

DEVON AREA CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting
held on Friday 28th January 2005 at Buckfast Abbey**

Present:

Anne Whiteley, Director of Children's Services (Chair), Devon Social Services Directorate
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
Carole Town, Clinical Psychologist, JACAT and CAMHS
Ann Morecraft, Designated Manager, North & East Devon Health Community
Martin Gladwin, Manager, CAF/CASS
Debra Lapthorne, Director of Public Health, South & West Health Community
Jane Richards, Portfolio Holder Child Protection, Devon Local Medical Community
Ann Wilson, Senior Practitioner, Human Resources Directorate
Juliet Hammacott, Acting PEWO,
Robert Brown, Devon and Cornwall Police
Danny Calfwell, Devon and Cornwall Police
Laura Hubbard-Fielder, Named Nurse, Devon Partnership Trust
Alison Davis, Lead Office Social Services
Gillian Wall, Child Protection Administrator, (minute taker)

Apologies:

Charles Holme, Designated Doctor, South & West Devon Health Community
Hazel Curtis, Designated Doctor, North and East Devon Health Community
John Shaw, Manager, Joint Agency Team
Peter Walker, Principal Education Welfare Officer, Devon Local Education Authority
Derek Moore, Assistant Director, NCH
Madeleine Jackson, Senior Crown Prosecutor, C.P.S.
Simon Snell, Devon and Cornwall Police
Dave Thorne, Devon and Cornwall Police

1. MINUTES OF 22nd OCTOBER 2004 - ACCURACY

Page 5 – Home Visitors – Action incorrect

2. MINUTES OF 22nd OCTOBER 2004 AND MATTERS ARISING

NSPCC Representation – Alison Kearnes, previously working as a Service Manager for Plymouth SSD has now been appointed as Area Manager for the NSPCC..

Information Sharing, Children Excluded from School – general concerns were raised at October's ACPC regarding the lack of communication and dialogue with School Nurses re: excluded children. Consequently School Nurses were unable to support the children and their families.

ACTION: DEBORAH BOOTH TO LIAISE WITH ERNIE LLOYD REGARDING THE RE-INTEGRATION PLANS FOR PERMANENT AND FIXED PERIOD EXCLUSIONS. TO DISCUSS ALSO WHETHER SCHOOL NURSES SHOULD BE INVOLVED.

Special Interest GPs

It was confirmed that no appointments had been made as yet.

ACTION: CHARLES HOLME TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE RE: HIS DISCUSSION AT THE LAST PCT MEETING.

121A's

In the absence of a full report from Dave Thorne, Bob Brown advised that the process was moving ahead and that a Multi-agency Consultation Group was to be established by Police regarding the final implementation of the 121A process.

ACTION: BOB BROWN TO PROVIDE A DETAILED UPDATE AND CIRCULATE TO ACPC MEMBERS.

New Licensing Laws

Following the last ACPC when concerns were expressed regarding Social Services' responsibility in processing license applications, Chris Dimmelow updated the meeting as follows:

- Their best guestimate for Devon was 10-14k applications to be processed.. Discussions were held with Business Support re: workload and their best guestimate was c. 45 hours per week to process this number of applications.

- Final guidance regarding Devon County Council's responsibility was still outstanding.
- The process was due to come into force as of 7th February 2005, however, the License Authority were still awaiting final application forms. It was believed that the process might be held up with the current debate re: binge drinking and extended opening hours.
- The IT system which was to underpin the process and allow on-line responses was still not fully functioning, however, a meeting had been scheduled to demonstrate how the system will work.

Chris Dimmelow advised that Social Services' response at this stage could only be a matter of checking against the database, however, the expectation was that more in-depth checks should be carried out. The latest guidance clearly defined the wider children's safeguarding responsibility.

It was recognised that the full implications of ACPC responsibilities in relation to this legislation would only become apparent as applications were received and processed.

ACTION: ACPC MEMBERS TO DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE TO ALL STAFF MEMBERS WHO MAY HAVE INTELLIGENCE AVAILABLE TO THEM.

THIS INTELLIGENCE SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO CHRIS DIMMELOW TO HELP PROCESS APPLICATIONS AND ALLOW OBJECTIONS TO BE MADE IF NEEDED. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE INTELLIGENCE WOULD ALSO BE PASSED ON TO POLICE.

The meeting discussed the protocol for passing on intelligence and concerns were raised regarding the collation of information, the disclosure of sensitive information and how it would support the objections under the guidance, in particular if objections were appealed.

It was agreed that a task centred group be set up, drawn from representation from ACPC agencies, to identify the most practical and pragmatic way of approaching this issue. Consideration to be given to procedures which are already in place but currently not widely known.

ACTION: CHRIS DIMMELOW TO LIAISE WITH PLYMOUTH AND TORBAY FOLLOWING THEIR MEETINGS WITH THE LICENSE AUTHORITIES NEXT WEEK TO ESTABLISH HOW THEY ARE ADDRESSING THE SITUATION.

ACTION: ANNE WHITELEY TO TAKE A REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE OF THE COUNTY HALL TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF RESOURCING.

