



Report to: Children, Young People & Families Scrutiny Committee

Date: 11th March 2010

Subject: Unannounced Inspection 12th and 13th January 2010

Report of: Nick Hudson

Contact officer: Anne Goldsmith 01942 486007;
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Purpose / summary: To inform the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Committee of the findings of the unannounced inspection of Wigan, 12th and 13th January 2010.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:

Recommendation / decision: The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny committee note the findings of the inspection and ensure that the action plan is implemented in a timely way.

The decision will be made as a result of this report and will be published within 48 hours

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	None
Staffing:	None
Policy:	None
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	
Wards affected:	all

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution?

Yes / No *

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget?

Yes / No *

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

Yes / No *

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	X
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

	X
Discussion	
Decision	
Information	X

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
	11.03.10		

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. J. Jones', written above a horizontal line.

Date

24th February 2010

1. Introduction

In April 2009 Ofsted introduced a new inspection regime for safeguarding. The new approach replaces the Annual Performance Assessment and Joint Area Review processes and forms part of the overall assessment of the Local Authority Children's Services within the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

The new inspections have a sharper focus on evaluating outcomes for children and young people and the impact that practice and services have on improving outcomes, including through managing risk and minimising incidence of child abuse and neglect.

There are two key inspections:

- An unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children and young people in need and children and young people who may be in need of protection.
- An announced inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services

Regulatory inspections of local authority children's homes, fostering and adoption and private fostering arrangements continue separately.

All local authority areas have an unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in any one 12-month period. In addition all local authority areas will have at least one inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in the three-year period following 1st April 2009. The announced inspections take place with up to 10 days notice and will be preceded by the unannounced inspection.

1.1 Unannounced Inspection

Wigan had an unannounced inspection of its services on the 12th and 13th January 2010.

The unannounced inspection is not a full inspection of safeguarding. It is an inspection of front-line practice in relation to contact, referral and assessment processes for children in need and children who may be in need of protection and an assessment of how well practice helps to manage risk of harm to children and young people and minimise the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

These short inspections focus on the local authority as the lead agency for child protection. However, the contribution of partners to achieving good or better outcomes for children through effective multi-agency working is also evaluated as an integral part of the inspections.

Inspectors focus their activity on analysing and discussing a random sample of case files so as to assess the quality of practice and actions taken to ensure good or better outcomes for children and their families.

They consider any evidence as to how well initial assessment informs case planning.

Inspectors look at the performance information that managers routinely use to inform themselves of the activity and effectiveness of the work of the teams, including any available self-evaluation.

They also consider the number of referrals awaiting action and/or the number of individual cases awaiting transfer to other teams. Discussions take place with social workers, their managers and other key staff.

Once the inspection has been completed the inspectors provide verbal feedback then follow this up with a formal letter. The inspections do not lead to a grading but set out in the letter strengths and areas for development but the inspectors may identify areas for priority action if they have significant concerns. Over 50% of Local Authorities which have been inspected so far have had areas for priority action identified. If the inspection raises serious concerns this may trigger an announced inspection of safeguarding and looked after children. Wigan Council had no areas for priority action.

A copy of the letter outlining the findings from the inspection in Wigan is attached in Appendix A.

Following the inspection the local authority is expected to set out an action plan to respond to the areas for development and to ensure improvements continue to be made. The announced inspection will follow up any relevant findings or recommendations from the unannounced inspection to see what progress has taken place.

A copy of the action plan is attached in Appendix B.

The social care service has integrated the action plan arising from the inspection into the service action plan and is being monitored by the senior management team.

2. Recommendations

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny committee note the findings of the inspection and ensure that the action plan is implemented in a timely way.

Appendix A:

Copy of the letter outlining the findings from the inspection in Wigan

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5 February 2010

Mr Nick Hudson
Director of Children and Young People's Services
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Progress House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HH

Dear Mr Hudson

Annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within Wigan Metropolitan Borough children's services

This letter contains the findings of the recent unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within local authority children's services in Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council which was conducted on 12 and 13 January 2010. The inspection was carried out under section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It will contribute to Ofsted's annual review of the performance of the authority's children's services.

The inspection identified no areas for priority action but some areas for development, which are detailed below.

