

DEVON LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 29th February 2008 at Buckfast Abbey

Present

Anne Whiteley, Director of Children and Young People's Services
Deborah Booth, Strategic Project Manager for Educational Achievement of Children in Care
Chris Dimmelow, Children's Safeguarding Manager, Devon Children & Young People's Services
Jane Richards, Portfolio Holder, Devon Local Medical Committee
Janet Phipps, General Manager for Women's Children's and Sexual Health, Northern Devon Healthcare Trust
Michele Thornberry, Named Nurse – Child Protection – Devon and Chair of LSCB Training and Workforce Development Sub-Group
Mary Mitchell, Assistant Chief Officer, Devon & Cornwall Probation Service
Graeme Barnell, Director of Care, Adult & Community Services, Devon Partnership NHS Trust
Roy Tomlinson, Adva
Maria Kasprzyk, Policy & Performance Improvement Manager, Devon County Council
Charles Holme, Designated Doctor – Child Protection – Devon
Richard Tomlinson, Consultant Paediatrician, R D & E Hospital (Wonford) Exeter
Virginia Pearson, Director of Public Health
John Vellacott, DCI – Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Andrew Munday, DI – Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Karen Tanner, Associate Director of Patient Care, NHS South West
Derek Moore, Assistant Director of NCH Devon and Cornwall
Peter Mitchell, CAF/CASS Head of Service
Claire Mitchell, Nurse Consultant (Safeguarding Children) R D & E NHS Foundation Trust
Chris Reilly, Named Nurse (Safeguarding) Devon PCT
Heather Parker, Associate Director of Nursing & Midwifery, South Devon NHS Foundation Trust
Karen Brown, LSCB Workforce Development Advisor
Michael Lee, Devon County Councillor (observing)
Roger Croad, Devon County Councillor (observing)
Helen Vogel, LSCB Secretary
Lesley Bird, LSCB Secretary
Julie Phillips, Administrator/Minute Taker

Apologies / copy of minutes to:

Beverley Dubash, Principal Education Welfare Officer
Peter Jeffs, Director of Communities, East Devon District Council
Laura Spittles, Named Nurse – Child Protection, Devon NHS Partnership Trust
Bob Brown – Head of Community Support Unit, Devon & Cornwall Police
John Davey, Director of Service Delivery, Connexions Cornwall & Devon
Catriona Cunningham, Nurse Consultant (Safeguarding Children) Torbay Hospital
Sheila Richards
Emma Webber
Jo Tennant, BCU Commander for Devon, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Helen Hyland, Designated Nurse – Child Protection - Devon
Alison Kearnes, Assistant Director, NSPCC Devon Dorset & Cornwall
Debbie Pritchard
Cathy Ellingford, Children's Lead Representative (SW Region) Devon PCT
Martin Spragg, Youth Offending Services Manager
Peter Adey

Anne Whiteley welcomed Helen Vogel and Lesley Bird who were newly appointed to the LSCB Office, plus Michael Lee and Roger Croad who were Devon County Councillors serving on the Scrutiny Group.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mandy Cox (replaced by Karen Tanner); Peter Jeffs, Beverley Dubash, Laura Spittles, Bob Brown, John Davey, Catriona Cunningham, Sheila Richards, Emma Webber, Jo Tennant, Helen Hyland, Alison Kearnes, Debbie Pritchard, Cathy Ellingford, Martin Spragg and Peter Adey.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Accuracy and Matters Arising

Page 1 – Derek Moore should be shown as having attended the meeting.

Page 2 – Report of the Case Review Sub-Committee: Case RM – Jane Richards advised that there would be an addendum to one of the reports, and Chris Dimmelow would be dealing with this.

Page 3 – Hidden Harm Action Plan – Graeme Barnell stated that he had not received a copy of Maureen Mukersey's report. Chris Dimmelow responded that he had asked her for this, but it did not appear to be available.

The Meeting heard that a Hidden Harm Action Plan had been drawn up.

ACTION:

VIRGINIA PEARSON TO ASK MAUREEN MUKERSEY TO PROVIDE A SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE BOARD.

Page 4 – Contact Point Update – Jane Richards asked if the start date had been delayed. Anne Whiteley responded that the Government had ordered an independent review of Contact Point and Deloitte had produced a report. An up-to-date position statement could be circulated with the LSCB minutes.

