



Date of Meeting: 4 September 2019

Lead Member: Andrew Parry - Lead Member for Children's Services...

Lead Officer: Sarah Parker, Executive Director – People Children

Executive Summary:

This paper provides an update and overall conclusion of the findings of the Safeguarding and Standards monthly manager's audit for June 2019 which was for Children Looked After (LAC) and includes a summary of audits undertaken on Children Who Are Disabled (CWAD) case files undertaken since April 2019.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Budget:

There are no budget implications related to this report.

Risk Assessment:

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW (Delete as appropriate)

Residual Risk HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW (Delete as appropriate)

This paper does not require a Risk Assessment

Climate implications:

None

Other Implications:

None

Recommendation:

There are no recommendations from this paper except to note its contents

Reason for Recommendation:

Appendices:

Appendix A - Monthly Audit Report – June 2019 and detailing CWAD since April 2019.

Background Papers: None

Officer Contact:

Name: Karen Elliott, Designated Safeguarding Manager

Tel:

Email: Karen.Elliott@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Case audits help identify good practice as well as highlight areas for development, improvement and learning. Audits support our continuous professional development and contribute to learning across the whole organisation. Auditing is a crucial element of case and service improvement and identifies where we need to do things differently to improve practice. We want to be sure that both the impact of our work and the child's experience is both positive and sustainable.

2. Monthly Audit Process

- 2.1. The audit template has seven domains with each domain given a score of between 1 to 10 by the auditor, with 1 being no evidence found and 10 where good evidence has been found. The auditor will also make an overall judgement at the end of the audit using the Ofsted judgements which are: Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate.
- 2.2. The auditor will consider: the child's voice, the impact of intervention on the specific child being audited, whether approaches have been effective and if policies and procedures have been followed appropriately. The auditor usually focuses on the last three months of involvement – the 'here and now' but where required the auditor will go back further.
- 2.3. The auditors are all peer auditors, so they do not audit their own teams work. The cohort of children audited this month were chosen from a list of Children Looked After. The allocated case workers include those from: the 0-12 and 13-25 teams, CWAD and both East and West Districts.
- 2.4. The auditor should escalate any urgent safeguarding concerns with the Safeguarding and Standards Team. None were identified as requiring escalation for immediate attention in the June audit.
- 2.5. The auditor involves the allocated social worker when auditing. The auditor contacts the social worker and agrees either to: audit the case alongside the social worker, get the perspective from the social worker prior to looking at the case on mosaic or speak to the social worker after auditing the case on mosaic if not possible to do together. The conversation had with the social worker is to try to obtain an understanding of context around practice and work undertaken.
- 2.6. This supports a move away from a deficit model to that of a learning organisation with the objective being a supportive process for the social worker and an opportunity for case reflection.

3. Audit Compliance (see 1 in Appendix A)

- 3.1. Audit compliance has reduced again this month down to 76% which is being followed up by the Corporate Director on an individual basis to identify what the barriers are to supporting the audit process.

4. Audit Scores (see 2 in Appendix A)

- 4.1. The overall average score across all seven domains has risen from 6.2 in May to 6.9 in the June audit which is in line with the general upward trend. 6.9 is the highest it has been since April 2018 except in April 2019 when it rose to 7.2.
- 4.2. 13 CWAD case files have been included in the cases chosen for audit since April 2019. They were not chosen as a cohort of CWAD specifically but were included in the pick list because they fulfilled the main criteria such as Child n Need or LAC as the cohort chosen for audit.
- 4.3. Of the cases audited since April 2019, the overall average score of all seven domains is in line with the June audit of 6.9. This would indicate a fairly consistent pattern of improved practice although the cohort was only 13, it is still encouraging.
- 4.4. 'Evidencing that supervision takes place regularly and that management oversight has been used appropriately to ensure effective practice', was the weakest scoring domain for both the June audit for LAC (5.9) and CWAD (5.8). This is a consistent pattern for the monthly audits being the weakest domain. Despite this being the weakest area, it still indicates a positive trend line upwards. Where this scored low the comments were again mainly around frequency of supervision and lack of reflection.
- 4.5. The highest scoring domain for June (LAC) of 7.4 and for CWAD 7.8, was the voice of the child. This domain indicates that there is evidence that the child's voice and their experience/needs were captured and understood and that this can be seen to have influenced the assessment, planning and interventions. This is often the highest or one of the highest scoring domains in the monthly audit and this trend upwards is very positive.
- 4.6. There continues to be evidence that work is taking place, but it is not always recorded consistently and in a timely way. This is still evidenced with some back recording onto mosaic taking place when gaps are highlighted in audits and reports.
- 4.7. It is important that there continues to be an emphasis on the expectation that work is recorded as soon after taking place as possible, so that this becomes fully embedded.