The inspection sampled the quality and effectiveness of contact, referral and assessment arrangements and their impact on minimising the incidence of child abuse and neglect. Inspectors considered a range of evidence, including: electronic case records; supervision files and notes; observation of social workers and senior practitioners undertaking referral and assessment duties; and other information provided by staff and managers. Inspectors also spoke to a range of staff including managers, social workers, other practitioners and administrative staff. I am grateful to you and your staff for your help and the time given during this inspection.

From the evidence gathered, the inspection identified a number of areas where the contact, referral and assessment arrangements were delivered satisfactorily in accordance with national guidance, in particular:

- Effective action is taken to ensure that children at risk of immediate harm are safeguarded.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

- The contact, referral and assessment service has recently been restructured following recommendations arising from a review of safeguarding practice, and as a result all initial assessments are now conducted by qualified social workers.
- Thresholds for children in need and child protection work are clear and widely understood across agencies leading to appropriate referrals being made.
- Record keeping is up to date and managerial decisions are clearly recorded.
- Regular casework audits of the contact, referral and assessment service are in place.
- Work undertaken within the contact, referral and assessment service ensures that children are routinely interviewed and is child centred.
- Senior managers are readily available to provide advice and guidance to support social workers in making appropriate decisions, particularly in relation to complex cases.

From the evidence gathered, the following strengths and areas for development were also identified:

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Wigan Safeguarding Children Board is effectively responding to a comprehensive audit of safeguarding completed following the Laming review. A regularly updated action plan incorporates actions from serious case reviews and other practice audits, and is driving forward improvements in safeguarding practice and procedures.▪ The training programme is targeted effectively at improving areas of weak performance. Staff and managers report that training is of a high quality and readily accessible.▪ Staff morale is good. Supervision is regular, of good quality and complies with the council's supervision policy.▪ The quality of work undertaken by the Children with Complex Needs team is good.▪ Good communication and liaison with partner agencies have led to a comprehensive review of the responsiveness of the council to domestic abuse referrals.

Areas for development

- Management decision making regarding contacts is not always timely, causing delayed responses to some referrals. However, no children were identified as being at immediate risk.
- There has been a decline over the past six months in the proportion of initial assessments of children in need being completed within timescale and this is now below the national average.
- Initial child protection conferences are not consistently held within timescale. The council is aware of this problem and is taking steps to secure improvements.
- Information regarding the ethnicity of families is not being routinely gathered at the point of initial contact.
- Initial and core assessments are of variable quality and management oversight of the quality and timeliness of assessments is not consistently rigorous. In some cases analysis is of a low standard with insufficient use of historical information or recognition of parental strengths. In some instances parental explanations about issues of concern are not robustly challenged.
- While procedures for the transfer of cases between the contact, duty and assessment teams and long term teams have improved, case transfer meetings do not consistently challenge the appropriateness or the urgency of transfer decisions.

Yours sincerely

David Asher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Copy: Joyce Redfearn, Chief Executive, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Sue Woolmore, Chair of Wigan Safeguarding Children Board
Sue Loudon, Lead Member for Children's Services, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Andrew Spencer, Department for Children, Schools and Families

Appendix B:

Copy of CYPS Children Social Care action plan

**WIGAN COUNCIL
CYPS CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE**

ACTION PLAN**February 2010**

AREA OF SERVICE DELIVERY	ACTION REQUIRED	SOURCE OF ACTION	LEAD	TIME SCALE	PROGRESS/ OUTCOME
CONTACT S RECEIVED & INITIAL RESPONSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further review of relationship and communication links between the emergency out of hours service and the duty / child care teams including use of ICS 	Safeguarding Review 2009	SH	March 2010	Meetings have taken place with managers at OOH to progress this.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New professional referral forms to be developed to improve the quality of contact information received from other professionals 	Internal Audit Report 2009	MB 3b subgroup	Nov 2009	Completed and Implemented November 2009
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and monitor the effectiveness of the new professional referral form. 	Baseline audit (duty) 2009	SH/CJ	April 2010	DS to undertake repeat audit activity Feb 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter to professionals (24 hour response) to be monitored and audited by managers. 	Baseline audit (duty) 2009	KP/CJ	January 2010	DS to undertake repeat audit activity Feb 2010 Copy of letter to be included on child's file.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Manager and Team Managers to meet with the CAF Co-ordinator to look at thresholds for intervention and to contribute to team around the child approach. 	Baseline audit (duty) 2009	SH/KP/CJ	Feb 2010	Meeting to be arranged part of locality response whole system issue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System to be introduced to improve the 	Annual	SH/KP/CJ	Feb 2010	LF/SH to devise systems and process mapping. E-mail has been sent

