

Edinburgh Child Protection Committee Action Plan with Progress Report - January 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	Jan-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	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. Panel chairs monitor all cases until accommodation is available. Data can now be quantified and reported on. The Authority Reporter and Head of Support for Children, Young People and Families will have a formal protocol devised by end of January 2008. This will be extended to apply to hearing decisions other than warrants.
	A2	Review and increase the availability of alternative placements for children assessed as at risk.	CB	CEC	Dec-07	Achieved. An accommodation strategy has been agreed. An emergency carer scheme is now in place with 2 carers being available and a further carer coming on stream in the next few weeks. Residential care provision is being changed with one unit becoming a respite/outreach unit from January 2008 and another a Close Support Unit from April 2008. This will increase the capacity to undertake preventative work and meet the changing need of some young people who require long-term care. All requests for accommodation are managed through a panel system that is monitored on a weekly basis. Emergency need is dealt with by the Resource Team duty system and overseen by a Service Manager.
	A3	Review capacity to recruit additional foster carers and access appropriate residential placements; and consider funding options to increase capacity.	CB	CEC	Mar-08	A Foster Care recruitment campaign is ongoing with the support of a dedicated communications officer. The priority is to increase the availability of local authority foster carers. Budget shortfalls have been included in bids for 2008/09 Council budget. All referrals for accommodation are overseen by a panel system and monitored on a weekly basis. Analysis of need is included in the ongoing accommodation strategy.
	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	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 is out for consultation with staff. The consultation period runs until 31 January 2008. 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	Jan-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	A mapping exercise is complete and staffing resources identified to focus on the development of service standards. Consultation with relevant multi-agency staff will take place prior to implementation from April 2008.
	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	A comprehensive multi-agency risk assessment framework has been approved by chief officers. A standardised assessment format, including risk assessment, has been reviewed and will be presented to Children and Families Senior Management Team for approval and roll-out across the City. This will be consistent with the framework described above and will be linked to the development of an agreed inter-agency and multi-disciplinary risk management framework for all care and protection services being led by the 'Changing Lives' Implementation Group. This Group is developing a policy and procedural framework for all social work services (children, criminal justice and community care). This will include a range of agreed risk assessment tools relevant to each service area and to varying levels of risk. Work will begin in January 2008 on extending this on a multi-agency basis.
	B3	Ensure the accessibility of social work practice team staff to referring agencies and the public.	MR	CEC	Feb-08	A review of access arrangements is underway, including a scoping exercise for each of the offices. On 14 January 2008 Children and Families Senior Management Team considered a proposal to extend the Social Care Direct model to all children and families social work. In the interim, arrangements are in place to provide a dedicated telephone line to each Access Point to ensure direct access to agencies seeking to refer children. This will be operational across Edinburgh by 11 February 2008, with a briefing for partner agencies. A review of access arrangements to the Emergency Social Work Service is underway, including a revised telephone system to both monitor call answering rates and facilitate access.
	B4	Review the Inter-agency Referral Discussion process.	MR / JM / CN	CEC / NHSL / L&BP	Feb-08	The inter-agency referral discussion arrangements are being reviewed by representatives from health, police and social work, both for quality and process. The aim is to address the known gaps in the system and to ensure a streamlined and efficient process that allows information to be shared effectively. An independent review of current processes and of agencies' preferred options for change will be complete by mid-February 2008. Consideration will include the need for consistency availability and accessibility, together with capacity for timeous case conferences and reviews. Decisions will be confirmed by end of February 2008 for immediate communication and implementation.

