

Report on Starting Point

Derbyshire County Council - Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – People



Report of the Safeguarding Working Group

1 July 2015

Cllr. Diane Charles (Committee Chair)
Cllr. John Frudd
Cllr. Glennice Birkin
Cllr. Daniel Walton

David Rose – Improvement and Scrutiny Officer, Derbyshire County Council.

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Executive summary and recommendations	4
3. Background to the report	5
4. Report findings	6
5. Report conclusions	11

Acknowledgements –

The Chair and Members of the working group would like to thank the Members and officers of Derbyshire County Council who have contributed to this report:-

Helen Barker	Business Manager, Call Derbyshire, Chief Executives
Vanessa Rogers	Business Services Officer, Call Derbyshire
Stuart Cottee	Service Improvement Manager, CAYA
Mel Meggs	Asst. Director Safeguarding & Disability Services, CAYA
Adele Glover	Social Care, Amber Valley
Dave Bond	Locality Manager, Amber Valley

All staff at Call Derbyshire and Starting Point

1. Introduction

Councillor Diane Charles, Chair of the Improvement and Scrutiny – People Committee and Chair of the Working Group, introduces this report;

“The issue of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is one that is close to the hearts of many people. The authority has statutory duties as well as a wider duty of care to ensure the people of Derbyshire are safe and protected. The authority has in place structures, processes and most importantly people to ensure risk is minimised to anyone who may be vulnerable.

The People Improvement and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a working group on safeguarding and for this to be a standing item. One of the areas of scrutiny is the development of Starting Point, through Call Derbyshire, and how this contributes to the safe and efficient referrals from and on behalf of vulnerable children.

This report presents our findings of the trials of Starting Point. Members and officers of Improvement and Scrutiny, Cabinet and officers have worked together to bring this report to a conclusion and I would like to thank all those involved for their assistance and contributions.”



Councillor Diane Charles

Chair, Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - People

2. Executive summary and recommendations

The report has found that there has been excellent preparatory work by Members, officers and partners in the development of Starting Point. The working group has met with many hard-working and dedicated staff that provides a service which ensures the safe and efficient referrals of vulnerable children.

The report has seen excellent partnership working. The evidence from the trials highlights that all agencies involved have shared information and expertise for the benefit of the vulnerable children who have been referred.

The report has also found areas of potential development, with the promotion of Call Derbyshire and the appropriate preparatory work to ensure Starting Point staff are supported once it 'goes live' later in the year.

The working group Members has made the following recommendations which the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – People is asked to accept and refer to Cabinet for approval and implementation of the proposals;

1. That the 01629 Call Derbyshire number is communicated through any new literature published by the authority and that efforts are made to replace any reference to the 0845 number in existing materials.
2. The working group meets with the independent chairs of the Derbyshire Safeguarding Adult's / Children's Boards to discuss their position with regard Starting Point.
3. The working group supports the development of Starting Point and its 'go live' later in the year and for regular updates of performance to be provided.
4. That Corporate Resources work with CAYA to ensure that the accommodation has suitable accessibility, IT provision and reasonable adjustments for all Starting Point staff.

The Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – People will monitor the implementation of these recommendations as and when appropriate.

3. Background to the report

In February 2015, the safeguarding working group from the Improvement and Scrutiny – People Committee agreed to take briefings on Starting Point. Also, it was agreed to undertake a visit to Call Derbyshire to experience one of the Starting Point trials in April 2015.

The scope of the working group's programme is to challenge and support the work being done to safeguard children, a duty that the authority holds. Members felt Starting Point would be a vital part of this duty and were keen to add value to its development.

4. Report findings

4.1 Call Derbyshire

The working group took an initial briefing from officers on the developments of Call Derbyshire.

Call Derbyshire has evolved since 2004, being a single point of access especially in out of hours support. In 2007, Social Care calls were fielded initially through Call Derbyshire to free up experts to deliver their day to day job. Over time, the amount of information collected and the breadth of subject areas has expanded and the call handling time has increased from an average of 5 minutes to 25 minutes per call.

Call handlers (Customer Care Assistants – CCA's) use Call Guides and these are shared with staff to ensure that calls are appropriately handled and referred. Children and Young People (CAYA) staff can field calls and provide advice and this is coordinated through the Service Improvement Team. Call Derbyshire is open 24/7/365. Out of hours, on average there are 5 Customer Care Assistants (CCA's) on duty between 5pm-8pm, 2 CCA's between 8pm-midnight and 2 CCA's between midnight and 8am.

It can be difficult to accurately predicting call volume with any real certainty. There is however frequent analysis of call volumes to identify any patterns and trends. Members raised the issue over the 0845 number and it being a barrier to some due to the call charges. Officers stated that the 01629 number is now regularly communicated but there is latent knowledge of the 0845 number due to previous communications. A 0345 number has also been reserved by Call Derbyshire. Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to a 01 or 02 numbers and count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls. These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone.

The working group recommend that the 01629 Call Derbyshire number is communicated through any new literature published by the authority and that efforts are made to replace any reference to the 0845 number in existing materials.

Members noted that there have been process improvements, driven by the findings from a Serious Case Review of a child death in Holbrook. These have

included confidential email process which goes automatically to the appropriate person (for example a Domestic Violence referral).

Members also noted that, as part of the Communications Review, Call Derbyshire is reviewing the breadth of its service, structures and processes. There is a move to focus on dealing with more complex calls for vulnerable people.

