

Practice Team, Children and Families Report April 2009 - March 10

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

Our Service Standards have been reviewed and amended to reflect the overarching aim of children's services to contribute to making sure that all children and young people in West Lothian are safe, nurtured, active, healthy, achieving, included, respected and responsible. We do this in partnership with children and young people, their families and carers, their communities and other relevant organisations. We aim to be open, honest and accountable, and to make best use of our resources through a competent and confident workforce.

We will:

- Respond to referrals within ten working days
- Provide a high quality service as judged by our customers
- Provide the information you need in ways which are easy to understand and meet your needs and preferences
- Ensure our staff behave professionally in all aspects of their dealings with you
- Work with you to achieve the best outcomes for children

In addition the Children & Family Practice Team have continued to set challenging performance targets:

We said we would:	06/07	07/08	08/09	Target 09/10
Carry out child protection investigations in partnership with our colleagues in the police and health according to interagency procedure	100%	100%	100%	100%
Prepare reports for the Reporter (SCRA) in time for decisions to be made	54%	55%	61.3%	62%
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%	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%	89.3%	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%	100%
Create a care plan for every child and young person with a social worker		100%	100%	100%
Involve service users and partner agencies in agreeing and reviewing the care plan		100%	100%	100%

Achievements/report on previous years targets

As the table above illustrates the Practice Teams for the majority of performance targets we have continued to maintain or improve standards despite increased demands and expectations from the general public and services alike. Visits to children or young people on home based supervision orders is an area that we need to improve and this will be addressed with teams.

Previous Child Protection Inspectors 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.

A further Child Protection Inspection will take place during the summer of 2010.

Feedback on customer satisfaction

The tables below provide a breakdown of the response.

Annual survey of customers and partners:

	Customers	Partners
% of respondents who rated the timeliness of response as good or excellent	87%	92%
% of respondents who rated the service delivered as good or excellent	80%	92%
% of respondents who rated accessibility of the service as good or excellent	93%	100%
% if respondents who rated the service's performance in keeping them informed as good or excellent	93%	92%
% of respondents who rated the staffs attitude as good or excellent	93%	92%
% of respondents who rated the staffs' professionalism/knowledge as good or excellent	93%	92%
% if respondents who consider they were treated fairly	93%	100%
% of respondents who rated the overall quality as good or excellent	93%	100%

Feedback from customers and partners is generally positive and we will use this information to help us improve our services.

Annual survey of children and young people - covering the Getting it Right for Every Child well-being indicators:

% of respondents who responded 4 & 5	
Feel Safe	100%
Feel Valued	93%
More Responsible	100%
Feel Cared for	93%
Achieve more	100%
Feel part of community	93%
Feel supported	87%
Feel Healthier	87%
More Active	93%
Informed	100%
Timeliness	93%
Overall quality of service	100%

Of those children and young people who responded 100% feel safe, more responsible, achieve more, informed and overall happy with the quality of service provided. Whilst this is extremely positive we have more work to do on supporting children and young people to feel supported and healthier.

We received many positive comments about our service, many around our working relationships with children and with other workers. There were some suggestions made regarding how we could improve our service and these will be considered by the team.

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

Complaints/compliments report

Between April 09 to March 10 we received 20 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 level of communication, involvement in care planning and lack of support. These areas have been highlighted for discussion at team meetings.

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 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 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.

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