Common Assessment Framework and Integrated Children's System

Chris Dimmelow referred to the full guidance document available on the website.

Regarding Information Sharing, Chris Dimmelow advised that they were still awaiting the Government to make a decision regarding the level of information on the database. The current discussions range from the provision of basic information about children and the agencies with which they would be associated e.g. Schools and GPs, through to the other extreme of having a fully coded flagging system of identifying particular concerns of children from a social care point of view. This would then raise the question of the future of the Child Protection Register.

Anne Whiteley advised that further information regarding the development of Common Assessment Tools was still outstanding. She added that she had responded to the national consultation regarding the draft document and voiced the views and comments of ACPC members. In Devon the Bideford Pilot is still progressing with the ISA work in conjunction with local professionals (from across the agencies) working with Dartington. The web-based Resource Directory for Bideford is "up and running" and is being maintained by DISC. Work on the CAF is very much early days – awareness raising workshops.

The minutes were approved and signed off as a true record

3. REPORT OF THE EDUCATION SUB COMMITTEE

Juliet Hammacott presented the minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2004.

Juliet confirmed that no response had yet been received regarding the photo phones in schools.

Juliet advised that Beverley Dubash was liaising with the health authority regarding joint training with health.

Chris Dimmelow referred to Section 175: Education Act 2002 and raised the issue of structural changes for LEAs regarding children's safeguarding responsibilities. It was agreed that a proposal would be drafted identifying the ways in which these structural changes will be responded to.

ACTION: CHRIS DIMMELOW TO CO-ORDINATE.

4. REPORT FROM THE TRAINING SUB COMMITTEE

Ann Wilson presented the minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2005.

Learning from Serious Case Reviews – all day conference dated 11th March:

The meeting discussed the handling and distribution of places and it was agreed that it would be a case of nominated people in the first instance.

ACTION: ANN WILSON TO LIAISE WITH CHARLES HOLME REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF RUNNING 2 OR 3 FOLLOW UP SESSIONS BASED ON DEMAND AND DELEGATES PAYING £50/HEAD PRIVATELY.

Ann Wilson advised that there was talk of a large Conference on 2nd June, 2005 focussing on Managers and Supervisors. The aim of this would be to explore the management of safeguarding children across the agencies and the role of Supervisors and Managers in day to day practice.

ACTION: ANN WILSON TO CIRCULATE MORE INFORMATION ONCE AVAILABLE.

Following a meeting with the PCT Chief Executives, Anne Whiteley advised that agreement had been given to implement a further piece of work by the finance team looking at health attendance at training vs. PCT expenditure re: training. This would go back to PCT with a proposal of establishing a pool budget at a very minimum.

Training in the use of Evidence Based Assessment Tools

ACTION: ANN WILSON TO LIAISE WITH MARIA KASPRZYK ABOUT HOW THIS FITS IN WITH THE INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SYSTEM.

Domestic Violence and Abuse Training

Work currently being carried out to bring the focus of Domestic Violence and Child Protection closer together. First 2 pilot programmes being rolled out April / May and further information to be circulated shortly.

Internet Offender Awareness – training for ACPC's

It was agreed that there wasn't a great need for this type of training.

ACTION: CHRIS DIMMELOW TO LIAISE WITH BRYAN SCANLON FOR CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS / CHAIRS.

Cradle to the Grave Conference-North Devon

Anne Whiteley advised that as part of an investment from Children's Services, the appointment of a Community Care Worker in every locality was in place to provide specialist advice re: Alcohol & Drug Misuse. It provided frontline workers with access to more specialist drug and alcohol agencies.

Anne Whiteley also stated that she welcomed the local initiatives of multi-agency training, which had been taken up.

The meeting was advised that a JACAT Conference on March 10th 2005, included a presentation on the impact of parenting of parents with substance misuse.

ACTION: ANNE WHITELEY TO RECEIVE AN INFORMATION FLYER.

ACTION: LAURA HUBBARD-FIELDER TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF ANY OTHER CONFERENCES AND CHRIS DIMMELOW TO LIAISE WITH RAY CHARRAN.

5. REPORT FROM THE HEALTH SUB COMMITTEE

Ann Morecraft advised that a joint meeting with Devon, Torbay and Plymouth was finally convened and the decision was made to hold these joint meetings quarterly.

It was also agreed that a number of topics e.g. substance misuse, the handbook, children and sexual health etc. required smaller sub groups to work on separately. The intention was to go wider than ACPC sub groups and would draw upon non-health individuals.

The aim was to focus health on these types of issues.

Record Retention – named nurse for North Devon finalised a protocol which will be submitted for inclusion in the handbook. It was recommended that this should be included as a ‘generic’ piece, to avoid getting lost in the health section.

ACPC move to Safeguarding Children’s Board – Chris Dimmelow advised that detailed guidance from DfES would be available in May 2005.

Neo Nats - Ann advised that they were developing clinical networks around Neo Nats, as there was a need for people involved in that area to have an understanding of Child Protection matters, in particular for serious burns and head injuries.

S.A.R.C.

Concerns were expressed with the adult approach which is currently being taken. The view was that the current work needed to amalgamate the work with adults and children.

