

**Victoria Climbié Audit Tool : 2002-03 : Performance Evaluation
for Leicester council. (509)**

Audit of services to Children in Need in response to the practice recommendations of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry
Spring 2003

Name of Inspector completing evaluation	Date of completion
Roy Fryer	08-May-2003

Please complete the relevant tick box to identify this evaluation phase.	
a) Completed after the evaluation of the audit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Completed after a follow up visit	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Completed after an inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>

STANDARD 1 - REFERRAL	Evaluation
Referral and initial response, including those provided outside office hours, safeguard and promote the welfare of children and are convenient and user-friendly	Most
Text box explaining evaluation particularly if evaluation does not agree with the council's self audit.	
<p>Procedures for the referral process are well defined and put into practice. ACPC protocols have been examined for the audit and are generally robust with a few requiring some revision. There are good working relationships with other agencies. Care First the IT system being developed in the Department will have the capacity by October to provide the case tracking and time scale alerts to enhance the information system and provide service managers with monitoring information. The introduction of a common referral/assessment form for children in need including those who are alleged to have been abused will strengthen this development. Staffing difficulties are the major concern in achieving the council's desired level of effectiveness.</p>	

STANDARD 2 - ASSESSMENT Assessment of children in need, focus on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child by addressing their developmental needs and the capacity of the primary carers to meet those needs	Evaluation Most
<p>Text box explaining evaluation particularly if evaluation does not agree with the council's self audit.</p> <p>An impressive file audit has taken place resulting in exemplars of good practice for assessments being produced supported by training and increased monitoring. It is evident that assessments are timely and include appropriate checks with other agencies. Managers are actively involved and supervision is regularly provided along with monitoring of procedures and practice. Work with black and ethnic minority families is well developed and independent interpreters are available for assessments. The housing department is a member of the ACPC and their work with social care has resulted in a Beacon award. Analytical skills are variable and this is being addressed through supervision and training. The importance of recording no-access visits is acknowledged by the use of a proforma to record purpose and outcome of visit, all contacts and the child's response. The joint audit of child protection with the UHL Trust should be undertaken as quickly as possible.</p>	

STANDARD 3 - ALLOCATION, SERVICE PROVISION AND CLOSURE Where a child is identified as being in need councils provide a service appropriate to the level of assessed need. Closure is only considered following an full analysis of need and such action is deemed to be in the child's best interest.	Evaluation Most
<p>Text box explaining evaluation particularly if evaluation does not agree with the council's self audit.</p> <p>All children on the CPR and LAC have an allocated social worker. The small number of children in need that are not allocated are regularly reviewed by service managers. All CP cases are reviewed independently to monitor the work plan. Staff recruitment and retention have affected some service provision and most of the proposed developments will not take place until July or October but these are improvements on existing well developed procedures and practice.</p>	

STANDARD 4 - GUIDANCE	Evaluation
Social services has effective policies and procedures in respect of children in need consistent with local ACPC arrangements and monitors the implementation of them	Promising
Text box explaining evaluation particularly if evaluation does not agree with the council's self audit.	
<p>The Director has produced a very helpful paper on the accountability of councillors and council staff to safeguard children which being distributed in SSI. There are effective policies and procedures in the department endorsed by the ACPC that are rigorously monitored. The ACPC has recognised that guidance on international issues and mobile families needs to be developed. Procedure for the closure and transfer of CPR cases is available and monitored but this is not for all children in need and the Council request national guidance on transfers between local authorities to reduce uncertainty. The Council has identified October for meeting most of the criteria having scored four on some but that is because improvements on existing systems are taking place particularly linked to the full implementation of the IT system Care First.</p>	

STANDARD 5 - TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	Evaluation
Social services ensure that all staff working with children in need are suitably skilled and qualified to undertake appropriate continuing professional development.	Promising
Text box explaining evaluation particularly if evaluation does not agree with the council's self audit.	
<p>Good training strategy informed by individual staff appraisal that identifies training needs and it used to set the training programme. All staff working with children in need are qualified and have received in house training. ACPC training is being offered to promote a more assertive culture by offering courses on "challenging other professionals," "working with dangerous families" and "supervising social workers who are managing risk". The difficulty is budget limitations and staff levels within teams restricting numbers that can be released for training.</p>	

STANDARD 6 - ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT	Evaluation
Social services has performance management arrangements within which all staff understand their responsibilities for delivering the services supported by regular supervision and appraisal.	Promising
Text box explaining evaluation particularly if evaluation does not agree with the council's self audit.	
<p>The audit has identified the need to increase the percentage of cases monitored and use the information to improve performance. Regular supervision and appraisal is in place to ensure staff understand their responsibilities. It is acknowledged that too much reliance is placed on team managers. The introduction of Care First will reduce the time consuming manual collection of information and the reconfiguration of staff responsibilities should allow team managers more time for supervision and performance management.</p>	

STANDARD 7 - GOVERNANCE	Evaluation
Councilors and Chief Executives have clear accountabilities for social services for children in need including arrangements for the review of policy and practice and strong scrutiny arrangements.	Promising
Text box explaining evaluation particularly if evaluation does not agree with the council's self audit.	
<p>Leicester City has many Government initiatives for childrens services and they are interested in forming a Childrens Trust to co-ordinate these initiatives supported by their own plans and PSA targets for children. They are planning innovative approaches to retain and recruit staff. The budget settlement will allow some development without the threat of reduction in services. There are clear lines of accountability and the Chief Executive is active in promoting the safeguarding of children. More information is required for councilors on services for children in need including unallocated cases and staffing difficulties.</p>	

Overall Assessment : Serving People well?

Evaluation - Serving people well	Most
Text box explaining evaluation particularly if evaluation does not agree with the council's self audit.	
<p>All CP children and LAC have a qualified social worker and only a small minority of children in need were not allocated at the time of the audit. Good performance management systems are in place that ensures regular monitoring, file audits and supervision. Policies and procedures are in line with ACPC requirements and supported by training and staff development. The risks are associated with the retention and recruitment of staff and the full implementation of the IT system Care First. An SSI inspection of childrens services will take place in May and will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the service.</p>	

Overall Assessment : Capacity for Improvement?

Evaluation - Capacity for improvement	Promising
Text box explaining evaluation particularly if evaluation does not agree with the council's self audit.	
<p>Services for children in need are well managed in Leicester and the application to become a Childrens Trust is indicative of the partnerships that exist and the desire to co-ordinate the many Government initiatives linked with the Council's objectives for children supported by their work on the PSA. The budget settlement has ensured that they will not have to cut back on service provision. The audit indicates a higher percentage of criteria that are not on target but a lot of these are because improvements to the existing system have been identified and require additional time for implementation.</p>	

Follow up visit to take place?	No
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Strengths and areas for development

Description of issue	PAF Domain	Strength/ Area for development?	Highlight for Annual Review?
There are procedures and policies and compliance is monitored through supervision and file checks by service managers. This process will be improved when the new IT system is fully operational.	Effectiveness	Strength	1 - Yes
The Council is strong on partnerships as evidenced by its desire to become a Childrens Trust to coordinate the large number of resources provided through Government initiatives to reduce deprivation. Beacon status has also been awarded to some services.	Effectiveness	Strength	1 - Yes
Staff recruitment and retention is a major concern and limits the effectiveness of services.	Effectiveness	Area for development	1 - Yes
Revision of some ACPC procedures have been identified following the audit. A joint audit with the Acute NHS Trust of child protection referrals will be undertaken.	Effectiveness	Area for development	1 - Yes