

Edinburgh Child Protection Committee Action Plan with Progress Report - March 2008

List of Abbreviations

CEC - City of Edinburgh Council
NHSL - NHS Lothian
L&BP - Lothian & Borders Police
SCRA - Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
CPC - Child Protection Committee
CYPSP - Children & Young Persons Strategic Partnership
ELBCPO - Edinburgh Lothians and Borders Child Protection Office
CPIRT - Child Protection Investigation and Review Team
ESWS - Emergency Social Work Service
SCD - Social Care Direct

TA - Tom Aitchison
GT - Gillian Tee
MM - Michelle Miller
CB - Christina Burnett
MR - Mike Rosendale
FMcL - Fiona McLeod
RL - Ron Lancashire
JB - James Barbour
SL - Sally Lee
JM - Jacqui Mok
AN - Anne Neilson
DS - David Strang
NR - Neil Richardson
CN - Craig Naylor
AL - Adrian Lawrie
AM - Anne Mitchell
KMacD - Kirsty MacDiarmid

CPR - Child Protection Register
IRD - Inter-agency Referral Discussion

Requirement - A	Action A1 - A4		Lead		Target	Mar-08 Update - include work undertaken, any resultant work streams and potential challenges
To provide, without delay, safe alternative care arrangements for all children identified as living in situations, which are unsafe.	A1	Establish system to manage, monitor and report on cases where warrants and other children's hearings' decisions cannot be implemented immediately.	CB / KMacD	CEC / SCRA	Dec-07	Partially achieved. A system is in place to monitor warrants. A database has been set up and is overseen by the Head of Support for Children, Young People and Families. Chairs of resource panels monitor all other cases until accommodation is available. By the end of March the database will have been extended to collate information from all panels to ensure that data can more readily be quantified and reported on. The Authority Reporter and Head of Support for Children, Young People and Families have devised a formal protocol. This is out for consultation and will be formally approved by 31 March.
	A2	Review and increase the availability of alternative placements for children assessed as at risk.	CB	CEC	Dec-07	Achieved. An emergency carer scheme started in Dec-07 with 2 carers offering a maximum of 6 placements. By mid February, 12 children had been placed, 3 of whom returned home and 8 of whom moved on to other care placements. In January 08, one residential unit became a respite/outreach unit. Another will become a Close Support Unit from April 2008. By mid February 2 young people were receiving respite and 9 receiving outreach.
	A3	Review capacity to recruit additional foster carers and access appropriate residential placements; and consider funding options to increase capacity.	CB	CEC	Mar-08	Partially achieved. A foster care recruitment campaign is ongoing with the support of a dedicated communications officer. It is too early to determine how many campaign enquiries will translate into approved carers. A recent analysis (Jan-07) has shown that use of local foster carers has reduced slightly, but that of independent providers has increased dramatically. This may partly be explained by a move away from use of out-of-authority residential placements.
	A4	Develop policy and procedures for approval and support to kinship carers and the placing of children with kinship carers in emergency situations.	CB	CEC	Jan-08	SMT has approved a policy and procedure report, which takes account of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 and the amendment of the Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996. This will be disseminated to staff by mid-March. In the interim, instructions have been issued to staff in the social work teams to ensure that police checks are carried out on all kinship carers prior to placement of children.

