



## **EAST AYRSHIRE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE: 14 DECEMBER 2009**

### **CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATORS REPORT**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Child Protection Committee with details of the Child Protection Co-ordinators activity since the date of the last committee (28 October 2009).

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 It was agreed at the last Child Protection Committee that the co-ordinator would provide details of activity. The Co-ordinator has spent a significant proportion of time in inspection related activities the details of which are contained in a separate report.

#### **3. HMIE - LAUNCH OF A REPORT ON THE FINDING OF THE JOINT INSPECTION OF SERVICES TO PROTECT CHILDREN 2005-2009**

- 3.1 The Co-ordinator attended the HMIE launch of the report summarising the findings from the first round of child protection inspections.
- 3.2 The report highlighted key strengths in child protection practice across Scotland. It also noted that in around 25% of the inspections showed serious weaknesses in aspects of child protection which could result in harm to children. In those areas the inspection process acted as a significant catalyst for change. The report also highlighted a number of common themes for improvement throughout Scotland;
- assessment of risks and needs;
  - planning to keep individual children safe and improve their circumstances;
  - meeting longer-term needs;
  - information sharing and recording;
  - quality assurance and self-evaluation for improvement; and
  - Leadership and direction.
- 3.3 The full report is available at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) A fuller report comparing the national recommendations and the East Ayrshire position will be available to the next Child Protection Committee.

#### **4. AYRSHIRE WIDE WORK**

- 4.1 The Ayrshire Lead Officers Group will meet prior to the Child Protection Committee and a verbal update can be provided. This group is responsible for co-ordinating the development of Ayrshire wide work and are discussing the development of an Ayrshire wide management information dataset and Ayrshire publicity material such as re-ordering the parenting handbook.

#### **5. WEST OF SCOTLAND**

- 5.1 The West of Scotland Child Protection Procedures have been distributed to the reading group for comment and will soon be distributed to all Child Protection Committee for comment.

#### **6. SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW**

- 6.1 The Child Protection Co-ordinator is completing a questionnaire for MARS in relation to our Significant Case Review activity which will be used as part of the national review of Significant Case Reviews.
- 6.2 The Co-ordinator attended a workshop on Significant Case Review which provided useful discussion points on how significant case reviews are carried out, different approaches and lessons learned in other areas, and involvement of the family.

#### **7. CHILD PROTECTION LINE**

- 7.1 The Child Protection Line was launched in February 2007 as one of the last outputs of the three year Child Protection reform programme. The main aim of the Child Protection Line was to *“provide a single point of contact for members of the public throughout Scotland who have a concern about a child or young person, to call.”* The Child Protection Line was operated by call handlers and had a specific signposting remit; callers to the Child Protection Line could receive general information, be transferred to local Social Work or Police departments, or leave information to be passed on to appropriate agencies.
- 7.2 An independent evaluation of the Child Protection Line was published in November 2009 and is available through the following web link (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/11/24142249/0>). The evaluation concluded that call demand for the Child Protection Line was relatively low and there was inconsistent engagement in the Child Protection line in local level. The operation of the Child Protection Line is not currently the most viable option and it is viewed that it would have more value if it used a 'professional-led' operational model.

## Review of Child Protection Line

- 7.3 Following the evaluation of Child Protection Line the Scottish Government propose that the Line will continue to provide child protection information for members of the public with child protection concerns, as well as being a referral route to local child protection services. It will be staffed by experienced and knowledgeable child protection practitioners and social workers, able to offer immediate advice and support to callers, as well as performing initial risk assessment and triage of referrals, and where appropriate providing informed referrals to local services. The Scottish Government will be providing grant funding to an organisation to provide this service.

## Purpose of the Service

- 7.4 The main purposes of the Child Protection Advice Line will be as follows:
- To provide informed advice and support to members of the public who have child protection concerns.
  - Where callers have a specific concern about a child or children, to provide initial professional assessment, advise the caller on validity of the concern, and where necessary give an informed referral to local services.
  - To provide a single point of non-geographical telephone contact for child protection enquiries from members of the public, raising awareness of child protection issues and how to report concerns.
  - To respond to general enquiries from the public about what they should do if they are concerned about a child with advice about appropriate actions.
- 7.5 The Scottish Government have drafted a specification for the new service and have asked for comments from Child Protection Committees in relation to:-
- What do the Scottish Government need to consider to ensure the line works effectively and complements local services?
  - How can the Scottish Government develop local links with the Line?
  - Does the line need to be 24 hours?
  - What statistical information would the CPCs want to receive?
  - How can they ensure that tracking of referrals is more successful this time?
  - Are there opportunities to utilise the expertise of CPC reps in training and preparing those who will be answering calls

7.6 The Child Protection Co-ordinator will provide a response to the Scottish Government on this matter.

## **8. CO-ORDINATORS JOB SHARE**

8.1 With effect from January 2010 the post of Co-ordinator will be filled on a full time basis.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Child Protection Committee is asked to: -

- i) note the contents of this report.

**Susan Taylor**  
**Chair of the Child Protection Committee**  
**8 December 2009**

**Report prepared by Diane Burns, Child Protection Co-ordinator**