

**Multi Agency Visits to Children with a Child Protection or Child In Need Plan whose safety is monitored by a Core Group**

Barking and Dagenham's Local Safeguarding Children Board is committed to the principle that safeguarding children is everyone's business. All agencies involved in exercising their safeguarding duties play an equally significant role in ensuring that the most vulnerable children are free from harm and kept safe.

One of the key mechanisms in fulfilling this multi agency responsibility/role is through the Core Group function. Section 8 of the London Child Protection Procedures (LCPP) details the roles and responsibilities of the Core Group process. All practitioners who are part of a Core Group must ensure that they are familiar with their roles and responsibilities as set down within this section.

The purpose of this local protocol is to facilitate better joined up working by providing a clear, consistent and accountable framework by which visits to children with a Child Protection or Children in Need Plan are recorded and shared with the other relevant agencies. The key procedural driver for this is section 8.4 of the LCPP, which details the roles of the Core Group and the key worker in implementing the plan. Whilst the procedures set out in the LCPP refer to children with a Child Protection Plan, this local protocol extends to all children who have a Child Protection or Child In Need Plan which is formulated and monitored by a multi agency Core Group.

This LCPP section details the minimum standard expected in terms of the Core Group visiting children and states:

- Ensure the children are seen at least every 10 working days by the key worker or by another member of the core group
- Ensure that the key worker sees the child at home at least every six weeks
- Ensure that the child's bedroom is seen at least once between each conference
- Ensure the child is seen alone (with parent's agreement) or babies awake at least every six weeks

Current practice across agencies suggests that at best the fortnightly Core Group visiting patterns are taking place sporadically, and when they do there is little evidence to suggest that the recording of the visits is shared with the key worker and other Core Group members.

As part of local performance indicators Social Workers are currently required to visit the child(ren) in the home every 10 working days. However, other members of the Core Group, as part of the Child Protection Plan, can also fulfill the 10 working day requirement by visiting at home, and/or seeing the child(ren) within a different setting, for example in health clinics, school, GP surgery etc...

Teachers would not have to complete the form every day, however if they saw the child(ren) as part of a specific task of the Child Protection Plan, beyond them carrying out their normal teaching duties, this protocol would apply. Health staff who see children in their health settings should always complete the protocol given they are unlikely to see the child(ren) on as frequent a basis as teaching staff. Again this should be set down within the Child Protection Plan.

Therefore, in order to improve multi agency performance in this area, all Core Group members are asked to familiarise themselves with the process for completing and sharing the following recording tool.

## **The Visiting, Recording and Sharing Information Process**

The frequency of the visits both to the home and other settings, and who undertakes them, should be agreed within the Core Groups, and set down within the Child Protection or Child In Need Plan. This should include agreeing if unannounced visits will take place.

On visiting/interacting with the child(ren) be mindful of the basic safeguarding information that needs to be collected.

Inform the parents/carers of your observations, unless to do so would place the child(ren) and/or yourself in immediate risk.

Either record the information on the report form during the visit/interaction or as soon as possible following the visit/Interaction, and no later than 2 working days after the visit/Interaction.

If immediate concerns have been identified inform the key worker, or another social worker if the key worker is not available. Consider whether the concerns require the immediate implementation of child protection procedures.

On completion of the report forward a copy to the key worker and the parents/carers (unless to do so would place the child(ren) at risk of harm). The report can be sent by email or fax. If sent by email the subject heading should be Core Group Monitoring Form CONFIDENTIAL. The report must be forwarded to the key worker no later than 2 working days after the visit/Interaction.

The key worker will disseminate the report to all other Core Group members and place onto the child's file held in Children's Services.

## **The Multi-Agency Core Group Monitoring Form**

(Please see accompanying Excel/PDF document)