Page 10, paragraph 3 - remove question mark from in front of Derek Moore's name.

3. DPCT CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Virginia Pearson thanked her colleagues both within and outside of the PCT for being brave enough to express concern around some of the governance services within the PCT. She felt that because of the size of the new PCT now, many people were working in roles closely related to the provider side. It was going to become more important to have processes in place as there was a national drive to create more independence around PCT providers. PCTs therefore needed processes in place both as providers for and commissioners of services.

One of the things which Virginia Pearson had done in discussion with colleagues was to establish a committee structure within the PCT so that all with a key role in child protection had a place where processes and policies could be ratified and serious case reviews/incidents considered. There had been two meetings so far, and good feedback received. Feedback from Mandy Cox was that it was not common for PCTs to have these arrangements in place and so she felt this was a model of good practice

Virginia Pearson confirmed that she had agreed with Anne Whiteley she would bring items of importance to the LSCB. Derek Moore cautioned the need to be clear as to who was on the Committee.

Charles Holme advised that the previous joint LSCB Health Group would continue to exist, but would call themselves a Forum and function more as a meeting place to exchange ideas and innovations which feed into individual PCTs for action.

Claire Mitchell observed that there was the Mental Health Trust and the R D & E Trust in Devon, and the joint Health Group was where they communicated to. They needed to be able to report to

the LSCB, and their normal process had been to take their business to that group. It seemed a Devon LSCB Health Sub-Group was now being missed. Virginia Pearson responded that the PCT Child Protection Committee had been set up as an internal child protection committee but she felt it needed to cover safeguarding in the wider sense of the word and perhaps have a wider membership. Perhaps towards the end of the year that might be possible. Claire Mitchell responded that she did not think this delay could be worked with and there needed to be some interim arrangement.

ACTION:

VIRGINIA PEARSON TO TALK TO COLLEAGUES (INCLUDING NORTH DEVON) ABOUT INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS.

Graeme Barnell said he knew there was an adult commissioning agenda being taken forward. Virginia Pearson responded that the issues were very similar except governance arrangements around children were established to a more rigorous extent than adults. What was missing was a commissioning arrangement around safeguarding in its broadest sense. She was trying to support the development of a provider structure focus.

Anne Whiteley cautioned the need for clear communication, and asked whether there was any national guidance. Karen Tanner responded that there was none she was aware of, but could make some enquiries. Virginia Pearson felt that around 70% of what was needed was covered through the Committee. She had agreed improvements to the content of the contacts agreed which picked up Working Together recommendations.

Chris Dimmelow stated that work done in respect of the LSCB Business Plan and structure of the Board had been done on the basis of a single Health sub-group, so if there was to be a breaking up of the Health sub-group, this would have implications.

ACTION:

COLLEAGUES TO LIAISE AND REPORT BACK TO THE NEXT LSCB HOW THIS MATTER IS TO BE RESOLVED.

4. DCPT CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Virginia Pearson thanked colleagues who had updated this document over the past year, including Alison Allen. This would be going to the PCRT Board next Wednesday for formal approval.

Maria Kasprzyk advised that Appendix D (Guidance on Preparing and Writing a Court Report) would need updating to take into account new guidance coming into effect from 1st April 2008. Workshops for all agencies were being organised and dates were awaited.

ACTION:

MARIA KASPRZYK TO PROVIDE VIRGINIA PEARSON WITH DETAILS SHE CAN TAKE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PRIMARY CARE TRUST.

MARIA KASPRZYK TO LET THE LSCB KNOW OF ANY NATIONAL POLICY CHANGES.

5. DEVON LSCB STRUCTURE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Deborah Booth explained this had come out of the Development Day held on 5th October 2007. She and Alison Kearnes had been tasked to undertake some options appraisal work. Alison had undertaken significant research into the structure of other LSCBs throughout the country. Alison and Deborah were looking at an LSC Board, executive group and sub-groups. Most LSCBs had a large overall board and smaller group sitting below maintaining, filtering, progressing, chasing functions. The Board sets key priorities and the executive ensures that the work of the sub-groups fits this. Each sub-group would have its own action plan. Basic task sub-groups would be standing groups. Sometimes they would take on more of a "task and finish" approach, for example, in

response to new legislation. Work had been undertaken around core functions if the sub-groups and where they work focus might be. Also looked at had been the role of the Joint Area Review and Staying Safe criteria and whether the new structure fitted this.

