available for professionals working in Brighton & Hove upon request. If you would like a copy of this report please contact us at LSCB@Brighton-hove.gov.uk

Methodology Altogether, 10 Network Meetings & 10 Core Groups were audited by professionals from the following services;

Children's Social Work
CAMHS

School Nursing
Probation

Health Visitors
Education Other Than At School Team (EOTAS)

Schools

In this audit, it was agreed that social workers would complete the audit themselves and discuss the findings with their practice manager. For this purpose, the audit tool included a section for practitioner reflection to be recorded. The audit terms of reference recommended that other agencies follow this approach which they did.

Parents were also spoken to as part of the audit and were asked to feedback about their experience of the meeting and support they have received from their social worker and other professionals.

The audit process consisted of two parts: **Part A** required auditors to individually audit records at a set time. A Network Meeting and Core Group audit tool was designed for this purpose. **Part B** brought the auditors together on an agreed date to feed back their findings and for the wider group to discuss and agree what the key learning and recommendations from the audit should be.

Overall Strengths



In the majority of cases meetings are held regularly and attendance at meetings by professionals is good



Multi agency planning is judged to be good in the majority of cases including communication and information sharing



The vast majority of ChIN Plans and CP Plans are SMART and in all but one case agencies are carrying out their agreed role as detailed in the plan.



Information sharing, honest and open discussion of the family situation including strengths and concerns



Parents being able to engage and have input at the meeting



Good attendance and multi-agency approach



The opportunity to discuss together a constructive way forward to support the family



Positive feedback from all agencies and advice given to mother to empower her to sustain the positive changes made

Recommendations to improve practice



The frequency of meetings should be specified in the Plan



Where appropriate, young people should be invited to attend the meeting



All actions should have a specific timeframe documented



Minutes should include a contingency plan



If practitioners are unable to attend a meeting, they should always be required to submit a report



Minutes of the meeting should be kept simple. The focus of the meeting should be on the child's plan with progress made/changes required recorded on the plan and updated



The ChIN/CP Plan to be amended to incorporate the views on progress etc from the Network/Core Group



A record of the meeting (whether this is minutes or an updated plan) should be recorded and circulated to members in a timely manner (within 2 weeks)



A letter to be sent to parents, thanking them for their involvement in the audit and inviting them to participate in a Parent's Advisory Group



The Brighton & Hove Procedures on Children in Need to be refreshed so that it sets out the process and purpose of Network Meetings and for this to be shared with professionals from other agencies.

Parent's Views:

Parents were also spoken to about their experience of the meeting and the support they have received from their social worker and other professionals. Read more [here](#)

The school was brilliant and the Young Carers Project is now involved which is excellent and all the professionals did their job

Health visitors communicate well with me and there is good communication between them and the social worker

You can give your point of view at the meeting.

The social worker is good at talking to my daughter

All of the professionals have worked well together

The social worker is excellent. She understands a family and is experienced

Feedback

As staff and frontline managers you will know about the quality and impact of your own services, and those of the partner agencies you work with. The LSCB Quality Assurance Framework highlights that it is important to the LSCB to have a constant feedback loop from the frontline to keep senior management and those with governance responsibilities 'reality-based'; not just in terms of what is or is not working, but to assist with ideas for improvement so that changes can be made systematically.

We would like to hear your thoughts, feedback and comments on findings presented to you in this briefing and any feedback on the style of the briefing itself, please do contact us at LSCB@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk to ensure your voice is heard.

Local Support

If you are Concerned about a child in Brighton & Hove call the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01273 290400

What Next?

The final report has been approved by the LSCB Monitoring & Evaluation Sub Committee on the 22nd July 2015 and the members will oversee the action plan.

Further Reading

[Pan Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures](#)

[Working Together 2015](#)

Training:

The LSCB's core multi-agency training courses include a focus on working together in network meetings and core groups. These courses are currently being updated and will be running again in the new year. View upcoming LSCB training at

www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk/events