

Devon Area Child Protection Committee

Minutes of a meeting

Held on Friday 22nd April 2005 at Crossmead Conference Centre

Present:

Anne Whiteley, Interim Director (Chair), Devon Children's Services
Chris Dimmelow, County Child Protection Manager, Devon Social Services Directorate
Mary Mitchell, Assistant Chief Officer, Devon & Cornwall Probation Service
Deborah Booth, Group Manager, Inclusion, Devon Local Education Authority
Helen Hyland, Designated Nurse, North & East/South & West Devon Health Community
Tony Sweeney, Assistant County Solicitor, Devon County Council
Derek Moore, Assistant Director, NCH
Carole Town, Clinical Psychologist, JACAT and CAMHS
Ann Morecraft, Designated Manager, North & East Devon Health Community
Debra Laphorne, Director of Public Health, South & West Health Community
Jane Richards, Portfolio Holder Child Protection, Devon Local Medical Community
Ann Wilson, Learning & Development Advisor, Human Resources Directorate
Juliet Hammacott, Acting P.E.W.O.
John Shaw, Joint Agency Manager, CSN
Charles Holmes, Designated Doctor, South & West Devon Health Community
Praveen Naidoo, Detective Sergeant, Devon & Cornwall Police
John Clements, Crime Manager, Devon & Cornwall Police
Dave Brander, South & West Devon BCU
Alison Kearnes, NSPCC Area Children Services Manager
Pat Clewer Devon Children's Services Division
Gillian Wall, Child Protection Administrator, (minute taker)

Apologies:

Martin Gladwin, Manager, CAF/CASS
Peter Walker, Principal Education Welfare Officer, Devon Local Education Authority
Madeleine Jackson, Senior Crown Prosecutor, Crown Prosecution Service
Laura Hubbard Fielder, Devon Partnership NHS Trust
Hazel Curtis, Designated Doctor, North and East Devon Health Community
D.I. Simon Snell, Devon & Cornwall Police
D.S. Bob Brown, Devon & Cornwall Police

1. Minutes Of 28th January 2005 and Matters Arising

NSPCC Representative – ACPC members congratulated Alison Kearnes on her new post and welcomed her to the meeting.

Special Interest GP's – Deborah Laphorne advised that Plymouth were unable to appoint a Named Doctor. However, a GP with Special Interest was now in post with clearly defined development targets.

Action:

- 1. Charles Holme to provide an update / evaluation of the new post in 6 months.**
- 2. Charles Holme to forward to Jane Richards, a copy of the special interest GP's job description for circulation during May's Child Protection Conference.**

121A's - The meeting was advised that no feedback was received to date.

Action: To be an Agenda Item with a formal update provided on or before the next ACPC Meeting

New Licensing Laws

Chris Dimmelow advised that although there had been a slow start, Devon County Council were now inundated with license applications. He added that no objections had been made to date. Anne Whiteley recommended that the process be kept under close review.

Common Assessment Framework

Anne Whiteley provided the following update:

- Further National Guidance had been received and a multi-agency Devon-wide Steering Group was being established to develop the strategic implementation in Devon. Invites were recently distributed to all agencies to provide partnership representation on the Steering Group.
- Maria Kasprzyk was moving this forward on behalf of the Local Authority and would keep ACPC regularly informed of progress and developments.
- The Common Assessment Framework was to be the key working tool across all agencies and would become the initial assessment for children and young people once in place.
- 2008 was the projected date for CAF to be up and running and its inception was expected to have enormous development and training implications.
- Further Guidance was expected.

Integrated Children's System

Anne Whiteley provided the following update:

- Electronic Social Care Records and the Integrated Children's System were expected to replace all the current documentation and recording methods of Social Services within Children's Services.
- The national requirements and timeframe for implementation was to be during 2005/06.
- National templates to be used, based on best practice, child development and National Framework of Assessment.
- There were significant implications for the working practices of staff and major changes were due to be managed this year.
- Maria Kasprzyk was also leading on this piece of work to ensure that it fits with the Common Assessment Framework.
- Regular updates to be made to ACPC

S.A.R.C.

Action: To be an Agenda Item with a formal update provided on or before the next ACPC Meeting

Ensuring Compliance with P.A.F.C 20

Chris Dimmelow advised that one of the threshold indicators for Children's Services was the timeliness of Child Protection and Looked After Children Reviews. The national target for C20 is 100% CP Reviews on time. Devon's performance was recently put under serious question following a couple of cases which missed the deadline by a matter of days. A lot of work had since been undertaken and with interagency cooperation there was 100% compliance in the last 2 quarters. A target had just been set requiring further 100% compliance for the remainder of the year.

