

Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service Service Redesign Newsletter November/December 2011

Introduction

This newsletter is designed to provide information on the developments of the lean review / re-design of children's social care.

In November we have progressed our project plan, however there have been some challenges along the way. We are developing our thinking around how to address the problems identified locally and nationally regarding the electronic recording system and simplifying the process. In the meantime we are

using a file management system called Documentum and have held recent workshops to familiarise staff with standards and requirements.

Check Report and Recommendations

The report on redesign of the service will take account of the early check phase, the work of the Family Team, and the recent mini-checks. The information and evidence from those reports along with workload data will shape the redesign of the social care service. Our primary objective for redesign is to fulfil the

Munro recommendations for providing families with early help and intervention as the foundation for services provided across the service.

The Family Team Pilot

In response to the pressures of demand and capacity we took the decision to join the Bath Locality team with the Family Team from 21 November. There have been some staff changes, due to natural turnover. One social worker who left to move to London, said "thank you for this fantastic opportunity to be part of

this Family Team, I'm really sorry I'm having to leave". The Family Team are experiencing four vacancies at present, but we have been immediately successful in recruiting to these posts. This has temporarily interrupted the quality of service we are striving to achieve.

Open Day

Due to the increasing interest in our pilot a number of local authorities were invited to an open day on 10 November where we shared our experiences of our lean review.

Social Work Reform Board

Representatives of local authorities from all over the country met in London on the 18 November. At this event it was confirmed that the recommendations from the competencies framework will be implemented and the career pathway for social workers will come into force next summer. The social work structure requires a 3 year degree course with a further assessed year in practice prior to confirmation of

the professional title of Social Worker. The registration board for social workers will transfer from the General Social Care Council to the Health Professions Council. Each local authority will have to identify a lead social work professional who will have the responsibility of ensuring that their agency complies with the regulatory framework. The aim of this is to improve the credibility of social work



as a profession and this will help the implementation of the recommendations in the Family Justice Review. This review which highlighted considerable weaknesses in the court process, has also been affected by the poor public perception of social

work. The Munro review, Family Justice Review and the Social Work Reform Board together, provide a real opportunity to raise the profile and credibility of social workers, and the redesign of social care services will enhance this further. Bath & North East Somerset are at the forefront of uniting these elements with the initiative around the Family Team work and the redesign of our service.

Timeline



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| January 12 | - | Formal staff consultation begins |
| 1 March 12 | - | Conference |
| 1 June 12 | - | Estimated date for new service structure |

What's Staying the Same

We will continue to report on our key performance indicators (PI's) as the Government is still considering the Munro recommendations that nationally specified timescales should end. Locally we are exploring more relevant PI's in relation to timeliness and quality of our interventions with families.

Client Record System

We are using Carefirst to record all referrals, visits and observations. At this time, the recording of basic data for the child protection process, and core data remains the same.

Duty

Currently, the duty arrangements for Bath & North East Somerset are:

- The area of Bath is covered by the Family Team, located at Lewis House
- North East Somerset area is covered by the North East Somerset Locality Team (NEST) based at in Riverside in Keynsham.

- The Disabled Children's Team take referrals for Disabled Children and for the Royal United Hospital.

Step Down

NEST have been especially proactive in establishing step down arrangements to universal services, for families who no longer need a specialist service.

What's Different?

IT / Documentation

The electronic client record system used in Children's Service is overly complicated and inhibits practice. Therefore we have reviewed the functions we are using in CareFirst and storing assessments and plans and other relevant documents in Documentum.

In order to improve the recording of the child and families experience we have created Word documents that we believe

capture the assessed needs, plan and interventions that the family can understand and contribute to.

Family Team Duty

In accordance with Munro recommendations we are ensuring that we have expertise on the front line. Our team and deputy managers have been responding to duty calls since 19 September.

Supervision Framework

In order to promote more reflection in social work practice we have

introduced a schedule of line management and peer supervision to better equip practitioners.

No "Hand off"

In systems thinking there is a concept of "Handing Off" which literally means assessing a situation and passing the work over to another service. In the Family Team we are encouraging assessment and intervention by the Social worker to create trusting relationships. This approach promotes engagement especially with those families who have

previously been resistant.

Team around the child

The Family Team have been promoting and facilitating team around the child meetings.

Consultation

A draft report on conclusion of check and redesign of the service was presented to the Control Board on 2nd December. A consolidated report will be presented to the Children Leadership Team on 14th December. A formal process of consultation will take place in the new year.

FAQ's

It feels like existing practice is not valued, is this the case?

The lean review was introduced not in response to a failing children's social care service. There are many examples of good practice across the service but this is not consistent. By using System's Thinking, the Family Team are learning how to improve the child's journey and create better continuity of service delivery. Our aim is to take the best elements of practice with us and manage the weaker areas more effectively.

What happens when all social workers are at capacity?

Bath & North East Somerset have a high re-referral rate and a higher than average number of children with repeat child protection plans. The intention is by providing intensive help and addressing the underlying causes of family dysfunction e.g. neglect, we will gradually reduce the need for families to return to specialist services. Implicit in this is the need to have a robust step down process to universal services, and we are on the road to establishing these arrangements.

Where will disabled children receive a service from?

The final redesign report will cover the detail in answer to this question, however it is recognised that disabled children receive a better service from a dedicated team. While there is interest from Sirona and the social enterprise to create an integrated disability service we will only progress this if there is strong evidence to do so.

What method's of intervention is the Family Team using?

The Family Team are using a range of different interventions to assist families. Practitioners will be trained in a range of methods over the next year to improve their expertise. For example Solution Focused Brief Therapy remains a recognised intervention for some families in certain circumstances, equally Systemically Family Therapy is more appropriate for others.