Anne Whiteley observed that there was a need to engage children and young people more actively in the work the LSCB did.

Charles Holme considered there needed to be a close link between the Serious Case Review and Child Death Review functions of the LSCB. Anne Whiteley commented that Serious Case Reviews needed to take more prominence in LSCB business. Lessons needed to be learnt from outcomes from Serious Case Reviews, and practice amended accordingly.

Claire Mitchell suggested that the sub-groups needed to be task-orientated, plus special interest sub-groups would also be required.

ACTION:

ANNE WHITELEY'S SECRETARY SALLY PRESTON TO LIAISE WITH HELEN VOGEL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO ASCERTAIN THE BEST DATE FOR MOST BOARD MEMBERS TO BE ABLE TO ATTEND A HALF DAY DEVELOPMENT SESSION.

IN PREPARATION FOR THIS HALF DAY SESSION, DEBORAH BOOTH, ALISON KEARNES AND CHRIS DIMMELOW TO PREPARE BRIEF PAPERS SO THAT BOARD MEMBERS CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE PROPOSED SUB-GROUPS, SET AGAINST INFORMATION FROM THE NATIONAL TOOLKIT.

CONSIDERATION TO ALSO BE GIVEN AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE PRIVATE FOSTERING SUB-GROUP SHOULD BE RETAINED UNDER THE PROPOSED NEW STRUCTURE.

6. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MANAGED NETWORK

Charles Holme asked whether the LSCB would consider holding a scrutiny role so that they were aware of the thinking behind the formation of a network and to ask questions around what progress they were making. Charles Holme considered that a good service had not been offered to young people in the North Devon and Torbay areas. It was difficult to find Paediatricians willing to undertake medical examinations of abused children and obtaining colposcopes had been particularly difficult. Children had had to be sent to Bristol to be seen, which was clearly unacceptable. There were examples of 15 year olds not seen by Paediatricians as they were too old for that service or by Police Forensic Examiners as they were too young. There was a need to undertake holistic examinations of children's needs, working in conjunction with the Police. Emphasis should include pregnancy prevention, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and the psychological consequences of child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse has serious long term effects on a young person's psychological make-up, ability to form relationships in adult life, tendency to self-harm, ability to hold down employment and parenting ability. Many offenders started their journey by themselves being the victim of abuse when young.

Virginia Pearson advised that, jointly with the Police, Devon PCT were investing in a sexual abuse assessment centre. Charles Holme remarked that SAACs would have places for older young people, but were not sufficient child-friendly for pre-pubescent children. He felt that children were better off being seen in local children's units as far as possible.

Charles Holme drew the Board's attention to a meeting at Buckfast Conference Centre on Monday 7th April. He confirmed, in response to Claire Mitchell, that there would be a multi-agency representative there on the day and he would welcome suggestions as to who would best represent children's services so that they could be invited. Chris Dimmelow advised that he would attend this event.

Anne Whiteley stated that the LSCB welcomed the idea of a managed network for the assessment of child sexual abuse.

7. LSCB BUSINESS PLAN 2008-2011

Chris Dimmelow stated that the Safe and Sound section of the Children and Young People's Plan, the Stay Safe Action Plan and the yet to arrive Toolkit for LSCBs were significant developments to help LSCBs work in an efficient and effective way. Hence the Devon LSCB's Business Plan had been revised in accordance with views expressed at the Development Day. The document tabled at the meeting would need to be cut down somewhat. It was very much hoped that the Toolkit would help in the compilation of a workable Business Plan.

It was suggested that a further Development Day (with a structured agenda) could take place if required

Anne Whiteley commented that she liked the way in which priorities were identified within the Business Plan. There needed to be similarities in layout between the new LSCB Business Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan.

Deborah Booth suggested that the What We Have Achieved section (page 5 of document) should stress consistency between the Children and Young People's Plan and the LSCB Business Plan.

Anne Whiteley suggested that it would be useful to all Board members to have readily accessible factual information on key areas such as the number of children on the Child Protection Register.

The point was made that Chairs and Vice-Chairs would have clear briefs based on the terms of reference of their sub-group.