The meeting discussed in detail the importance of professional attendance at review meetings, particularly given the future move towards a Safeguarding Board. Chris Dimmelow pointed out that unless meetings were quorate, important decisions eg. deregistration was not possible, leading to further issues for performance indicators of children being on the Register for too long. He added that a piece of work was currently being undertaken to ascertain the level of attendance at meetings and whether reports / apologies were received.

Action: Audit Findings to be fed back to agencies to look at how improvement can be achieved..

Chris Dimmelow raised the issue of decision making at Child Protection meetings and made it clear that Community Care Workers were not licensed to make decisions re: the content of Care Plans or crucial issues of registration.

Action: Chris Dimmelow to ensure that guidance is forwarded to District Offices.

Private Fostering

Anne Whiteley advised that the Executive Committee of the County Council had received and approved a report which set out core responsibilities in respect of Private Fostering. The next stage was to appoint 2 new posts within the fostering service; one which would be geared towards raising awareness of the key issues of Private Fostering and the other a specialist Social Worker responsible for undertaking assessments. Furthermore, the ACPC sub-group on Private Fostering is being convened by Alison Davis. The ACPC will report to The Children's Trust on performance with regard to Private Fostering under its new functions as a Safeguarding Board.

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Young Persons in Custody

The meeting was advised that young offenders from Devon were now sent to Ashfield in Bristol, a regional Youth Offenders Institute for under 18's. Mary Mitchell added that 18-21 year old offenders still went to Exeter Prison for a short period of remand before being sent on to other prisons.

Safeguarding Children - Child Contact with Prisoners

Work is continuing with all local prisons, the Probation Service and all Social Services on the peninsula to ensure a consistent and standardised response to requests for assessments. This work is being co-ordinated by the MAPPA Strategic Board. The ACPC will be kept informed of developments.

Sudden Infant Death Response Team

Charles Holme advised that clear guidance was still outstanding from DfES regarding the Screening Response Team Committee. There was debate amongst the meeting re: the LCSB's responsibility in respect of setting up and managing these Screening Committee and further discussions re: whether to set up a regional or local Response Teams.

Local Children's Safeguarding Boards

Anne Whiteley advised of a debate which was taking place in the far South West Region to take forward discussions re: setting up the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. She added that invites were being distributed amongst the various agencies for representation at that meeting.

Action: to be an agenda item for the next ACPC meeting

ACPC Communication / Local Practitioner's Forum

Chris Dimmelow advised that previous attempts to establish a local practitioner's forum had failed in South Devon given the fragmentation of that particular area. It was recommended that South and West Devon combine forces with Torbay and meet as one group and this to be welcomed.

All ACPC members sanctioned the cross border communication of ACPC Groups.

Learning from Serious Case Reviews – Training Suggestion

The meeting was advised that Charles Holme and Helen Hyland were analysing the recommendations from Part 8 Reviews with a view to identifying the areas of high risk which needed immediate action to be taken. Helen advised that the current focus was on Health across Plymouth and Torbay and that the work was going back over 10 years.

Action: Anne Whiteley and Chris Dimmelow to discuss how that same piece of work can be commissioned for Social Care.

ACPC Business Plan

Last years Business Plan was reviewed.

Anne Whiteley stressed the need for more robust arrangements being developed for monitoring and evaluating the impact of work being undertaken. She stated that the ACPC's move towards a Safeguarding Board necessitated even further the need for a more systematic approach to self assessments / evaluation, to measure the Committee's performance against the Business Plan.

Action: Chris Dimmelow to address

FGC Vision Statement Launch

Anne Whiteley recorded her appreciation and thanks for the work undertaken on the Family Group Conference Launch. She stated that it was an impressive event with an extremely powerful vision statement to support it.

LCSB'S Funding Proposals

Anne Whiteley advised that she would not be taking the proposals to the PCT Chief Executive in their existing format. She felt that further work needed to be undertaken in detailing the additional resources /funds needed to establish a Safeguarding Board. Furthermore, it was felt that modifications were needed in light of discussions re: training (ref: Report from the Training Sub Committee following).

Action: Chris Dimmelow to liaise with other local authorities (eg. Somerset / Cornwall) re: their completed work to date with setting up a Safeguarding Board.

Report from the Education Sub Committee

Juliet Hammacott presented the minutes from the Education Sub Group Committee.

CRB checks

Chris Dimmelow advised that following a recent physical assault on a child by a coach driver, a formal letter was being distributed to all head teachers reiterating the need for formal contracts being drawn up with coach companies in respect of the regular school services, as well as the one-off day trips.