4.2 Starting Point

Members of the working group received a briefing and visited the Starting Point trial and spoke to the various people involved.

Members noted the legislative background around safeguarding. 'Working Together 2013' states that Local Safeguarding Children Boards need to assess the effectiveness of help provided to children and families, including Early Help. The Revised Ofsted framework now contains a judgment about Early Help to determine that it is well co-ordinated, multi-agency with appropriate, effective thresholds that are understood by all. The Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority and each of the authority's relevant partners. Also the Act puts a duty on local authorities to offer assessments using Section 17, child in need or Section 47, child protection.

The context for the development of Starting Point is that the Child's Journey begins at the point of referral which is generally Call Derbyshire. Call Derbyshire provides an information gathering service. This information is then reviewed by CAYA professionals through a basic referral triage system within the Contact Centre. Referrals are then distributed to districts and localities. The districts and localities operate 'Duty' systems to manage incoming work.

Members noted the internal challenge days, audits and external inspections that have been carried out over a period of time. Following analysis of these reviews, the department looked at developing their referral service in response to issues identified. These included decisions based on limited information, a lack of thorough analysis and inconsistent application of thresholds through a lack of understanding across agencies

Therefore, Starting Point was developed. It will not be a formal Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub arrangement (like in other council areas). The service will

focus on Early Help support through to Safeguarding and not solely on Child Protection concerns.

Members noted the proposed service model and spoke to members of staff who were trialling Starting Point at Shand House, Darley Dale. Members experienced the processes that contribute to the aim of having a single point of access via telephone, secure e-mail and an electronic referral document. Building on the Call Derbyshire model, members of staff are placed in 'pods' with a Pod Leader, who is a senior practitioner. Within each pod, there are Social Care, MAT and partner agencies. This includes Child Disability Services, Police (Public Protection Unit's researcher and officer), Health (Chesterfield Royal and Derbyshire Community Health Service), Education Support and Family Resource Workers; plus Call Derbyshire CCA's.

Members noted that Starting Point operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, incorporating and supporting an out of hour's function. This includes the Child Rapid Response Team. Discussions have taken place and will continue to secure representation from the Probation Service and Adult Safeguarding Services. Members also noted that appropriate resourcing was seen as a potential issue. Health workers in particular would need to ensure that they're fully supported in keeping up to date with their clinical work at the same time as working in Starting Point.

The working group recommend meeting with the independent chairs of the Derbyshire Safeguarding Adult's / Children's Boards to discuss their position with regard Starting Point.

Members were briefed and spoke to staff at the pods and experienced the process of triaging by Senior Practitioners / experienced Social Workers to determine priority. Additionally, further information gathering and sharing through direct contact with children, families and face to face discussion with co-located partners in 'real time'. Members were also briefed on the tools that are used, including chronologies, genograms and a Safety and Wellbeing grid linking to Derbyshire's 'Stronger Families, Safer Children' model of working. Members noted that this is to ensure a consistent application of the joint threshold document and to enable stronger analysis and robust decision making.

Members also noted that all concerns regarding a child suffering significant harm, or a child at risk of significant harm, are received as a priority when

callers choose Option 1, and then '1' again on the Call Derbyshire telephone number Professionals are required to follow up the telephone contact with written confirmation. All contacts about low level, emerging or complex needs made by professionals will be made on an electronic referral record and submitted to Starting Point.

Members also noted the development of Starting Point trials. Approximately 70 individual staff from across early help, safeguarding and business services have been involved so far. Each trial has been supported by colleagues from Derbyshire Police, health visitors and a service manager. All were co-located with the authority's staff and were able to share data and information. Trials have shown that Starting Point provided a consistent platform for child protection strategy meetings where it is possible to interrogate databases, meet face to face, agree threshold and put in place a safe plan of action for the child in consultation with a district service manager via a conference call.

Over the last two trials Starting Point dealt with 700 referrals achieving a decision rate of almost 90% in the twenty four hour decision making target. There is overwhelmingly positive feedback from colleagues receiving work from the trial and from all who have taken part.

There is a clear recognition that co-location benefits all agencies. Being able to update individual agency records in real time ensures that children and families receive the correct support at the earliest possible opportunity based on the most comprehensive information and this leads to safe practice and better outcomes for children.

The working group endorse the development of Starting Point and its 'go live' later in the year and for regular updates of performance to be provided.

Cabinet decided on the 5th May 2015 to agree to temporary accommodation at Godkin House, Ripley for Starting Point to go live, later in the year. The working group note the good facilities and location of the accommodation. However, they also noted the limited free car parking (although there are several car parks close to Godkin House) and that the current IT provision needs developing to ensure that Starting Point can operate effectively. Members also noted that funding would be required to upgrade the IT infrastructure along with some building alterations, furniture and equipment required to move teams onto new ways of working.

The working group recommend that the Corporate Resources work with CAYA to ensure that the accommodation has suitable accessibility, IT provision and reasonable adjustments for all Starting Point staff.

5. Report conclusions

The working group acknowledges the work that the Authority has done to develop Starting Point.

The challenge for the Authority is to ensure that the processes are in place to ensure that staffs are fully supported in their relocation to the new accommodation. This is especially important considering the importance of the service, in ensuring there is safe and efficient referral service for vulnerable children.

The findings and recommendations from this report will help the Authority's continual improvement in the safeguarding of young people in and around Derbyshire.