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	<p>timeliness of management decision making regarding contacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff to ensure that there is more emphasis on ensuring the ethnicity of families is routinely gathered at the point of initial contact or at the first visit. 	<p>unannounced inspection 2010 Annual unannounced inspection 2010</p>	<p>S/HKP/CJ/DA/ SW</p>	<p>Jan 2010</p>	<p>to staff, standing item on supervision/team meetings. DS to undertake repeat audit Feb 2010.</p>
<p>ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN INITIAL / CORE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice guidance & training issued to staff at Duty team July 2009 to ensure assessment of risk is clear part of all analysis. Further audit of IA's to be completed September 2009 to analyse impact Implement guidance for staff in line with the new DV risk assessment model for domestic abuse agreed by WSCB Commission further training on analysis within assessment for social care staff within duty and locality teams Ensure implementation of the use of the Alcohol scale (Framework for Assessment) including the delivery of appropriate training advice and guidance for staff undertaking assessments. 	<p>Internal audit SCR June 2009</p> <p>Safeguarding Review 2009 SCR 18/6/09</p> <p>Safeguarding Review 2009</p> <p>SCR re Child B 18/6/09</p>	<p>PJ</p> <p>SH</p> <p>Glyn Davis</p> <p>SH</p>	<p>30/9/09</p> <p>Nov 2009</p> <p>Nov 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>Training sessions completed with all teams at cint & guidance issued Sept 09</p> <p>Preliminary session delivered for managers. Staff Training planned to be delivered October 09 Staff have attended training in Feb 2010.</p> <p>Requested from corporate training that staff not involved in the earlier training.</p> <p>QA manager attended corporate training meeting Feb 2010 & briefed L&D on training needs identified through audit and SC action plan.</p> <p>Core assessment audit completed by</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake audit of sample of Core assessments using audit tool to evaluate quality – to produce updated practice guidance for social care staff Review pilot implementation of graded care profile to inform further development of use of this tool. Commission training for social care staff on undertaking direct work with children and young people to enable them to develop further skills in communication with c & yp Workers to ensure that they keep the key information on the child/young person up-to-date. Admin to send copies of completed assessments to young people and their families. 	<p>SCR re Child B 18/6/09</p> <p>Action Plan Review</p> <p>Baseline Audit</p> <p>Safeguarding Review 2009</p> <p>Baseline audit (duty 2009.)</p>	<p>LF</p> <p>TOD</p> <p>Corporate Training</p> <p>KP/CJ</p> <p>LS/SS</p>	<p>April 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>Jan 2010</p>	<p>QA manager, Dec 09, further practice guidance to follow.</p> <p>Graded Care Profile pilot completed, recommendation needed to roll out across workforce.</p> <p>QA manager attended corporate training meeting Feb 2010 & briefed L&D on training needs identified through audit and SC action plan.</p> <p>E-mail sent to all staff and standing item on team meetings/supervision. DS to repeat audit activity 2010.</p> <p>Team Managers to remind staff at the team meetings. TM to audit on closure/transfer.</p> <p>Staff in receipt of weekly monitoring info, response required by Head of Service</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System to be introduced to improve the proportion of initial assessments of children in need being completed within timescale. • Managers/Senior Social Workers to ensure that assessments contain good quality analysis, incorporating historical information, parental strengths and evidence of challenge to parental explanations. • A more robust system to be set up for the transfer of cases between the contact, duty and CINT teams to improve the challenge, appropriateness or urgency of transfer decisions. 	<p>Annual unannounced Inspection Jan 2010</p> <p>Annual unannounced inspection Jan 2010</p> <p>Annual unannounced inspection Jan 2010</p>	<p>SH/KP/CJ/RM SO/DA/SW</p> <p>SH/KP/CJ/DA/ RM/SO/SW</p> <p>SH/PC</p>	<p>Jan 2010</p> <p>Jan 2010</p> <p>Jan 2010</p>	<p>Managers/Senior Social Workers to use the quality audit monitoring forms</p> <p>Weekly transfer meetings already operating.</p>
<p>CASE RECORDING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of case notes on ICS to be undertaken to evaluate quality and consistency of use • Develop policy and practice guidance in relation to recording information about the welfare and safety of children. 	<p>Internal audit</p> <p>SCR Child B 18/6/09</p>	<p>PC</p> <p>SA</p>	<p>November 2009</p> <p>Feb 2010</p>	<p>Audit completed- at CINT- guidance re-issued to staff 1.02.10.</p> <p>Support for ICS process provided across duty & CINT teams</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Social Workers to be identified to pilot the use of the ICS chronology and then feedback and audit to be undertaken. Use of the record of allocation plan and case management discussion record to be audited to check quality of decision making. 	Baseline audit (duty) 2009	SH	April 2010	SW staff identified currently using chronology.
		Baseline audit (duty) 2009	SH	April 2010	Service Manager duty using audit tool
STRATEGY DISCUSSIONS AND SECTION 47 INQUIRIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation of multi agency working group to undertake Initial Audit of Strategy discussions undertaken over 3 month period. This to then develop further practice guidance and process of joint working 	Safeguarding Review 2009	SH	April 2010	2 meetings have taken with GMP to discuss practice issues- and agreement to undertake this work Improvement in the quality of strategy meetings, further meetings to be arranged.
CHILD PROTECTION PLANS CONFERENCE AND REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review implementation of ICS module and impact upon quality of CP plans Implement cycle of regular multi agency audit of CP plans Child Protection Conference Procedures to be updated to include 	Safeguarding Review 2009	SA	Nov 09	Review completed- actions identified- further meeting required to plan
		Safeguarding Review 2009	WSCB	31 July 2009	Multi-agency audit completed Feb 2010.
		SCR Child B 18/6/09	SUE H		completed