Requirement - B	Action B1 - B11		Lead		Target	Mar-08 Update - include work undertaken, any resultant work streams and potential challenges
Improve assessment of risk and needs to ensure that consistent and timely assessments are carried out when there are concerns about children.	B1	Develop agreed standards for: response times; allocation; recording; assessment and care planning; intervention; core groups and case conferences; and management overview.	MR / MM	CEC	Mar-08	Draft standards prepared for child protection, looked after children, permanency, youth justice and kinship care. These will be made available to teams via the intranet in mid-March, with staff briefings to follow.
	B2	Establish an agreed framework for the assessment of risk and need; with a common understanding across all agencies and disciplines regarding thresholds for intervention; supported by an agreed mechanism for reviewing the appropriateness of responses to referrals.	MR	CEC	Mar-08	The department's standardised risk and needs assessment has been revised. Following a period of consultation with staff over Dec/Jan, the format and accompanying guidance are being amended. Work on this will be completed by end Feb, with a planned implementation date of 1 April, accompanied by staff briefings. The format and guidance are consistent with the work of the GIRFEC 'Team around the child' project that is developing an inter-agency framework that will be piloted in 2 areas of the city later this year with full roll out planned for 2009/10. The department's format is regarded as a stepping stone to this inter-agency framework. The department's guidance also takes account of ELBEG's guidance on inter-agency risk assessment. The guidance will fit within the joint risk assessment framework that the departments of Children and Families and Health and Social care are developing. This will consist of an overarching policy statement on risk assessment relevant to all care groups. Under this will sit each care section's own detailed policy and procedures and specific risk assessment tools.
	B3	Ensure the accessibility of social work practice team staff to referring agencies and the public.	MR	CEC	Feb-08	Children and Families Senior Management Team is currently considering a proposal to extend the Social Care Direct model to children and families social work. In the interim, in addition to the normal switchboard numbers for social work centres, it has been agreed to offer an additional number for each duty access point. This is specifically for professionals seeking to discuss child protection concerns only. Access to emergency social work services should be improved by the introduction of a new telephony system at the beginning of March and by the introduction of separate arrangements for home care enquiries at the beginning of April.
Improve assessment of risk and needs to ensure that consistent and timely assessments are carried out when there are concerns about children (cont'd).	B4	Review the Inter-agency Referral Discussion process.	MR / JM / CN	CEC / NHSL / L&BP	Feb-08	An independent review of CEC's arrangements for inter-agency referral discussions was completed in early February. This has been disseminated to relevant agencies. By early March, the department will confirm the next steps it will take.
	B5	Reduce delays in reports to Authority Reporter.	MR	CEC	Dec-07 and ongoing	Internal mail delivery problems have been addressed. Performance has shown an improvement from 27% to 44% over the last quarter. Monthly reports to managers of practice teams allow them to monitor performance. SCRA and CEC have also established a working group to ensure streamlined processes for dealing with referrals and producing reports.

	B6	Develop a secure system for electronic data exchange between Children and Families and the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA).	CB / KMacD / SWIFT PB	CEC / SCRA	Mar-08	CEC staff now have GSX capacity. The Authority Reporter is currently investigating the possibility of electronic receipt of reports from the local authority for hearings and for investigation purposes. It is likely that this will be introduced on a phased basis and will involve receipt of reports to the Reporter, not an exchange of information.
	B7	Implement and monitor a procedure for the transfer of cases between areas, when appropriate.	MR / SL	CEC / NHSL	Jan-08	NHSL: system in place for transfer. Audit of effectiveness to be undertaken March 2008. CEC has developed a revised procedure that will be considered by senior management on 10 March. CPC has agreed a short-life working group to explore options for an approach that ensures that travelling or hard to reach families remain allocated to the appropriate professionals (social work and health visitors), irrespective of their address within Edinburgh by the end of April.
	B8	Introduce a procedure for the provision of feedback to referring agencies.	MR	CEC	Dec-07	Achieved. This issue has been addressed via instructions to team managers and mandatory training for all neighbourhood, CPIRT and hospital based teams that took place throughout December 2007 and that was completed with a final session in January 2008. The training includes a manual and clear guidance on feedback to referrers. Instances of individual non-compliance will be reported by relevant agencies to the Senior Manager Children and Families for remedial action.
Improve assessment of risk and needs to ensure that consistent and timely assessments are carried out when there are concerns about children (cont'd).	B9	Ensure Children and Families representation at multi-agency violent and sex offender risk management case	MR	CEC	Dec-07	Achieved. Monitored by senior managers in Children and Families.
	B10	Expand access to SWIFT to relevant social work staff.	CB / SWIFT PB	CEC	Mar-08	A proposal has been developed by Children and Families and the Council is considering the budget implications.
	B11	Implement a system for police input and up-date of intelligence as their enquiries progress.	CN	L&BP	Sep-07	Achieved. A dedicated Local Intelligence Officer was appointed to the Amethyst Team in July 2007 with responsibility to assess all enquiries that come into Amethyst and create suitable intelligence entries at the point of referral. This officer also assists in the IRD process through the effective provision of intelligence checks.