With regard to Appendix A (page 38) Mary Mitchell made the point that roles of member agencies of the Board in improving children and young people's safety should include the role of the Probation Service in working with perpetrators.

ACTION:

BOARD MEMBERS TO MAKE COMMENTS BY E-MAIL TO CHRIS DIMMELOW AND ALISION KEARNES.

8. APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON – JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Mary Mitchell presented this item. In terms of the person specification, what was being sought was a simpler and more focussed role rather than a "professional chair" being undertaken by a person with a real interest, passion and desire to make sure the LSCB was fulfilling its function. It was critical that the post holder had good knowledge and understanding of local communities – what would be sought was a local person, who lived locally and understood local issues.

Deborah Booth suggested the purpose section of the Job Description should include the post holder being able to promote the interests of Devon's children, and Virginia Pearson added that this should fit in with the Staying Safe component of Every Child Matters.

Maria Kasprzyk suggested point 1 of purpose is amended to read: "To ensure that the Board operates effectively in promoting Devon's children."

Virginia Pearson suggested that the responsibilities section of the Job Description should not include the provision of professional advice and support to the LSCB Development Manager as required as the proposed Independent Chair of the LSCB needed to retain their independence.

Deborah Booth suggested that point 5 under the list of responsibilities (To drive the development of the Board in order to deliver results) was so important that it should be the first listed in that section.

It was hoped that the post holder could be in post for September 2008, thus giving time for transition.

ACTION:

ANNE WHITELEY AND MARY MITCHELL TO PROGRESS INCLUDING BY DRAWING UP THE JOB ADVERTISEMENT. (THIS WILL BE A DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL APPOINTMENT PROBABLY INVOLVING CLLR JOHN SMITH AS THE DCC PORTFOLIO HOLDER).

ANNE WHITELEY AND MARY MITCHELL TO BRING BACK RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NEXT LSCB MEETING.

9. PENINSULA CHILD DEATH REVIEW PANEL UPDATE

Chris Dimmelow presented a report which had been prepared by Ann Morecraft, Peninsula CDR Project Manager. Requirements had been costed and interview dates set to interview for business support to the Overview Panel and Rapid Response Teams. Plymouth PCT was going to host the office for the Peninsula CDR Panel, but there were internal procedural issues around the post. It was hoped these could be overcome and interviews could go ahead on Monday and Tuesday, 17th and 18th March. Gradings for posts have now been agreed, resulting in some decrease in costings given previously.

ACTION:

CHRIS DIMMELOW TO REPORT BACK TO LSCB WITH REVISED FUNDING PROPOSALS ONCE INFORMATION THROUGH FROM DCFS.

In the meantime, Devon CYPS will underwrite the posts that have been agreed for business support out of monies which will be available from the Government in the near future, but, failing that funding in the future should come through the LSCB.

Chris Dimmelow noted that job descriptions for the Lead Specialist Nurse and other nurses attached to the Rapid Response Teams have been agreed. It was hoped to be able to appoint the lead Nurse on 25th March 2008.

The point was made that the medical side had been structured similarly to child protection – with a Named Doctor and Panel Link and a Designated Doctor. Job descriptions were being verified and appointments likely not to be made by the 1st April. Nurses needed to be in post plus the co-ordinator and business support staff first of all.

Chris Dimmelow noted that the policy and procedure documents were almost ready for circulation, including terms of reference for the Child Death Overview Panels and Rapid Response Teams. Anyone with an interest in serving on the Panels should let Chris Dimmelow know. Monthly meetings were envisaged initially. At the moment, there would be a minimal contract with CEMACH around information compilation.

Charles Holme noted that there were guidelines as to membership within Chapter 7 of Working Together. Chris Dimmelow responded that Chapter 7 guidance had been respected in terms of membership.

Panel members should include professionals from public health and child health, and co-opted members were required reflecting the make up of local organisations, for example large ethnic minority groups.

The first meeting of the Panel was likely to be in April or May 2008. A contact telephone number would need to be determined and widely circulated.

Virginia Pearson reported that she had spoken to the Exeter Coroner, Dr Elizabeth Earland regarding accommodation and governance issues around access to some of the records and the sharing of information. Dr Earland felt obliged to abide by the principle of confidentiality, but access to summary information would be allowed. Virginia Pearson wrote to the Minister of Justice asking for clarification regarding access to the details of coroners' records, especially the electronic

database, and was still awaiting a formal response. Charles Holme noted there was new legislation to allow coroners to share information with Local Authorities.

