

APPENDIX A

Report on improvements undertaken in Children and Families Branch in relation to the assessment and provision of special educational needs and social care

Subject	Action to be Taken	Position to Date
1. Occupational Therapy	a) To increase OT capacity across the county.	Each of the three areas of the county now has an additional .5 OT support. We have increased administrative support to relieve OT's of these responsibilities.
2. Referral and decision making	To increase awareness and understanding of policy and procedures for effective decision making for children and their families (Section 17 : Children Act 1989) (Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their families)	Achieved. Eligibility criteria have been drawn up and agreed. Criteria used county wide to ensure consistency of standards and practice. Work monitored by Area Team Managers.
3. Initial (Brief) Assessment	To increase awareness and understanding of policy and procedures to ensure compliance with the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families that Initial Assessments are completed within a maximum of seven working days.	Achieved as above. Social Care Teams have received and will continue to receive half day training sessions on key areas of professional development.
4. Core Assessment	To monitor policy and procedures to ensure that Core Assessments are carried out within a maximum of 35 working days	Achieved as above.
5. Core Assessment and multi- agency working.	a) To establish interagency protocols, collaborative and joint commissioning arrangements where	Ongoing. Children's Services, PCT, Connexions and a range of other service providers working together to achieve better

	<p>necessary to agree support plans (Section 17 Children Act 1989).</p> <p>b) Protocols and collaborative arrangements will include an understanding of and agreed lines of communication and information sharing and exchange.</p>	outcomes for children and families particularly where complex needs are identified.
6. Initial and Core Assessments: Record Keeping.	To ensure that all actions are properly recorded through Care First and other electronic systems. This will include, for example, meetings and discussions with any family member, consultations with more senior managers, involvement with other agencies, decision making and communicating decisions.	Training on CareFirst for key staff ongoing.
7. Assessment of parent/carer capacity to look after Child in Need	To ensure advice is given to parent/carer as part of the core assessment of their right to request an assessment of their ability to provide care. This will take in to account any relevant impact on siblings.	All key staff aware of the need to ensure such assessments are carried out where relevant. Information leaflets providing such information for families are currently being published.
8. Complaints (Response to Ombudsman Criticisms)	<p>a) To set up a central log of all SEN complaints, representations and compliments and to discuss at team meetings.</p> <p>b) To set up new processes for handling complaints efficiently.</p> <p>c) To streamline and clarify decision making within the SEN team.</p>	<p>Log established in January 2008. Key issues and areas of improvement have been identified particularly around individual cases.</p> <p>New processes have now been established and unnecessary delays are being avoided.</p> <p>Achieved. Avoidance of unnecessary delays in decision making and has improved the service's ability to respond to</p>

	<p>d) To ensure school representation on SEN panels.</p> <p>e) To invite participation of Parent Partnership advisers to attend SEN Team Meetings.</p> <p>f) To review key stage transfer processes.</p> <p>g) To establish a Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire.</p> <p>h) To improve processes for amending statements</p> <p>i) Develop whole staff in-service training.</p> <p>j) To review arrangements for staff absence and caseload change.</p>	<p>urgent matters.</p> <p>Most SEN panels now have school representation thus improving transparency and quality of decision making.</p> <p>Now happening resulting in improved inter-service communication and relationships.</p> <p>Transfer processes have now been reviewed with the expectation that there will be fewer appeals and complaints.</p> <p>A questionnaire is now being sent to all parents with the final statement. This enables us to monitor satisfaction with the service and to identify areas of improvement.</p> <p>Statements are now being issued in compliance with regulations and the time lapse between Amendment Notice and the final statement is reduced.</p> <p>Training programmes now provided with better understanding of customer focussed working practices.</p> <p>Now reviewed and arrangements in place to prevent case actions to be overlooked.</p>
--	--	--

Philip Ward: Interim Special Educational Needs Manager
September 2008