Requirement - C	Action C1 - C4		Lead		Target	Mar-08 Update - include work undertaken, any resultant work streams and potential challenges
Improve planning to meet children's needs ensuring that all children assessed as requiring a service have a social worker or lead professional allocated to their case.	C1	Establish a multi-agency process for screening, assessment, integrated care planning and service provision to ensure that responses to referrals are proportionate to assessed need; that appropriate resources are targeted at areas of greatest need; and that a lead professional is identified in each case.	MR / SL / CN	CEC / NHSL / L&BP	Mar-08	Pre-referral screening of all care and protection referrals to the Reporter from the police has been taking place since mid-September 2007, resulting in a 50% reduction in the referrals being made to the Reporter by the police. The children not referred to the Reporter are still referred by the police to the local authority. Pre-referral screening involving agencies other than the police and Reporter is not yet developed, although meetings have been established to enable discussion to take place between the police, health, local authority and SCRA about future development. A "Team Around the Child" project has been established by the CYPSP to progress this action point.
	C2	Ensure all children on the Child Protection Register have an allocated social worker.	MR	CEC	Oct-07	Achieved. This is being monitored by senior managers in Children and Families. CEC is considering options for ensuring that looked after children and children receiving a through and after care service are all allocated to an appropriate worker. Proposals will be presented by mid-April.
	C3	Establish agreed definitions and a system for reviewing and re-prioritising other unallocated cases.	MR	CEC	Dec-07	Definitions agreed: a) allocated (to an <u>individual named worker</u>); b) unallocated (all other circumstances). Allocated cases include those cases open to Working Together and Children and Families Centre staff, as well as those allocated to Practice Team staff. By mid-March managers of practice teams will also produce a paper detailing how their teams review the status of unallocated work.
	C4	Review permanence planning arrangements to ensure timely consideration of children's long-term needs.	MR	CEC	Mar-08	Permanence policy has been revised and procedures are being developed. The Accommodated Children's Review Team monitors performance on a case by case basis and reports to senior Children and Families managers. By end March the team will be able to produce monthly reports on performance for each practice team.

