



In July 2020, The Audit and Practice Standards Team (APS) audited a total of 132 children's LCS records with a focus on the core group process (across all 4 quadrants). The purpose of the audit was to report on the Quality of minutes, Effectiveness of the Core Group, and the Overall safety of the child. This was a collaborative effort with Family Safeguarding Team/Safeguarding Adolescent Team Service Managers and the APS Team to ensure that the purpose, tool, and follow up work had a shared sense of accountability in terms of responding and supporting on-going practice improvement.

 The thematic audit found the child's overall safety and focus on their experience was a strength in our practice, although the quality and effectiveness of the core group minutes require the most focus for improvement. In the majority of children reviewed one or both (Quality/Effectiveness) were found to not meet the practice standards required for good consistent practice. Drift and delay were frequently the concerns when the quality and effectiveness of the core group did not meet the required standard.

- In 52% of children reviewed the quality of minutes did not meet required standard and in relation to the effectiveness of the core group meetings only 45% were felt to be driving forward planning.
- Core group minutes update information well (provide a narrative) but do not develop the Child Protection plan consistently or drive forward on-going planning.
- There was little evidence that managers are attending the 1<sup>st</sup> Core Group Meetings as set out in policy. There needs to be a renewed focus on attending these meetings- it creates better quality planning, increase knowledge of the child and overall management grip. In the West quadrants, only 13/60 1<sup>st</sup> Core groups were chaired by a manager (similar figures for East).

### Findings for Quality

- Progress of the plan is hard to follow when:
  - Previous minutes are not reviewed
  - Discussion of CP plan is not recorded
  - CP plan is not revised following meetings
- Need more consistency with the use of a template or agreed headings across teams and quadrants
- Examples were seen where parents did not engage. More challenge is needed with all professionals taking responsibility to help engage absentee parents.
- We are not consistently tracking actions from previous minutes or addressing how the delay is impacting the child.

### Enhancing Partnership Working

- Multi agency professionals need to share reports in advance when they cannot attend.
- Increase communication between core group members to address and resolve any concerns for children and families.
- More escalations should be considered to address concerns of drift, delay and minutes that are routinely not shared and agreed.
- Equal responsibility to safeguard

### Findings for Effectiveness

- New information and updates by the network are captured well.
- It was difficult to evaluate effectiveness due to a lack of progress recorded against the CP plan and little analysis to address need for new actions or approach.
- Parental issues were often the focus which is important but not always tracked back or analysed as to how it is impacting the child.
- Partner attendance is strong although we need to improve partners providing a report if absent
- CP Plans are not consistently updated following the meeting nor are minutes recorded as shared with partners.

### Putting improvement into action

- APS Team to share learning directly to practitioners within team meetings
- Practice Soundbite has been shared as a learning tool
- Frontline teams to incorporate learning into service plans
- Updated thematic audit to take place in January 2021
- Core Group Template to be updated on SSCP website
- 7-minute briefing to be shared with multi-agency partners

### Findings for Overall Safety

- All areas demonstrated strong and swift responses to safeguarding concerns identified within CGMs.
- No escalations were required for concerns around safeguarding or safety
- Quadrant differences were seen in regard to the child's experience and voice being present in process, some teams did really well in this area
- We need to better analyse safety at the end of core groups minutes based on new updates and family's report to any changes made
- Ensure we are using the multi-professional group to help challenge safeguarding concerns, focus on outcomes for the child, and contribute to the overall process.

### Impact we want to see

- Clear sense of progress, direction, and changes in place for the child when reading minutes and plans
- Increase absentee parent in meetings or a clear sense that their involvement has been considered
- Increase in minutes shared with professionals and families
- Increase of managers in 1<sup>st</sup> CGM
- Evidence of the safeguarding model having lasting impact on families before they are closed.