

Appendix 1 – Comments and observations on the efficacy of the SWSO model.

Social Workers:

1. I feel personally it has made a big difference to the way I am able to work, All my case note recording is now up to date along with reports, and minutes for meetings, it was a struggle to complete all visits and keep on top of paperwork as well as other tasks like booking meetings, taking minutes etc. now the SWSO's are able to support it has made my work load manageable.
2. Having another point of contact for families is a positive step forward. It has taken some time for the Officers to get to know specific cases but now that is up and running they are able to deal with some of the calls without having to put them through to the social worker. I believe the role needs to be developed further and to perhaps look to more flexibility within roles across teams.
3. I feel they have made a huge difference. The referrals to other agencies, invites, and tasks generally are being completed more timely and efficiently so that children and families are getting a better service. I think the support officers are very valuable to our teams. The admin tasks of, frequent routine calls, management of diaries, and organisation of meetings, information sharing with other services allows us to concentrate on the social work task at hand. They take minutes at meeting allowing us to focus on the chairing and have a successful meeting instead of trying to multi task.
4. I am able to spend more time with families since having the social work support officer. I am able to complete more regular visits and ensure that all of my visits are completed well within timescale.
5. I spend less time on administration tasks such as phone calls and am able to spend more time on social work tasks such as assessment writing and report writing. This has also meant I am not having to spend time working at home to complete reports.
6. Particularly within CDS; the team of professionals around a child can be quite substantial and not only does it take time to become familiar with the children and young people on our caseloads, it also takes time to make links with and develop working relationships with other professionals.

Children with additional needs including communication difficulties often require more time to become comfortable with new people and having a social work support officer enables social workers in the team to spend time with children getting to know them, gathering their views. Whilst doing so, the SWSO may be in the office dealing with an enquiry or solving problems for another family.

I believe that social workers will never have all of the time that they would like to spend with families, however the SWSO's enable us to spend as much time as is possible with them which is invaluable to the children and young people that we are working with.

7. Tasks such as booking taxis/ arranging payments and filling in referral forms can be actioned via a quick email from social worker to SWSO for them to then take the time to complete. This

alleviates a great deal of pressure on social workers and I feel helps to ensure that things are done in a more timely fashion, leading to better and faster outcomes for children and families.

8. The introduction of the SWSO prompted one agency social worker to join CDS as opposed to another authority due to the support offered to the role.

Partners and service-users

9. I would just like to say how helpful it is to have the support people in post for the social workers.

Previously, due to their very busy workloads, it has at times been quite difficult to reach social workers to discuss case issues, often with us by-passing each other for a number of days. Since the admin support people have been in post it has greatly reduced this and has enabled much better and efficient communication between health and social care.

I would like to re-iterate how much this has improved working.

Please pass this information to your managers.

Senior School Nurse – Bassetlaw.

10. To Steve Edwards:

We met *****, one of your social work support officers at KC LAC review last week and she is brilliant! She has managed to sort out a list of 'stuff' in a week that we have been chasing for months!

This has made a massive difference to KC and will make our lives easier in terms of chasing answers and awaiting consents. I can only imagine the effect for social workers but it will certainly cut down the number of emails they receive from foster carers chasing 'stuff'!

Thought you may like to know since it's a 6 month trial!

Kind regards

Fostering Futures Carer