

APPENDIX B

Information re Translation and Interpretation within the Childrens Social Care and the Safeguarding Service specifically:

Overview:

Peterborough is an ethnically diverse city. As well as the long standing Italian, Portuguese and Pakistani Muslim communities, there are a large number of Eastern European nationals who have arrived from accession states. In addition to this the city is home to a number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who are either the responsibility of Peterborough City Council or other local authorities who place young people in Peterborough and who often go on to settle within the area. The majority come from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.

The local authority contracts two organisations, Cintra and Language Line to provide interpretation services. Both organisations have a great deal of experience in providing interpretation services. Face to face interpreters are used for all formal meetings with families who have difficulty with English. All workers have mobile telephones and are able to access telephone interpretation services when necessary. Telephone interpretation, provides an immediate and efficient service to aid communication between workers and service users.

The LSCB have translated their "Safer Parenting Guide" into foreign languages appropriate to the local communities; Slovak; Lithuanian; Polish; Portuguese and Russian. Service users are provided with translated copies of transcripts of meeting minutes and court hearings. The department has a budget of £54,000 to provide interpretation services. Children's Social Care is committed to ensuring that service users who require interpretation services are given the information required in a format they can understand.

Children and Young People who are Looked After:

Whenever children and young people are Looked After by the Local Authority they need to have a Care Plan that fully reflects their needs. It is this Care Plan that is then reviewed at regular intervals, the frequency of these reviews are prescribed nationally and must be held within the first month of placement, then within the following three months and then 6 monthly thereafter, as a minimum. Care planning and reviews are about bringing together children who are looked after, their families, carers and professionals, in order to plan for the care of the child and to review that plan on a regular basis.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) were introduced on a statutory basis in 2004 and the primary task of the IRO is to ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child's current needs and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the local authority's legal responsibilities towards the child. As

corporate parents each local authority should act for the children they look after as a responsible and conscientious parent would act.

The IRO's must quality assure the care planning and review process for each child and to ensure that his/her current wishes and feelings are given full consideration.

From IRO Handbook: Statutory guidance for independent reviewing officers and local authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review for looked after children

During 2010 the Safeguarding Service arranged for the translation of 5 invitation letters and 16 sets of Review of Arrangement documents for 15 children and young people. These were translated into polish x2; Portuguese x4; Kurdish Surani x2; Lithuanian x 3; Urdu x 2; Arabic x 2; Tigrinya x1 and Pashtu x1.

As an example; a child who is the subject of an Interim Care Order; was removed from his mother's care following concerns about her alcohol misuse and placed with foster carers; his father approached the Department seeking to care for him and he was placed with him. Unfortunately he was physically assaulted by his father, and was removed from his care and returned to foster care. Work has continued with his mother to address her alcohol misuse and reduce the risk posed. She is now supported by extended family members and contact between the child and his mother has been increased with a view to his eventual return to her care. He remains the subject of an interim care order therefore his care plan needs to be reviewed. As the mother does not have sufficient English to understand these discussions, interpreters attend the child care review in order to ascertain her views, clarify her situation and ensure she was able to participate in an informed way in the decision making about her child. The cost of an interpreter at one of these reviews was £70 +VAT and to translate the notes is £334.30 +VAT. Without the use of interpreters we would be unable to engage with this child's birth family, facilitate change and potentially he may have remained in the care of the Local Authority instead of being able to return to his mother's care in the longer term.

An unaccompanied asylum seeking young person travelled to this country alone as a 14 year old and has been looked after by foster carers. When he arrived he spoke no english and although is beginning to learn the language he does not have sufficient command of the language to communicate his wishes and feelings with workers; there is clearly a tension for this young person, who given his experiences sees himself as an adult and not needing to be looked after, however given his age there are very clear expectations that he cannot live independently at this time. He is able to speak his own language but not read it, so paperwork is not translated for him but the use of interpreters is vital to ensure that he is engaged in planning his own future and understanding expectations of him while in placement. The services of an interpreter at a review meeting costs on average approximately £170.

Child Protection Conferences:

Child Protection Conferences are held when children or young people are believed to be at risk of significant harm. The Initial Child Protection Conference brings together family members, the child, where appropriate, and those professionals most involved with the child and family following a Section 47 Enquiry. Its purpose is:

- To bring together and analyse in an inter-agency setting, the information which has been obtained about the child's developmental needs, and the parents' or carers' capacity to respond to these needs, to ensure the child's safety and promote the child's health and development within the context of their wider family and environment;
- To consider the evidence presented to the conference, make judgements about the likelihood of a child suffering Significant Harm in future and decide whether the child is at continuing risk of harm; and
- To decide what future action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, how that action will be taken forward, and with what intended outcomes. (PSCB procedures 5.1)

We know from research that when families are fully included in developing a child protection plan they are more likely to engage with the plan and consequently it is more likely to support change and protect children. It is vital therefore that parents, children and young people, where english is not their first language, are supported to contribute. Interpreters are used at child protection conferences and minutes of meetings are translated. The cost of an interpreters attendance at conference is on average £180.

Comparison:

The alternative to the young person mentioned above returning safely to his mother's care would be that he would remain in Local Authority Care. Although very difficult to predict the accurate cost of caring for him if he were to remain in Local Authority care the cost of a child living with Local Authority Foster Carers for a year is approximately £15,000; there are also additional financial costs that are incurred whenever children are in the care of the local authority including additional social worker time; the cost involved of multi agency meetings to review care plans and additional support from health and education. These figures result in estimates of the total cost of approximately £23,000 a year.

In addition to the financial cost, there is the huge emotional cost involved. Although some young people in care do very well the gap is closing we know that children in care are more likely to have poor educational experiences, leave school with fewer qualifications, are at higher risk of offending, becoming a teenage parent and being not in education, employment or training.