Further concerns were raised regarding certain schools failing to recognise the need for such formal checks on Teaching Assistants as a direct result of the schools responding to pressures internally.

Action:

- **Chris Dimmelow to liaise with Jackie Hurd to organise internal distribution of the letter.**
- **Chris Dimmelow to liaise with Paul Edmonds re: addressing schools within the independent sector.**

Report from the Training Sub Committee

Ann Wilson presented and distributed the minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2005.

Ann shared a discussion from the Training Sub-Group meeting re: how to disseminate learning from a national level and bring it down to practitioner level.

Action: Jane Richards and Ann Wilson to work up proposals for feedback at the next ACPC meeting.

A proposal was put to the ACPC to eliminate the charges for Foundation Level Training this year in respect of Health Staff only on a 'quid pro quo' basis.

In light of the fact that the Health Community were negotiating free venues and resources towards the training. This in response to the endless paper trail of 'cross agency' invoicing and the high numbers of Health Staff requiring training.

Proposals received from Exeter PCT re 'terms of reference' for training sub-group – amendments made by ACPC.

Action: Anne to feedback to Miles – General agreement ‘except for local accountability for training which needs to rest with ACPC.

***Action: Anne Whiteley to take a report to the PCT Chief Executives re: funding of training / pooling of resources moving forward towards a LCSB.**

Ann Wilson circulated the leaflet re: Managers and Supervisor Conference in June. She reiterated that the aim of this was to explore the management of safeguarding children across the agencies and the role of Supervisors and Managers on a day to day basis.

Report from the Health Sub Committee

Ann Morecraft presented an overview of the meeting dated 15th April 2005.

The meeting was advised that Hazel Curtis had stepped down as ‘Designated Doctor’ and Charles Holme was acting as a ‘cover’ for Devon Plymouth and Torbay in the interim.

Stop it Now Campaign – Ms Morecraft advised of a presentation by the NSPCC re: Child Abuse and the ways in which they were trying to stop the process. Charles Holme was due to present his views to the Strategic Health Authority with respect to Child Abuse being considered as a public health issue. Further work was being undertaken re: establishing volunteer groups within the Devon area as there were considerable gaps in the South West area..

Action for Health Committee:

- **Report back to ACPC with further update.**
- **Proposal to the Strategic Health Authority re: ACPC’s involvement.**

Ann Morecraft advised of 4 further subgroups which had now been formed to address the following areas; Training, Record Keeping, Substance Misuse and Sexual Health.

6. Report of the Case Review Sub Committee

Case LB – Chris Dimmelow advised that he and Tony Sweeney attended the inquest and although the final outcome was that Luke took his own life, it was clear that his death could have been avoided with better co-ordination amongst the Agencies. Strong signals, which were reflected in KT’s overview report, indicated that there was a need to improve working relationships with the Partnership Trust in respect of Substance Misuse and how it impinges on Child Protection.

Case MG - Chris Dimmelow advised that Terms of Reference had been drawn up and Agencies were requested to undertake a Part 8 Review. Reports were

still outstanding from Devon Children Services and The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust.

Case LM - The outcome of considerable investigation had shown that there was no evidence of fault and the Case Review recommendation was that no further action be taken. Chris Dimmelow advised that there were still concerns re: the role LM's father played in his death, and advised that it was necessary for the appropriate notes to be recorded should he ever become a father again.

Case AP - Chris Dimmelow advised that a report had been submitted to the Crown Prosecution Services to determine if there was any culpability on the part of any agency involved. Decision from CPS was pending. Inquest still to be held.

Case LBU - Chris Dimmelow advised that Terms of Reference had been drawn up and Agencies were requested to undertake a Part 8 Review. Reports still outstanding from the Exeter Primary Care Trust. Inquest still to be held.

Concerns were raised re: LBU's older brother who was still believed to be living with his paternal grand parents. It was agreed that Connexions would be considered to try to engage LBU or his grand parents.

Case KT - Chris Dimmelow advised that he had attended KT's inquest on 20th April. The outcome was that there was no correlation to KT's death and her parent's chaotic drug use. Post Mortem tests had not identified any physical injury. There was no trace of methadone or any other elicit drugs that could have caused the death.

The completed Part 8 Review is now presented to this meeting for approval. It has identified issues with interagency communication and the action taken in this case. There was a need to immediately consider how agencies can work more effectively in the future and there was a strong need for better co-ordination of services around Drug and Alcohol misuse.

The meeting was advised that a number of recommendations had been made by various agencies, plus additional recommendations from the overview report which set out a very clear action plan in terms of the individual agencies. The next stage was to translate these recommendations into an action plan matrix, promote it amongst the individual agencies and bring back to ACPC forum to address the main theme of Substance Misuse.

