



Multi Agency Briefing

Report on Multi Agency Self Evaluation Activity

October 2012

Introduction

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is fully committed to self evaluation as an integral part of the improvement process.

Multi agency evaluation of child protection services is led by the Audit and Evaluation Sub Group of North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee. This group maintains an overview of single agency audit and evaluation activity and coordinates a range of multi agency audit and evaluation activity. This work makes a significant contribution to the development and monitoring of improvement plans and ensuring children and young people in North Ayrshire are supported to achieve improved outcomes.

The Audit & Evaluation subgroup have implemented a Multi Agency Self Evaluation Strategy since January 2011 and this paper provides details of the findings of this activity to date. The two year strategy is structured around four key themes in child protection: pre birth, "uncooperative families", parental drug and alcohol misuse and domestic abuse. The first three themes have been completed; findings in respect of the domestic abuse evaluation will be published in Spring 2013.

The Multi Agency Child Protection Self Evaluation Strategy can be found at:
<http://www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info/professionals.php>

What We Did

We conducted multi agency case file audits in respect of each of the key themes and followed these up with a number of staff focus groups involving staff working directly with the cases audited.

This qualitative data was complemented by interrogation of available quantitative data.

What We Found – What is Working Well

- Staff across agencies and services in North Ayrshire tend to work very well together.
- Most staff are able to identify concerns about children and share these appropriately.
- Child protection processes usually work very well and the needs and risks for children identified as being in need of protection are well monitored via the core group process.
- Staff demonstrate a very high level of commitment and motivation for their work with families.
- In discussion, staff are able to articulate outcomes for children and how services contribute to improving these.
- Decision making clearly reflects the needs and risks of the child across almost all care planning activity.
- Overall, staff had a shared understanding of concerns across agencies and showed tenacity in working together both professionally and effectively to keep the child at the centre, despite challenges posed by caregivers.

What We Found – What Needs to Improve

- Assessment of the needs and risks for children requires to be improved. Specifically there needs to be greater analysis of how parental difficulties impact on children; all needs and risks must be explicitly recorded and considered within the assessment; and assessment must be clearly understood as an ongoing dynamic process.
- All child protection plans must contain planned outcomes for children, using the well being indicators as a foundation, and all staff in all services must meaningfully contribute to the development and implementation of these plans.
- Plans for children should continue to be in place for children for as long as needed – not just for the period of time they are on the child protection register.
- Staff must make increased effort to represent the views of children and young people. For ALL ages of children, staff should seek to identify and represent that child's perspective of their circumstances.
- Adult services and children's services must work more closely together; understanding how their respective roles and responsibilities complement each other and ensure the needs of vulnerable families are identified and met.

What We Will Do Next

The Audit & Evaluation sub group will continue to monitor the implementation of improvement plans.

As a critical part of our strategy, we will also measure the impact of the improvement plans. It is not sufficient to merely ensure action has been taken; we need to consider what difference such actions have made to improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

As we are nearing the end of our two year Multi Agency Child Protection Self Evaluation Strategy, we are currently reviewing this and beginning to develop a new strategy for 2013-2015. We expect to publish this in Spring 2013.

We are also considering how we can better support staff in ensuring continuous improvement in child protection services. A proposal is currently being developed via the Learning and Development Sub group to introduce new multi agency learning opportunities which promote reflection on practice using findings from local self evaluation activity

Your Role in Supporting Continuous Improvement in Child Protection Services

1. Implement the findings of our multi agency self evaluation activity.
2. Consider how your single agency self evaluation activity can support improvements.
3. Continue to contribute to our Multi Agency Child Protection Self Evaluation Strategy by sharing your views via staff focus groups and surveys.
4. Take advantage of the new child protection learning and development events being introduced early in 2013 to promote an open learning culture which recognises the value of improving practice via evaluation and reflection.