

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

12 JANUARY 2010

NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR SAFEGUARDING INSPECTIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Corporate Parenting Board on the new arrangements for safeguarding inspections from April 2009 and the Sunderland arrangements in relation to this.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the death of Baby Peter and the subsequent Laming Report of March 2009, recommendations were made for the urgent review of inspections of safeguarding services.
- 2.2 As a result, from April 2009, Joint Area Review (JAR) inspections of children's services ceased, and were replaced by a new programme of inspection. Outcomes for all children and young people will now be fed through the new Comprehensive Area Assessment. However, two new inspections will take place relating to safeguarding children and young people. They are:
- Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment of children in need and children who may be in need of protection
 - Announced inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services.
- 2.3 These two inspections also feed into the Comprehensive Area Assessments, which assess how well councils are working together with other public bodies to meet the needs of the people they serve.

3. UNANNOUNCED INSPECTIONS OF CONTACT, REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 These are annual inspections of front-line practice in relation to contact, referral and assessment processes for children in need and children who may be in need of protection. The authority will have no prior warning that the inspections will take place. Inspectors will literally present themselves at 8.00am on the morning of their visit, and stay for two days.

- 3.2 During their visit, inspectors will scrutinise case files, performance information and speak with managers and practitioners to inform themselves of the activity and effectiveness of the work of the teams.
- 3.3 These short inspections will focus on the local authority as the lead agency for child protection. However, the contribution of partners will also be evaluated, particularly around the quality of multi-agency prevention and support for safeguarding children and young people.
- 3.4 No grade is awarded for these inspections, however a letter will be sent to the Director of Children's Services setting out the strengths of the service and any areas for development in observed practice. It will always identify if there are any serious concerns identified during the inspection. If serious weaknesses are identified, this could bring forward the timing of a full inspection (details below).

4. INSPECTIONS OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SERVICES

- 4.1 These inspections will take place once every three years. The authority will receive ten working days notice of the inspections, after which time two to three inspectors will be on site, also for ten working days.
- 4.2 For each element (i.e. safeguarding and looked after children) inspectors will evaluate:
- Capacity to improve
 - Leadership and management
 - Quality of provision
 - Outcomes
- 4.3 Before and during inspection, the following activities will take place:
- Analysis of performance information
 - Ofsted already holds lots of information on all local authorities and the inspectors will be fully briefed about Sunderland's performance before they arrive
 - Documentation analysis
 - Ofsted has provided a list of documents they want to see before their visit. Inspectors will have fully reviewed this documentation before they arrive
 - Interviews with officers, partners and stakeholders
 - Ofsted has set a list of those users, managers, professionals, agencies, other staff and stakeholders that inspectors are likely to want to hold focus groups with during the inspection (attached at Appendix A)
 - Case file analysis

- Ofsted will inform us which case files they will review when on site
 - Survey of children and young people.
 - Ofsted will contact all looked after children and those young people who have left care in the last twelve months, and invite them to complete a survey, to gather their views on the services they receive.
- 4.4 The authority will receive a report following this inspection and will receive a 'grade', based on Ofsted's four-point scale: Outstanding, Good, Adequate, Inadequate.

5. SUNDERLAND ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 As part of the preparation for the inspections, a Project Board and a small Project Team were established. Self-evaluation has been carried out and risk management plans devised to understand areas of strength and also where improvements are required. This work will now be taken forward and monitored by a Safeguarding Service Improvement Board, to ensure continuous improvement within the service, in preparation for and beyond inspection.
- 5.2 Dissemination of information to partners has also begun, as well as identifying appropriate stakeholders who could potentially be involved in focus groups with inspectors.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note the contents of this report and members are requested to disseminate this information in their own organisations.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SERVICES

INTERVIEWS TO BE HELD WITH INSPECTORS

Inspectors will conduct meetings and hold discussions with users, managers, health professionals and agencies, police, other staff and stakeholders. Typically, these may include:

- Chair and members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust Board
- children, young people, their parents or carers receiving children in need services
- any existing groups of users
- lead manager(s) for safeguarding and common assessment framework
- managers responsible for commissioning, planning and monitoring services
- Director of Children's Services, Lead Member (and where appropriate support members) and Chief Executive
- managers of Primary Care Trust and police responsible for reviewing points of referral and the quality of risk assessments, decision-making and multi-agency working
- managers of the accident and emergency department of the local hospitals
- strategic group responsible for tackling domestic violence
- focus group of designated headteachers, teachers and support teachers
- focus group of independent reviewing officers
- focus group of social workers involved in safeguarding and protecting children
- focus group of social work team managers for child protection and children in need
- multi-agency staff focus group for early intervention and prevention
- health focus group for safeguarding, including general medical practitioners (GPs) and designated health professionals
- focus group of staff responsible for the education of young people excluded from education or educated other than at school
- representatives from the community and voluntary sectors
- manager/staff of the independent advocacy service