ACTION:

VIRGINIA PEARSON TO PASS COPIES OF HER CORRESPONDENCE TO ANNE WHITELEY TO TAKE UP AT A REGIONAL MEETING.

10. LSCB KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS/DATA SET

Anne Whiteley stated that she and Virginia Pearson had taken the original set of Indicators and considered whether they needed to be monitored twice, looking to select the ones which most aptly linked to LSCB business and the Business Plan. The Government had produced a list of around 198 Indicators, 16 of which had to be covered by Children's Services, with each Local Authority then having to select up to a further 35. However, increasingly the Government Office South West were being prescriptive as to certain Indicators expected to be seen within the 35 "chosen".

Under the section Be Healthy, Charles Holme asked if the Indicator substance misuse by young people included alcohol. Many admissions to Accident & Emergency Department were for alcohol misuse. There was a need to be able to determine what A&E data related to drug and alcohol misuse. It was noted that under the section Stay Safe was the Indicator children admitted to A&E departments because of substance misuse.

ACTION:

ROY TOMLINSON TO SEEK CLARIFICATION WHETHER THE PHRASE SUBSTANCE MISUSE INCLUDES BOTH DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. (DEVON LSCB WOULD WANT TO HAVE A LOCAL INDICATOR FOR ALCOHOL ABUSE GIVEN THE LEVEL OF ALCOHOL ABUSE BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN DEVON).

CHRIS DIMMELOW TO ARRANGE FOR AN AMENDMENT TO BE MADE TO THE MASTER COPY UNDER STAY SAFE TO READ "CHILDREN ATTENDING (NOT ADMITTED TO) A&E DEPARTMENTS BECAUSE OF SUBSTANCE MISUSE".

Under Stay Safe, Anne Whiteley said she felt there was a need for a Local PI with regard to Domestic Violence.

Under Stay Safe, it was felt that the Indicator Children in Care in Devon from other Local Authorities was significant, Deborah Booth noting that around 170 young people from other parts of the country were attending maintained schools in Devon.

Chris Dimmelow made the point that information gathering in respect of children in private education or being home educated was poor, as not all authorities observed Placement with Parents Regulations.

Under Stay Safe, Anne Whiteley suggested the need for there to be a Local Indicator of Devon children placed more than 20 miles from their home. **This was agreed.**

Under Enjoy & Achieve, Anne Whiteley asked if the Board felt there was a need to include Rate of children in care and Number of children in care. Maria Kasprzyk suggestion that exception reports should come to LSCB if applicable. Anne Whiteley suggested just keeping in Rate of children in care under 18 as a percentage of population as that compared Devon with other Local Authorities.

Under Enjoy & Achieve, Charles Holme suggested the need for an Indicator measuring children with Statements who were excluded from school.

Under Enjoy & Achieve, Deborah Booth stated that the Indicator Non-authorised absence should be amended to read Unauthorised absence.

Under Enjoy & Achieve, Deborah Booth suggested the need to have as an Indicator the number of 19 year olds who had been in Care but were out of education or training.

Under Enjoy & Achieve, Maria Kasprzyk suggested the need for missing children to be an Indicator.

Under Making a Positive Contribution, Anne Whiteley made the point that there was a need to ascertain the views of children and young people on a whole range of safety issues. She suggested using Devon County Council's Young People's Scrutiny arrangements and the work of the Children's Trust as a starting point in thinking about what sort of questions to ask about the issues which made children and young people feel safe and unsafe.

Under Service Manager/Business Plan, Anne Whiteley noted there to be a need for an update on the Section 11 audit. Chris Dimmelow responded that Board members would be receiving the audit tool with an expectation/request that they complete it and return it to him as soon as possible so a full audio of Section 11 responsibilities across the LSCB could be compiled into one document.

Graeme Barnell felt this should include some form of monitoring of deaths and suicides. Chris Dimmelow responded that he was awaiting a new data set which was due to arrive imminently, and he thought that would include a requirement to monitor suicides committed by the under 18s. Anne Whiteley added that a lot of such data would be available through the Child Death Overview Panel in due course.