The meeting discussed in detail the process and response times for the production of management reports, which had been highlighted as a major issue. Chris Dimmelow referred to the extensive guidance document which outlines how agencies should complete these report, however, it was agreed that there was a need for training asap.

Action:

- **Derek Moore to formally contact the Bridge Consultancy re: training requirements for completing part 8 reports.**
- **Chief Executives to provide comments within 2 weeks.**
- **Chris Dimmelow to forward report to CSCI.**
- **Anne Whiteley to discuss the development of these issues at her meeting with the Devon Partnership Trust Chief Executives.**

7. Statutory Guidance on making arrangements under section 11 of the Children Act 2004

Chris Dimmelow circulated an Executive Summary.

Action: Chris Dimmelow to provide an analysis of the guidance in terms of what it means for ACPC and its likely impact.

Implementation of LCSGB'S.

Anne Whiteley presented a summary of a letter distributed to all ACPC Chairs.

Action:

- **Sub group to be set up to discuss the development and implementation plan including full cost implications.**
- **All present agreed membership to include; Anne Whiteley, Chris Dimmelow, Helen Hyland and Deborah Booth.**
- **Alison Kearnes to provide an 'outside' contribution / input.**

8. Children and Young People's Plan – Consultation and Regulations and Guidance

Anne Whiteley advised that Guidance and Consultation papers had just been received from DfES, consultation date due to close 6th June 2005.

Ms Whiteley summarised, advising that the requirement was to have a single Child & Young Person's Plan for Devon which would be co-ordinated, developed and overseen by the Children's Trust. The overall plan subsumed a wide mixture of sub plans, 10 statutory and 7 non statutory, which would cover every aspect of children and young peoples' lives. She advised that there was strong emphasis in the guidance regarding direct participation from children, young people and their families.

9. Workforce Strategy

Anne Whiteley presented an overview of the Children's Workforce Strategy.

The meeting was advised that the Common Core Competencies were out for Consultation with the closing date being July.

Action:

- **Ann Morecroft to email all named professionals to alert them of the existence of these consultation documents.**
- **All to feed their comments to Anne Whiteley for incorporation into the consultation.**

10. Substance Misuse and Safeguarding

Pat Clewer presented an overview summary of the current work being developed.

He stated that recent studies /research had highlighted very clear links between Child Protection Safeguarding and Substance Misuse, and that developments within this area were being rolled out by Children's Services. Additional resources have been created within Social Services in order to provide a specialist Social Worker who can provide expert support in each locality. Furthermore, plans for Specialist Midwives within the RD&E were being developed as well as better working practices for with families and children with the families.

To support this further, in particular the new Social Worker posts, it was proposed that a County-wide Steering Group be established to oversee these initiatives and develop the work further. It was believed that this group should be the overall strategic co-ordinating body to ensure that work was well focussed and co-ordinated

Although funding from Devon Drug Action Team was not currently available to support and extend these initiatives, the potential for good working relationship between Child Protection Services and Substance Misuse agencies across the country would make for a successful bid for additional funds from DAT.

Pat Clewer concluded that this piece of work was a huge priority and it was important to secure some of the new funds coming into Devon Drug & Alcohol Team in 2006.

It was agreed that ACPC would support the bid to get substantial resources needed to roll out these initiatives.

Action:

- **Helen Hyland to advise the Health Sub Committee of Pat's ongoing work.**
- **Chris Dimmelow to be part of and co-ordinate setting up of the steering group**

Hidden Harm Conference – May 2005

Government publication which looks at all aspect of Substance Misuse and the impact it has on family life.

11. Domestic Violence Update

Chris Dimmelow presented the following overview of the current highlights of activity:

- The roll out of the REPAIR programme across the country in terms of an intervention service for men who haven't come through the criminal justice system.
- New offence under the Crime & Victim Act which was just put into force. This would look at resolving situations in Child Protection cases where both parents deny responsibility for the actions which led to death. Previously there was an inability to prosecute on the crime of murder, with the only charges being cruelty.
- Chris Dimmelow distribution information regarding the LGA and Home Office Conference on 15th June, 2005. He added that the cost for attendance as £195.

12. Any Other Business

Appalling treatment of Asylum Seekers:

- Charles provided an overview of a particularly ill treated Kurdistan family and asked that all ACPC members advise him of any similar cases.

Fixed Period Exclusions

- Deborah Booth updated the meeting re: LEA's new focus on fixed period exclusions in secondary schools

13. Next Meeting

The next ACPC meeting was scheduled for 15th July 2005 at Buckfastleigh Abbey.