

Practice Team, Children and Families Report 2007 - 08

Introduction

This report summarises the work of the Practice Team over the past year and reports on performance and feedback from customers. We set challenging performance targets against each of our service standard and we publish results of our monitoring to let you know how we are performing against them.

Service Users and Partners

Practice Team customers are primarily children, young people and families. This includes parents and other carers such as grand parents. Some will be receiving a service from the Practice Team voluntarily, others will have social work involvement as a result of statutory responsibilities of the Practice Teams, for example following a decision of a Children's Hearing to place a child on a supervision order.

Practice Team staff work alongside many partner agencies including education, health, SCRA and police. They also work alongside voluntary sector organisations and other teams within Children and Families.

Summary of the services provided

There are three Practice Teams in West Lothian. These teams offer support to a range of children and their families.

Practice Teams provide a daytime duty system including a response to initial child protection referrals and other emergency situations as well as planned office appointments. The teams are also responsible for the provision of reports to the Children's Reporter and Children's Hearing system, the support of children and young people looked after at home and away from home, throughcare support to young people and permanency planning and adoption work. Social Workers in the teams also have responsibility for children whose names are on the child protection register and work with colleagues from other agencies to develop plans to protect and support these children and their families. Staff work with families on both a statutory and voluntary basis and are also involved in group work with other Social Policy colleagues.

Service standards

We said we would:	06/07	07/08	Target 08/09
Carry out child protection investigations in partnership with our colleagues in the police and health according to interagency procedure	100%	100%	100%
Prepare reports for the Reporter (SCRA) in time for decisions to be made	54%	55%	57%
Prepare reports for child protection and LAC meetings in time for children, young people, families and carers to read them over		LAC- 100% CP- 100%	LAC- 100% CP- 100%
Visit each child or young person on a new home based supervision order within 15 working days of the order being made	95%	95.2%	100%
Allocate a social worker to every child or young person on the child protection register or looked after by the council	100%	100%	100%
Create a care plan for every child and young person with a social worker		100%	100%
Involve service users and partner agencies in agreeing and reviewing the care plan		100%	100%

We asked customers if they felt our Service Standards were still relevant. All of those who responded agreed they were and 73% agreed that they are met, the remaining 27% answered 'don't know'.

Staff also reviewed the service standards and some amendments were made to ensure that all standards were measurable.

Achievements/report on previous years targets

As the table above illustrates the Practice Teams have continued to maintain or improve standards despite increased demands and expectations from the general public and services alike.

Child Protection Inspectors West Lothian positively appraised West Lothian employees. As the report states 'Inspectors were very confident that children who needed protection were known to services. There were robust arrangements to ensure that the necessary immediate action was taken to make children safe. Staff took steps to ensure that their needs were met and their circumstances improved.' The report was published September 08.

Feedback on customer satisfaction

14 out of 19 of children and young people who responded gave top marks for making them feel safe, feel cared for & lead a more active life. 12 gave top marks for helping them achieve more and feel healthier. We have more work to do however as only 9 gave us top marks for helping them to feel part of the community.

Eleven agencies we work with also provided useful information that we will use to improve our service.

All of them rated our service good or very good for timeliness and sharing information. 10 rated our communication and the quality of our work as good or very good.

All rated our work with children and families as good or very good with the exception of one person who considered our availability to be just adequate.

We received many positive comments about our service, many around our working relationships with children and with other workers. There were several suggestions made regarding how we could improve our service, such as joint training. The team considered these suggestions and many have already been acted upon, for example joint training with another Children and Families Social Work Team. There has also been a range of joint training events related to child protection, as detailed in the Child Protection Annual Report.

A full report with the results of any consultation exercise is available from Jo Macpherson on request.

Complaints/compliments report

Between March 07 and May 08 we received 18 complaints.

Following an investigation by the Group Manager, most of the complaints were resolved by fully explaining why a certain decision was made.

Several complaints concerned financial support to kinship carers. As from 1st April 2008 we pay approved kinship carers of Looked After Children the same allowance rate as council carers – unlike many other local authorities who are not paying out until 2010.

We investigated all the complaints.

We also had many compliments from children, young people, parents, carers and partner organisations. Some were made during consultation exercises. Others (8) were contained within cards and other correspondence.

Cost

There is no charge to customers to use any Practice Team Service.

Customer Comments

Our Service Standards in this leaflet are reviewed every year and we monitor our performance against them by regular management review and by listening to customer feedback.

We welcome feedback from all service users, potential service users, partner agencies and staff.

Please let us know if you feel we are not performing in accordance with our standards or if you have other feedback regarding the Practice Team. Contact Jo Macpherson - details below.

Contact details

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