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	<p>the requirement for a Child in Need meeting to be arranged within ten days in any circumstance where the child is not made subject to a CP plan, or where a CP plan is discontinued, and where the child is still deemed to be a child in need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system to be established to ensure that a copy of any such Child in Need plan is sent to the IRO service, and to monitor progress against the plan. • Monitor the effectiveness of the procedure to improve the timescales in Initial Child Protection Conferences. 	<p>SCR Child B 18/6/09</p> <p>Annual unannounced inspection Jan 2010</p>	<p>SUE H</p> <p>Sue H</p>	<p>Feb/March 2010</p>	
LEGAL PROCEEDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review implementation of PLO and develop revised procedures for staff 	Internal Audit	TOD	Nov 09	<p>Work allocated to team manager- report to DMT December 2009</p> <p>New revised procedures/practice have been developed to avoid drift.</p> <p>New practice yet to be monitored.</p>
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and develop the information packs given to young people on admission into becoming looked after and put plan in place to ensure these are used consistently by social workers 	Safeguarding Review 2009	PJ/	Sept 09- Jan2010	<p>Work completed by Children's Rights service with YP to develop this- using IT- report completed- implementation Oct 09</p> <p>Part of fostering service action plan</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update procedures for placement meetings including their content , timing, and monitoring system. Implement plan to improve placement stability outcomes for LAC Improve participation of young people in service planning for LAC- via projects undertaken by Children's Rights Officer Develop Corporate Parenting Strategy Audit of Foster Carer files to be undertaken to evaluate quality of statutory work/ support/ recording 	<p>Feedback from foster carers</p> <p>CYPS Performance Plan 2009 -2012</p> <p>CYPS Performance Plan 2009 -2012</p> <p>CYPS Performance Plan 2009 -2012</p> <p>DMT</p>	<p>PJ</p> <p>TOD</p> <p>TOD</p> <p>TOD</p> <p>PJ</p>	<p>Jan 09</p> <p>Action plan to DMT January 2009</p> <p>Strategy to DMT by end November 2009</p> <p>November 2009</p>	<p>SM have attended conference/ workshop to begin review of practice</p> <p>Extensive work undertaken – see report of Children's Rights 2009-</p> <p>Work on Pledge completed by CCC presented and agreed by cabinet</p> <p>Completed- action plan written and out for consultation with staff</p>
<p>CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Service – Aiming High 				<p>Service manager responsible for CWCN appointed – will be in post form Oct 09. Service Manager to contribute to the Aiming High Project Board.</p>