ACTION:

VIRGINIA PEARSON TO LIAISE WITH SIMON CHANT.

ACTION:

IT WAS AGREED TO RETAIN AS A LOCAL INDICATOR CHILDREN IN CARE IN DEVON FROM OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND TO INCLUDE AS A LOCAL INDICATOR DEVON CHILDREN PLACED MORE THAN 20 MILES FROM THEIR HOME.

The view was expressed that there was a need to collect data on children re-admitted to care.

ACTION:

CHRIS DIMMELOW TO SPEAK WITH KAREN CLEAVE ABOUT DATA ON CHILDREN RE-ADMITTED TO CARE.

With regard to Stay Safe, Roy Tomlinson noted there was a National Indicator for road safety. Information around accidents in the home would be collected from A&E Departments, Minor Injury Units and/or GP surgeries. With regard to accidents in the home, Anne Whiteley suggested there was a need to get Children's Centres and other such universal provisions to promote safe practice to the parents/carers who were their clients.

ACTION:

VIRGINIA PEARSON TO BRING AN ANALYSIS OF THE "BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY" REPORT TO A FUTURE LSCB MEETING.

ACTION

CHRIS DIMMELOW TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE TO THE NEXT LSCB MEETING REGARDING THE STAY SAFE ACTION PLAN'S LIST OF 17 NATIONAL INDICATORS WHICH THEY FEEL ARE OF HELP TO THE WORK OF LSCBs.

11. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – INFORMATION SECURITY

Virginia Pearson explained that this was something that had come out of work she had been doing with the Strategic Health Authority, especially with regard to serious case reviews, ensuring that even initials were not used on documentation sent out as this was potentially identifiable

information. Virginia Pearson wanted the Board to use these principles also and suggested papers being sent electronically to recipients and with confidential password access, or numbered paper copies being sent out by secure means.

Chris Dimmelow responded that it was helpful to be able to exchange documents with some initials in, but arguably there was a need to get into the habit of not doing so. With regard to serious case reviews, it had been agreed that papers would be sent out password protected. Devon County Council would be moving to a secure e-mail system with colleagues outside of DCC.

Virginia Pearson felt that paperwork for LSCB meetings should also be sent out password protected. Maria Kasprzyk responded that moves were afoot towards placing papers on the internet for Board members to access. This would also be password protected.

ACTION:

MARIA KASPRZYK TO KEEP THE BOARD UPDATED WITH REGARD TO PROGRESS.

SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS TO BE ANONYMISED FROM NOW ON.

12. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – RETENTION OF RECORDS

This item concerned retention of child protection minute records in respect of young people until they were 26 years of age.

Virginia Pearson stated that there was a need for professionals to ensure the way in which they worked was safe and in accordance with Working Together guidelines on this.

13. LSCB TRAINING PROGRAMME – REVISED BUDGET PROPOSALS

Karen Brown presented her paper of proposed changes to partner agencies' contributions to maintain the level of training which had been offered during the current financial year. This included undertaking 40 Safeguarding Level 3 courses.

On 13th May 2008, 100 places would be available on the first safe recruitment and managing allegations training course at £45 per person.

Efforts were being made to try to embed serious case review training into the current training programme. Three further courses were being organised for the autumn

Board members indicated either agreement with their organisation's proposed contribution for 2008-2009 (where they were able) or otherwise gave this in principle.

ACTION:

KAREN BROWN TO LET ANNE WHITELEY KNOW OUTSIDE OF THIS MEETING WHICH AGENCIES HAVE YET TO PAY THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2007-2008.

CLAIRE MITCHELL TO VERIFY THAT THE PROPOSED CONTRIBUTION FOR THE RD&E HOSPITAL TRUST WAS ACCEPTABLE AND LET CHRIS DIMMELOW KNOW THE OUTCOME ON MONDAY 3RD MARCH.

14. PART 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Graeme Barnell stated that he had recently received a couple of Part 8 Reports and he had made some observations based on work he was undertaking around quality of untoward incident reporting. Graeme Barnell considered there was a tendency within reports to generalise (for

example use of the phrase “review procedures”) and to be overly prescriptive. It would be more helpful to specify whether a given fault was to do with poor leadership, or lack of training, for example, as to do so would help operational managers to be able to target change

Anne Whiteley responded that Devon’s procedures were a distillation of national guidance. In terms of the LSCBs performance, two years ago Bridge Consultants were brought in to work with the LSCB around their Part 8 reports. The LSCB also had a requirement to externalise who they got to write these reports, and this was a topic to be discussed regionally. Report writers used a standard template now, although there were significant variations between agencies and report writers as to how this was observed. There were now two national reports on improving safeguarding practice.