5. Audit Judgements (see section 3 in Appendix A)

- 5.1. We have seen only 2 Inadequate judgements for the June audit which remains the same as last month. There were no Inadequate judgements for the CWAD case files audited which is good.
- 5.2. There is an increase in Outstanding audits for the June audit where there were 5. This is 15% of the overall judgments which is positive. None of the CWAD audits were graded as Outstanding which is disappointing.
- 5.3. 47% of the audits were judged to be Good for the June audit and 62% for CWAD which is very positive. We remain in the Good/Requires

Improvement being the significant total and need to shift to this being a pattern of Good or Good/Outstanding being the majority.

6. Themes

6.1. The overall themes remain similar to the comments of previous months such as:

- It is sometimes unclear who has attended meetings.
- Within the Equality/Diversity domain it is evident that auditors are sometimes uncertain about what they are looking for, particularly if the child is White British. This domain generally is scoring quite highly with an average of 7 which does not reflect the uncertainty in the comments.
- There are examples of drift when social workers are off sick which highlights the need for managers to be more proactive in case management oversight in these situations and consider reallocation if there is likely to be a prolonged absence.
- There is sometimes no evidence of reflective supervision and this reflects the lower score for this domain.
- When the auditor has made a judgement of Requires Improvement or Inadequate, the actions detailed for follow up are clearer this month.
- There is some evidence of IRO escalation when plans or case recording such as visits are not evident.
- On occasion there is not an up to date care plan/pathway plan although when one is present it is generally good.
- The auditors rarely comment on the chronology. This may suggest that there is not a current up to date chronology present.

7. Children Looked After Statutory Visits (see section 4 in Appendix A)

- 7.1. Previously the need for improvement was highlighted in terms of LAC statutory visits and this continues to remain an area of focus for the monthly audit report.
- 7.2. The data shown in the table 4.A) in the appendix leaves a clear month for any late recording on mosaic to have less of an impact on the accuracy of the data available each month.
- 7.3. There continues to be a consistent gradual improvement for LAC Statutory Visits completed on time which is positive.
- 7.4. The report was re set to start again in April, so the table shows visits carried out in April, April to May and April to June. This is so that any poor performance from last year does not impact negatively on this data.
- 7.5. This month it shows that 85.81% of statutory LAC visits were carried out on time between 1 April to 30 June with 12.33% being undertaken late.

8. Moving Forward and Actions

- 8.1. We will know when we are making improvements when the monthly audit returns consistently show increased scores, and overall judgements show

- a percentage increase in those that are graded 'Good' and 'Outstanding', with fewer 'Requires Improvement' and with no 'Inadequate' judgements.
- 8.2. The Quality Assurance Meeting has been reviewed and will recommence in September where the learning from audits will be shared.
 - 8.3. The findings of case audits will be considered by the Children's Senior Leadership Team on a quarterly basis.
 - 8.4. Good practice is that all case files should have an up to date chronology. It is a quick and effective way to see what is happening in the life of a child or young person. It helps identify patterns and helps with assessing risk and analysing the likely impact of events. A reminder to consider chronologies will be sent out with the next audit cycle.
 - 8.5. The audit programme has been reviewed with a proposal due to go to the Children's Senior Leadership Team later this month with it due to come to Corporate Parenting Board in October. The new programme of quality assurance will increase the pool of auditors to include senior leaders across the council and the introduction of Observed Practice and Observation of Meetings. It will also include an audit week to include a 'Conversation' with children, young people and their families.
 - 8.6. The Cohort of children that will be audited in August will be those with an allocated worker from the CWAD Team.