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SUPERVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo from head of service to all staff reminding them of the supervision policy • Policy to be made easily available via intranet • All supervisors / managers submit examples of the last 3 supervision meetings to their line manager for review to ensure compliance with departmental supervision procedures • Develop the capacity for Supervision discussions that result in casework decisions to be inputted into electronic case records via ICS by the manager responsible • Review pilot of updated CMD form and amend and implement accordingly with staff to ensure consistent practice. • Enable input of CMD decisions as a 	<p>SCR Child B 18/6/09</p> <p>SCR Child B 18/6/09</p> <p>Internal Audit</p> <p>Internal Audit</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>PJ</p> <p>PJ/DS</p> <p>PJ/ Sean Atkinson</p> <p>Paula Jones</p>	<p>June 09</p> <p>Jan 2010</p> <p>Oct 09</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed and on the intranet.</p> <p>Full audit of supervision has been completed across social care in Dec 10. Further audit of duty Feb 2010.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Implemented October 2009 Practice to be rolled out across the localities.</p> <p>Implemented October 2009 Practice to be rolled out across the localities. System now</p>

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	<p>case note on ICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Managers to supervise all staff in their respective teams. • SSW to provide a mentoring/support/training role to staff/students to build capacity within the team. 	<p>Baseline audit (duty) 2009</p> <p>Baseline audit (duty) 2009</p>	<p>KP/CJ</p> <p>DA/SW/RM/SO</p>	<p>Feb 2010</p> <p>Feb 2010</p>	<p>operating at duty, needs to be endorsed at DMT for localities.</p> <p>SSW staff to undertake this role once agreement is reached at DMT that TM should supervise all staff within their teams.</p>
POLICIES & PROCEDURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of core procedures and readily available on intranet • Recording of specialist Procedures on Intranet 	<p>Safeguarding Review 2009</p> <p>Safeguarding Review 2009</p>	<p>PJ/ AM</p> <p>Sean Atkinson</p>	<p>November 2009</p>	<p>SharePoint site developed to "house" all social care procedures linked to national sites this is a continuous process to keep procedures up to date and reflect locality working.</p>
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Managers to use weekly performance management information (assessment completion and timescales) to monitor and report on performance. • ISO peer audit review project to be progressed with the intention of implementing an 	<p>On going</p> <p>Follow on from work on Safeguarding audit 2009</p>	<p>MB All service managers</p> <p>MB/ PJ</p>	<p>On going</p> <p>2010</p>	<p>Addressed at tm meetings- these to be re scheduled to reflect re structuring changes and weekly responses to the Head of Service.</p> <p>Training provider identified.</p>

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	<p>externally validated peer review programme within social care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit tool to be developed in line with principles of ISO project. • Baseline audit to be completed of Social Care functions using this new tool. • Baseline audit to be completed in the localities. • New quality audit tool to be devised for all Social Care functions. 	<p>Baseline audit (duty) 2009</p>	<p>DS DS DS DS</p>	<p>Sept 09 Oct 09 Sept 2010 Jan 2010</p>	<p>Audit tool completed</p> <p>Baseline Audit of contact/ referral /assessment completed at duty team</p> <p>Baseline audit of Social Care activity within the new localities to be set up.</p> <p>Completed and being piloted by SH.</p>
<p>RE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL CARE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete restructure of social care to enable service delivery which minimises transfers of cases for young people and enables delivery across locality areas. • See separate action plan for Re Structure- DMT • Audit of work being undertaken in 	<p>CYPS Performance Plan 2009 -2012</p> <p>DMT</p>	<p>DMT</p> <p>PJ/TO</p>	<p>March 2010</p> <p>November 2009</p>	<p>All teams identified work being allocated across teams awaiting identification of buildings for physical moves.</p> <p>Completed</p>

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	support services in order to evaluate and review functions of support staff.				
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