Graeme Barnell expressed concern that an organisation could be said to get off lightly if they were simply asked to “review procedures” when what was at issue was poor practice, for example. There was a need for ‘smarter’ reports and recommendations.

Jane Richards observed that it was difficult to extract from management reports and as report writers did not necessarily know the structure within an organisation, it was consequently harder to direct recommendations. The purpose of such reports was to draw out lessons to be learned rather than apportion blame.

Graeme Barnell said he would expect recommendations to be addressed to an organisation’s Chief Executive or equivalent. Recommendations should be posing questions to managers rather than prescribing. Anne Whiteley responded that this was an issue which needed exploring in the light of information from the national study, and it was worth having a dialogue within the Serious Case Review sub-group.

Chris Dimmelow made the point that the basis of Part 8 Reviews was not to blame but to look at where policies fell short rather than debate quality of leadership.

Mary Mitchell suggested that there should be a report back facility so that Board members would in that way know that recommendations had been actioned. Chris Dimmelow reminded members that action plans were to be sent to agencies electronically.

15. PUBLIC HEALTH CONSULTANT POSTS

Virginia Pearson reported that Devon PCT currently had a number of Public Health Consultant posts out to advert, the focus of one of these posts being on child health with 3/10 sessions dedicated to working with the Children’s Trust and 1/10 sessions specifically to do with safeguarding.

16. YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mary Mitchell explained that she chaired the Perpetrators’ sub-group of the Devon Adva Partnership and within that forum there had been a lot of discussion around 16-18 year old victims of domestic violence. The Police appeared to assume that victims under the age of 18 would be subject to child protection procedures. Mary Mitchell and her Probation colleagues were concerned that young victims of domestic violence were not always receiving the services they needed.

Maria Kasprzyk commented that work towards a coherent Domestic Violence Policy was nearly completed. There was evidence of a lot of confusion as to what the role and responsibilities of MARACs were. Was it information sharing? How were decisions around consent obtained in risky situations? Some proposals would be going back to the next MARAC Steering Group to try and resolve the information sharing issue insofar as no-one wanted to put victims of domestic violence at risk.

Charles Holme raised the matter of 16-18 years olds who were the perpetrators of domestic violence as well as having been victims. Mary Mitchell responded that these young people were managed and picked up by Youth Offending Teams if they were going into the legal process. Youth Offending Teams had their own risk assessment tools, many of which were validated for people of 18 years or older.

The Meeting heard from the Police representatives that Devon & Cornwall Constabulary were looking at a new risk assessment tool.

Mary Mitchell considered the Police were somewhat wedded to using the ACPO definition of domestic violence. The issue was what were the needs of the young people involved and how were these to be met. Chris Dimmelow considered there to be a need for some flexibility from organisations in terms of sharing information so as to protect vulnerable children and adults. With regard to children, there was a need to decide whether the social care of youth justice route was in their best interests.

Maria Kasprzyk in response to Deborah Booth confirmed that Dave Simpkins was the Lead Officer for policy work being undertaken on domestic violence within the Children and Young People's Services.

Anne Whiteley observed that there was no money within the CYPS budget for women's refuges now as funding was pooled some years ago to include the Social Services funding. The issue of future funding to at least sustain the current level of work was a real concern. Anne Whiteley suggested there was a need for discussion and debate through the MARAC Steering Group. Maria Kasprzyk advised that the draft proposal should be ready by the end of April 2008, and Chris Dimmelow hoped the MARAC Steering Group would be able to come to a flexible agreement.

ACTION:

REPORT BACK TO BE MADE TO JUNE 2008 BOARD MEETING.

17. PHASING OUT OF THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER

The Meeting heard that a letter from Anne Whiteley on this matter was in the process of being distributed. Maria Kasprzyk advised that work was being undertaken on the business processes, linking in to the South West procedures. All of Devon County Council's policies, procedures and business processes were being updated and information on the change would be posted on the public website in due course. As children were coming up to their next Child Protection Review, they would be issued with information about the change. Owing to the electronic system which the Children & Young People's Services used, there would be some slight delay in terms of changes there until June 2008. Agreement had been reached that a letter would be sent out with child protection minutes explaining changes.