Requirement - D	Action D1 - D9		Lead		Target	Mar-08 Update - include work undertaken, any resultant work streams and potential challenges
Improve performance monitoring of key child protection processes, including assessment and planning, to ensure continuous improvement in how staff carry out their work.	D1	Establish management information for the Child Protection Committee on unallocated cases, un-enforced warrants and orders, and other critical performance measures.	MM	CPC QA Sub-group	Mar-08	CEC has developed a monthly performance reporting framework. By April this will be integrated into a multi-agency performance reporting framework.
	D2	Clarify and monitor the effectiveness of managers' overview of the quality of practice, including: timescales for reports; availability and quality of assessments; care and protection planning; contact with children; recording and file maintenance.	MR	CEC	Dec-07 and ongoing	Monthly monitoring statistics are provided to Social Work/Working Together Managers. These are currently on a city-wide basis but will be broken down by practice team from mid March. A working group is developing additional guidance and procedures on case recording and this task will be complete by March 2008.
	D3	Develop a revised care plan, linked to the risk assessment framework to improve the quality and consistency of child protection plans.	MR	CEC	Dec-07 and ongoing	A new child protection/care plan is being implemented alongside the standardised assessment framework. See B2. The training for all front line staff in December 2007 and January 2008 also addressed the purpose and content of child protection plans.
	D4	Within individual agencies, ensure consistency and monitor the quality of case recording, according to agreed agency-specific standards.	MR / SL / AL / KMacD	CEC / NHSL / L&BP / SCRA	Mar-08	NHSL: audit of records to be undertaken against national standards with additional aspects of child protection added to the audit tool. To be completed by March 2008. Police have undertaken a review of 137 IRDs to consider whether referrals were appropriate, information shared was relevant and necessary, and that intervention, if required was proportionate and carried out. The IRD review process attended week by Health, Children and Families, Police and Education ensures management overview and provides a quality control perspective. In addition, the Police have undertaken a review of case generation, investigation, tracking and disposal, both within and outwith Amethyst, to ensure that their processes are robust and can withstand scrutiny. CEC: see D2 re: work of group on improving the quality of Children and Families social work case recording. This will include new procedures, training strategy and quality assurance arrangements.
	D5	Review local compliance with the new inter-agency child protection procedures, focusing on timescales for child protection case conferences, delivery of reports, attendance and progress on protection plans.	MM	CPC QA Sub-group	Jul-08	See D1. A case audit form has also been developed for CEC case files. First audit to be carried out in April 2008 and 6 monthly thereafter. An audit of paediatricians' attendance at child protection case conferences was carried out in January 2008. This showed an overall attendance rate of 28% (58% initial; 24% review; and 17% pre-birth). The most common reason given was "no relevant information to contribute". NHSL to review.
Improve performance monitoring of key child protection processes, including assessment and planning, to ensure	D6	Implement a protocol for independent chairs of child protection case conferences to report poor progress on child protection plans.	CB / CPIRT	CEC	Jan-08	CPIRT will present a draft protocol to senior managers by mid-March. Implementation date: end March.

continuous improvement in how staff carry out their work (cont'd).	D7	Develop and implement a protocol to ensure that children and their families make an effective contribution to child protection services, including case conferences, core groups and reviews.	CB	CEC	Dec-07 and ongoing	Involving children and their families, together with techniques and strategies for doing this in an effective way, has been part of the mandatory training carried out in December 2007 and January 2008. By end March there will be a feedback sheet available for children to complete after case conferences, giving their views on how well practitioners have helped them prepare for the meeting. By the same date, the minute of the CPCC will include an area for chairs to record whether the views of children have been adequately presented. By end April there will be a leaflet available to give to children who are invited to CPCCs.
	D8	Monitor the effectiveness of Child Safety programmes within schools via HMIE school inspection reports and report to the Child Protection Committee.	FMcL	CEC	Quarterly reports to CPC	An analysis has been carried out of HMIE findings over the past 2 years and will be updated on a regular basis. This will be reported to the CPC as required.
	D9	Review the role and effectiveness of designated child protection staff within schools	FMcL	CEC	Mar-08	A small short-life working group is being established to consider how this action will be taken forward. This will be actioned within the timescale indicated.