ACTION: AGENDA ITEM AT THE NEXT MEETING - BOB BROWN TO INVESTIGATE AND UPDATE.

6. REPORT FROM THE CASE REVIEW SUB COMMITTEE

Confidential reports were received.

7. LOCAL CHILDREN’S SAFEGUARDING BOARD PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING AN INITIAL BUDGET

Chris Dimmelow presented a global figure of £112,200 and asked that all agencies make provision for an amount of money to contribute towards this total figure.

ACTION: CHRIS DIMMELOW TO PROVIDE A FURTHER BREAKDOWN TO ALLOW MORE MEANINGFUL ALLOCATIONS BY AGENCY GROUPS.

8. ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH P.A.F. C 20

Chris Dimmelow presented the current guidance for ensuring that Child Protection Meetings and Looked After Children's Reviews are held on time.

ACTION: ALL AGENCIES TO IMPRESS UPON THEIR PRACTITIONERS THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDING ALL CHILD PROTECTION MEETINGS SO THAT SOLID CHILD PROTECTION PLANS AND DECISIONS CAN BE MADE.

9. PRIVATE FOSTERING

Alison David presented an update report on the issue of Private Fostering.

The meeting discussed in detail the issues of the lack of funding and resources internally to carry out assessments, in particular for Language Schools who were anxious to receive advice and guidance.

The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to raise awareness of Private Fostering but concerns were raised regarding the lack of resources to carry out and implement an awareness campaign.

It was proposed that the National Group be approached re: the economies of scale for production of national publications / information packs.

It was agreed that the only practical way forward was to be clear about ACPC's expectations during the implementation period. ACPC needed to take a phased approach to identify and target the most vulnerable children in need of the assessment (i.e. under 5's).

Anne Whiteley suggested that a proposal be taken back to the County Council Executive with recommendations, and they ultimately needed to make the final decision re: moving forward.

The following support was agreed for an Interagency Steering Group:

- Named Nurses with LAC responsibilities
- Education Welfare Officers
- Representative from Primary Schools
- Representative from Sure Start
- Devon Youth Service
- Representative from Ethnic Community Groups

ACTION: CHRIS DIMMELOW TO LIAISE WITH TORBAY TO SEE HOW THEY ARE APPROACHING THE NEW LEGISLATION.

CHRIS DIMMELOW AND ANNE WHITELEY TO CONTINUE TO DISCUSS HOW THE LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONDS, IN PARTICULAR REGARDING THE ISSUE OF THE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS SHOULD BE INVITED TO JOIN THE STEERING GROUP

10A. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN – CHILD CONTACT WITH PRISONERS

Chris Dimmelow presented the briefing papers for discussion.

ACTION: LAURA HUBBARD-FIELDER TO CHECK THE DOH PROTOCOL WITH THE PARTNERSHIP TRUST

10B. SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CUSTODY

ACTION: BOB BROWN TO CHECK OUT WITH PRISON SERVICE RE: YOUNG PERSONS GOING IN ON REMAND TO EXETER PRISON

11. CONSULTATION ON THE FRAMEWORK FOR INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ACTION: CONTACT POOLE RE: FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS FROM THE PILOT.

ACTION: TO BE AN AGENDA ITEM AT THE NEXT ACPG MEETING.

12. JOINT INSPECTORATE REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDS LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACED AWAY FROM THEIR RESPONSIBLE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Anne Whiteley advised that the Review and National Report was a precursor of a wider initiative by DfES, addressing the issue of out of County placements. It was recognised that those placed well away from their Local Authority were the most vulnerable of children and were asking Local Authorities to review and amend their procedures for making 'Out of County Placements'.

13. SUDDEN INFANT DEATH RESPONSE TEAM

Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of resources to carry out this function.

ACTION: CHRIS DIMMELOW, SIMON SNELL AND CHARLES HOLME TO ESTABLISH A BASIC SERVICE IN CO-ORDINATION WITH TORBAY AND PLYMOUTH.

ACPC Communication

Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of communication within the ACPC. Chris Dimmelow advised that he would be attending the next meetings of the locality groups to discuss ways in which communication could be improved.

ACTION: AGENCIES TO THINK ABOUT HOW THEY COMMUNICATE ACPC MATTERS TO THEIR LOCAL PRACTITIONERS.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Protocols for responding to allegations of abuse by staff members at the Atkinson Unit

Chris Dimmelow presented an overview of the protocol and attached a full report for agency review.

ACTION: ALL AGENCIES TO STUDY AND EMAIL THEIR COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS TO CHRIS DIMMELOW WITHIN TWO WEEKS

Possible development of Regional Multi-agency Child Protection procedures

Chris Dimmelow presented an overview of the report stating that all procedures were a distillation of the National Guidance.

General feedback was that this should have happened years ago and received the full support of all agencies.

Anne Morecraft circulated the Bichard Report from MAPPA.

Business Plan for Safeguarding Boards

ACTION: TO BE AN AGENDA ITEM FOR THE NEXT ACPC MEETING FRIDAY 22nd. APRIL 2005. CROSSMEAD CONFERENCE CENTRE, EXETER