

# Safeguarding Children



## *From Possibility...*

*"Poor co-ordination; a failure to share information; the absence of anyone with a strong sense of accountability"*

(Report of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, p.5)

Findings from an inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié in 2003 clearly identified shortcomings when working to safeguard children's welfare. It informed the Green Paper Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004 in particular, the plans for integration of services around the needs of children, the set up of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and the new duty on agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In Cumbria, the LSCB is serious business with regular meetings between key stakeholders with representation from Local Authority, the Police Public Protection Unit, Criminal Justice Board, Children Services, the Probation Service and other relevant agents. Their purpose is to develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, planning of services for children, communicating the need to safeguard, monitoring effectiveness of what is done to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and undertake Serious Case Reviews.

In this effort, information sharing and visibility of processes are crucial to reach the desired outcome of a clear and transparent network to ensure its directives are met.

Ad Esse were invited to assist with mapping current processes and information sharing activity to present to the board to evaluate its rigidity and provide a visual tool for improvement.

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consulting

## OUR APPROACH

The huge scale of this task was evident from early on, due to the large network of government and voluntary agencies involved in the welfare of children. A child may come to the attention of a wide range of agencies, be it through schools, GPs, voluntary services such as Child Line or through police attending a call that alerts them to safeguarding children measures. The more joined up the communication, the better the confidence that the protection of children is more secure in providing the services and help that is required.

Our approach was to focus on the criminal justice arm of safeguarding with a view of developing a comprehensive visual process flow that could be presented to associated agencies to encourage similar involvement.

**This required mapping out processes and information sharing practices of the following organisations:**

- Public Protection Unit (Police)
- Children's Services
- Youth Services
- Cumbria Domestic Violence Strategic Management Board
- Haverigg Prison Service
- Probation Approved Premises

This involved detailed diagnostic work through one to one interviews with representatives of each group to formulate a joined up snapshot of communication lines and achieving joint understanding of processes.

Exploring linkage with the Police Public Protection with Children services would enable a consistent approach across the four geographically dispersed areas of Cumbria and a common understanding of each others responsibilities.

Understanding how troubled children are given the support and help they need if they get into the criminal justice system through criminal activity would enable better streams of support to address criminogenic needs.

A large proportion of safeguarding children cases are a result of an unstable household such as domestic violence between parents or guardians. Processes and forums (eg Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC), exist to tackle on going risks associated with domestic violence and looking how these fit into the Safeguarding children arena and would facilitate joined up approaches.

Risk doesn't necessarily diminish once the perpetrator of crime on children is apprehended and given a custodial sentence. So fusing the prison services processes around safeguarding children (such as breaking communication lines of perpetrator and child or monitoring child contact of eligible offenders) would add value to connected thinking.

Due to the recent shift of Probation Approved Premises from a mix of offenders to high-risk offenders, the importance of risk management becomes even more apparent. Linkage to safeguarding measures would ensure clearer action streams.

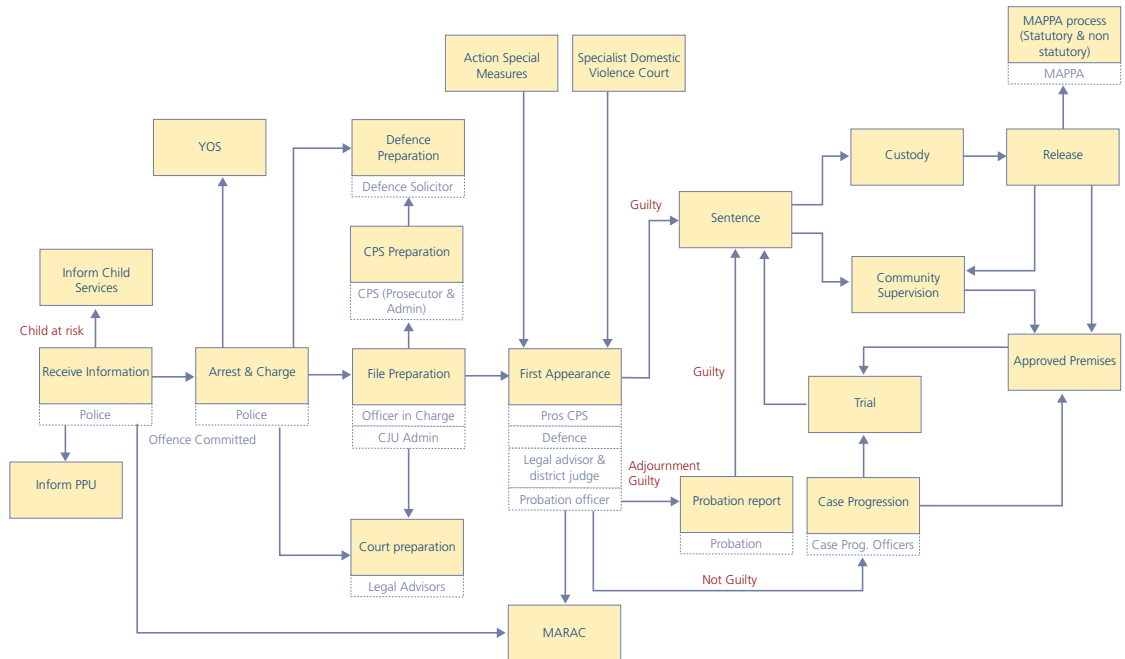


## To Actuality...

Once our initial diagnostic stage was completed we were able to develop a detailed process map that showed the clear linkage of services in the criminal justice arena, with detailed drill downs of processes to allow all agencies visibility of each others safeguarding measures.

This was then presented to Cumbria's Local Safeguarding Children Board with a view of quality assurance and a tool to explore further improvement of coverage and information sharing.

The high level processes identified in Safeguarding Children (Criminal Justice View):



## THE BENEFITS

- Increased visual management has resulted in a clearer picture of activities, roles and responsibilities and information sharing practices
- Better informed strategic planning can be enabled through greater visibility
- Understanding the end-to-end processes of an organisation is at the heart of delivering high performance, compliance and robust operations
- With clear understanding of every process, unsatisfactory or broken processes can immediately be identified by the process stakeholders, prioritised and flagged for further analysis or redesign



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## FROM THE CLIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"From a Criminal Justice Board perspective I believe that this work will help reassure the public to be confident that the agencies are working well together in safeguarding young people.

It contributes towards a wider aim of the Cumbria Criminal Justice Board to have an Offender Management process map of Cumbria, which can be shared between all agencies with a role to play, and thereby improve our service delivery to the public

Internal staff in the Criminal Justice System can have confidence in a clear set of processes which outline their own, and other partners, responsibilities in supporting a system which minimises the risk of serious harm, rather than exacerbates it through poor communication or lack of understanding of each other's processes.

The work with Ad Esse has helped us clearly map the scale of the work carried out between criminal justice partners in this county. It will also assist us in identifying key areas for improvement to streamline processes and ensure consistency in these processes wherever an offence occurs."

**Paul Bradley,**  
Business Manager,  
Cumbria Criminal Justice Board



## FURTHER INFORMATION

To receive regular case studies and articles like this one, you can subscribe to our newsletter 'Actuality'. Contact us at Ad Esse Consulting Ltd.

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