In terms of public information leaflets, what had been agreed was to stop producing the Devon County Council leaflets and to use the "What to do if you are worried a child is being abused" (DCSF publication).

Chris Reilly made the point that Named Nurses received child protection register lists currently, and she wondered whether they would receive this information electronically in the future. Chris Dimmelow confirmed that they would not, but Named Nurses would still be able to find out if a child was subject to a formal child safeguarding plan. It would be against the spirit of what DCC was trying to do to still provide lists of children subject to a child protection plan. Charles Holme added that Named Nurses would also need to know if a child was subject to ongoing involvement with CYPS. Chris Dimmelow responded that if that was the case, the name of the Social Worker should be given for further information to be sought from.

ACTION:

A REVISED NOTIFICATION LETTER TO BE DRAWN UP WHICH INCLUDES A CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER.

CHARLES HOLME TO NOTIFY MANAGERS OF ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS OF THE PROPOSED PHASING OUT OF THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER AND THE INTRODUCTION OF CHILD SAFEGUARDING PLANS.

18. MULTI-AGENCY REFERRAL FORM, THRESHOLDS AND AXS

Maria Kasprzyk provided a verbal update report as follows:

With regard to the multi-agency referral form, work was being undertaken to link it into the CAF referral route and it had been tested in the pathfinding areas.

A great deal of work had been done around escalation and de-escalation through the AXS pathways.

Multi-agency threshold training had been completed in the pathfinding areas. Some final work was being undertaken based on the pathfinding areas.

The AXS training programme was out and Maria Kasprzyk would check with Learning & Development that they had covered all eligible parties such as CAFCASS. Full implementation was expected by October 2008. Feedback was that once this was established, it would be a positive way of working. There was a need to work out the relationships with the different assessments. Training was progressing very well and there had been positive feedback as to its quality.

Issues around Child in Need meetings and plans were in the process of being sorted out.

With regard to Team Around the Child Meetings, it was felt these needed some rationalisation and use of common language.

It was felt that thresholds were being applied more consistently, that there was more understanding of what the criteria for thresholds was – for example that four or five Level 2 concerns could make the case a Level 3. Some of the exercises being undertaken in training brought out this issue and around 100 calls a week were being made to the Threshold Unit.

Deborah Booth was aware that Dave Simpkins had sent out a letter to schools on this subject.

Chris Reilly commented that feedback from the two pilot areas in her area are that it was a good initiative which was working.

Chris Dimmelow wondered where the budget holding lead professional for below AXS Level 3 come from.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Appointment of Assistant Director for Integrated Services

Anne Whiteley advised that the Primary Care Trust and Local Authority had now appointed Miles Hapgood as Assistant Director responsible for integrated services. He would pick up responsibility for AXS and its implementation. Miles Hapgood would take up post from 1st April 2008.

(2) A Guide to Drugs and Alcohol in Pregnancy

A copy of this booklet had been circulated to Board members.

(3) Charles Holme reported that it had been agreed at PCT that delayed recognition for child protection guidelines was a risk area. Plymouth and Torbay unitary authorities were going their own way. Children were at risk because of these differing patterns and an official launch was needed soon.

Chris Dimmelow responded that he and Maria Kasprzyk had discussed this. The implementation of the South West procedures had been piecemeal – Torbay's switching process was complex; Plymouth got into technical difficulties trying to amalgamate both systems on their website, and the

system had had to be completely re-written. Chris Dimmelow was of the opinion that it was safer to stick with the Devon only procedures until enough of the South West procedures were up and running to be sure.

Chris Dimmelow in response to Anne Whiteley said he did not think there were any issues which she could usefully take up with other Directors of Children’s Services.

ACTION:

CHRIS DIMMELOW AND MARIA KASPRZYK TO COME BACK TO THE BOARD WITH SPECIFIC PROPOSALS.

20. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next LSCB Meeting will take place on Friday 6th June 2008. at East Devon District Council Offices, The Knowle, Sidmouth.

Signed Dated
Anne Whiteley
Director of Children and Young People’s Services

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