Improve assessment of risk and needs to ensure that consistent and timely assessments are carried out when there are concerns about children (cont'd).	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. Practice Team Managers are addressing the performance issues within teams. Arrangements are in place to review performance regularly. A working group has been established between SCR and CEC 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	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. Technological capacity, the need to introduce shared mailboxes and the need for GSX connection in the local authority are potential challenges.
	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: a revised procedure is in place; awareness has been raised with Practice Team Managers. 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 original professionals (social work and health visitors), irrespective of their address within Edinburgh.
	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 will be completed with a final session in January 2008. The training includes a manual and clear guidance on feedback to referrers.
	B9	Ensure Children and Families representation at multi-agency violent and sex offender risk management case conferences.	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 and is included in the Children and Families budget submission for 2008-2009.
	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	Jan-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. A system is being developed for reporting performance in relation to the allocation to an appropriate worker of all 'looked after' children.
	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 individual named worker); b) unallocated (all other circumstances). Practice Team managers are responsible for monitoring all unallocated cases (including those being provided a service on a duty basis) and prioritising according to changing need.
	C4	Review permanence planning arrangements to ensure timely consideration of children's long-term needs.	MR	CEC	Mar-08	Permanence policy has been revised. Procedures are being developed for staff. The Accommodated Children's Review Team is monitoring performance and will report to senior Children and Families managers.

Requirement - D	Action D1 - D9		Lead		Target	Jan-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	A monthly performance reporting framework within the Council will be complete by the end of January 2008. This will then be developed further and 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 now being provided to Social Work/Working Together Managers, together with updates on permanency cases. 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. The training for all front line staff in December 2007 and January 2008 specifically addresses 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 weekly by Health, Children and Families, Police and Education ensures manager 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: a steering group has oversight of ongoing work to improve and sustain 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	Review process to be agreed by QA sub-group in January 2008, with a view to implementation between January and July. CPIRT has produced initial statistics on timescales of child protection case conference reports, delivery of reports and attendance. These will be produced at regular intervals and progress on child protection plans is being monitored by the neighbourhood child protection lead managers and CPIRT. An audit of paediatricians' attendance at child protection case conferences will be complete by 31 January 2008.

Improve performance monitoring of key child protection processes, including assessment and planning, to ensure continuous improvement in how staff carry out their work (cont'd).	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	Achieved. The process has been confirmed and clarified for child protection case conference chairs to report any concerns to the relevant line manager and if necessary to the Social Work/Working Together Managers' group.
	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	Involving children and their families, together with techniques and strategies for doing this in an effective way, has been a specific part of the mandatory training carried out in December 2007 and January 2008. CPIRT is developing a checklist to ensure that chairs specifically address this issue at case conferences. A monitoring system including feedback from children and young people is being developed.
	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	Jan-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. CPC will produce a business case for a funding application to the Chief Officers Group by end February 2008.
	E2	Ensure an effective means of sharing good practice city-wide on a multi-agency basis.	AL	CPC Practitioner Sub-group	Mar-08	The Practitioners Sub-group is in the process of restructuring, subject to CPC approval. Thereafter it is proposed that examples of good practice will be notified to CPC via minutes of Sub-group and link in with Comms Sub-group for dissemination. In addition, identified members of the Practitioners Sub-group will be tasked to ensure good practice examples are circulated to their own agencies.
	E3	Publish an inter-agency communications strategy and circulate public information.	GMcC	CPC Comms Sub-group	Mar-08	Sub-group has been re-established and membership confirmed. Strategy to be developed within timescales indicated.
	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	The work to achieve an Amethyst intranet page is complete, however, problems with software and content management have prevented this from being published. It is intended to do this early in 2008 when the new software is available. NHSL: in place. CEC: website is being reviewed.
	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; April; June; 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	Plans are in place to provide additional input to police and social work staff who undertake Joint Investigative Interviews by March 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.

Requirement - F	Action F1 - F6		Lead		Target	Jan-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 January 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	A monthly performance reporting framework for CEC will be in place by the end of January 2008. The Quality Assurance Sub-group will oversee compliance and report to CPC. Early emphasis is being placed on indicators to monitor progress against specific actions in the improvement plan. Activity will then progress to the development of an integrated, multi-agency framework to incorporate the performance monitoring requirements of all agencies.
	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 (see also F3 and D1 above).