Requirement - E	Action E1 - E7		Lead		Target	Mar-08 Update - include work undertaken, any resultant work streams and potential challenges
Improve training to raise awareness and understanding of staff across services of their roles and responsibilities in child protection.	E1	Establish a child protection training strategy for Edinburgh that reflects the national strategy.	JM	CPC Training Sub-group	Mar-08	Training strategy agreed in principle by CPC on 4 December 2007, together with training plan and budgetary implications. The final training strategy will be presented to the CPC meeting in April 2008. CPC will produce a business case for a funding application to the Chief Officers Group by the end April 2008.
	E2	Ensure an effective means of sharing good practice city-wide on a multi-agency basis.	AL	CPC Practitioner Sub-group	Mar-08	Practitioner Sub-group members have been tasked with identifying their local networks to ensure good 2-way communication to the and from the Committee via this group. This will more effective sharing of best practice, including acknowledging good work on individual cases. In the longer term and subject to the identification of resources, the group will consider the establishment of good practice seminars.
	E3	Publish an inter-agency communications strategy and circulate public information.	GMcC	CPC Comms Sub-group	Mar-08	All partner agencies are represented (child protection practitioners and communications professionals). Dates are established for 2008. Draft communications strategy was presented to CPC in Mar-08; regular CPC Newsletter under development for distribution to all child protection staff within partner agencies.
	E4	Ensure clear and accessible information is available to the public and to staff via internet sites.	MR / AN / CN	CEC / NHSL / L&BP	Jan-08	CEC has added the name of the Senior Manager Children and Families to its site. NHSL public website has been up-dated to ensure relevant links to child protection information, including links to CEC website; and staff intranet site includes a copy of this improvement plan, with updates included as these are developed. L&BP are to appoint a new website manager whose responsibilities will include managing the child protection information on the L&BP site.
	E5	Review Joint Investigative Interview training requirements and implement a strategy to ensure appropriate numbers of trained staff are available.	AM	ELBCPO	Mar-08	5 JIIT courses are planned for 2008: February; June; October; November; December. 20 places for social workers and 20 places for police officers from 'A' Division will be available. Negotiations are underway between CEC and L&BP to address the challenge of the differential in numbers of police officers and social workers requiring training. This is an issue across Scotland.
	E6	Ensure staff engaged in Joint Investigative Interviews of children with disabilities have appropriate specialist support.	AM	ELBCPO	Mar-08	Achieved. Training day set for 27 March for JII trained police officers and social workers. A further date is to be set for May 2008.
	E7	Raise awareness of child protection within schools via inter-agency training.	JM	CPC Training Sub	Mar-08	As part of the training strategy, 6 inter-agency 2-day training courses (level 2) will be delivered per year for 30-35 members of staff on each course. Places are allocated to staff within core agencies and the voluntary sector. Within the education service, priority will be given to new 'designated staff' in schools. In the absence of a dedicated inter-agency budget, these courses remain vulnerable.

Requirement - F	Action F1 - F6		Lead		Target	Mar-08 Update - include work undertaken, any resultant work streams and potential challenges
Ensure chief officers monitor the effectiveness of the Child Protection Committee and key child protection processes to achieve better outcomes for children.	F1	Establish a Chief Officers Group for Edinburgh, in accordance with national guidance.	TA / JB / DS	CEC / NHSL / L&BP	Jan-08	Achieved. First meeting scheduled for February 2008.
	F2	Establish a Child Protection Project Board to oversee improvement activity.	TA	CEC	Jan-07	Achieved. Project Initiation Document approved. Staff and stakeholder briefing issued.
	F3	Establish a multi-agency quality assurance sub-group of the Child Protection Committee with clear terms of reference.	MM	CPC	Sep-07	Achieved.
	F4	Review the interaction between the Child Protection Committee and inter-agency planning mechanisms (e.g. CYPSP).	NR / GT	CPC / CYPSP	Jul-08	The Director of Children and Families chairs the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and is vice chair of the Child Protection Committee. A new draft Children and Young People's Plan has been developed, identifying key outcomes for children and young people requiring improvement over the next 3 years. This includes a focus on preventative work for vulnerable children as well as outcomes for children in need of protection. The CYPSP will receive regular monitoring reports on progress, including from Child Protection Committee.
	F5	Develop a detailed performance reporting framework to ensure management information is accessible to senior officers to support strategic planning, remedial action, resource allocation, prioritisation and targeting.	MM / NR	CPC - via the QA Sub-group	Mar-08	Core indicators and the means of obtaining the information have been identified. From this, CEC will continue to produce bi-monthly reports for CMT and committee. From mid-March it will replace monthly reports on performance city-wide with reports broken down by practice teams. These will be distributed to senior managers and to practice teams. From mid-March there will also be a CEC monthly report available to the QA sub-group of the CPC. The group will develop this into an integrated multi-agency framework.
	F6	Improve the co-ordination and consistency of agencies' quality assurance systems.	MM	CPC QA Sub-group	Mar-08	This action is included in the QA sub-group work plan for commencement early January 2008.