



## **EAST AYRSHIRE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

**DEVELOPMENT DAY 22 JUNE 2009**

### **CHAIRING OF THE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE: OPTIONS PAPER**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The constitution states that the Child Protection Committee (CPC) Chair is appointed by the Chief Officers for a period of 2 years and is responsible for: -
- chairing committee meetings
  - ensuring the CPC fulfils its key functions effectively
  - receiving reports from the Lead Officer who will be accountable to the CPC.
  - ensuring the development of the annual business plan and report
  - agreeing resource requirement for the work of the CPC
  - ensuring East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee collaborates with other CPC's
  - reporting to the Chief Officers

#### **2. PROPOSALS**

- 2.1 Consideration should be given to inserting a condition that the Chair is responsible for managing the lead officer as detailed in the guidance for CPCs in Scotland - Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committees, January 2005.
- 2.2 The CPC should also consider the options for chairing the CPC. The Joint Review of Haringey Children's Services Authority recommended that they appoint an independent chairperson to the local safeguarding children board

(LSCB). This is being considered by CPCs in Scotland, with different conclusions being reached.

### **Option 1 : Key Agency Chair**

Continue with current chairing arrangements where the Chair is agreed from the representative agencies. The majority of CPCs in Scotland have this option with the majority of those being from social work. The key agency Chair option ensures that the Chair has working knowledge of operational and strategic management arrangements in their area, and is well connected within and across organisations. The Chair may have an involvement in a number of crosscutting groups, thus allowing a consistency of approach. Being CPC chair is part of the individual's duties and therefore does not require additional funding.

The disadvantages of this option include the capacity of the chair to dedicate required time to Committee activities; potential conflict with role as agency representative versus chairing/vice chairing responsibilities; and the influence that this may have in identifying committee tasks / priorities and delivery of these. This could be minimised by ensuring an alternative agency representative is in place to enable the chair to focus on the chairing role and allowing the alternative agency representative to speak for Chairs agency. It can also be minimised by ensuring that the appointed person has the appropriate personal, professional and leadership qualities to undertake the role with objectivity.

If option 1 is preferred, consideration requires to be given to:

- how long the appointment will last
- whether and how often it can be renewed for existing chairs, who are being supported by the CPC to continue
- how rotation of the chair amongst the partner agencies will take place, taking account of the need for the right person. For example one CPC area rotates its Chair every two years between each of the agencies.

### **Option 2 : Independent Chair**

At least three CPCs have independent Chairs in Scotland (Glasgow, Borders and Renfrewshire) and there is a significant number of CPCs which are currently considering this option. Fife has recently appointed an independent chair. The CPCs that have an independent chair in place report that they have found this highly effective. The benefits of having an independent chair of the CPC is that they are independent from all representative agencies and therefore not influenced by individual agency agendas and cultures. The role can also become more focused on encouraging agencies to work collaboratively and identifying common objectives and priorities. The role is

dedicated to progressing Committee activities and representing Committee at a national level and should not have competing demands on the role. The chair would be accountable directly to the Chief Officers Group. Independence can also enhance the scrutiny role of the Chair and bring objectivity to the process of audit and review [case reviews, self-evaluation, resource or options analysis).

The main disadvantages of having an independent chair is the cost implications for this position which would need to be explored fully if the CPC is to consider this option. A recent costing exercise completed by Fife CPC estimated that required time for the chair would be 5-7 days per month at cost of £200 - £250 per day resulting in costs of £12 000 to £21 000 dependant on remuneration and number of days. In addition, there is the disadvantage that the independent chair does not have knowledge of local services and organisations. Experience from other parts of the country suggests that an independent chair needs the clear backing of the Chief Officers group to ensure agencies deliver on identified plans and tasks as an independent chair does not have the political 'weight' of an individual service behind them. In addition, there would be increased expectations of the Chief Officers Group, particularly in respect of time as the post holder would require to be directed by the group directly. Experience from other CPCs also highlights that the key issue is in identifying a suitable candidate, which is increasingly challenging as independent chairs are also being recruited to adult protection committees. Feedback from other CPCs emphasises the critical importance of the objectivity of the chair, which does not necessarily mean independence. They also highlight the importance of having the right person with drive, commitment, enthusiasm, along with the necessary personal, professional and leadership qualities.

### **Option 3 : Joint Chair – Adult and Child protection Committees**

The third option is a new option, which could only be fulfilled on an independent basis as this is a statutory requirement in respect of adult protection. Several recent appointments have been made in Scotland on a joint basis, but there is not sufficient experience to be able to share this at present. The advantage is that there will be clear links between the committees from the onset, with the capacity to share information and resources across committees. The most obvious disadvantage will be in identifying a suitable candidate, with the right range of experience to exercise both roles effectively.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Child Protection Committee is asked to consider:

- the proposed options for chairing of the committee;
- the responsibilities of the chair;
- the period of chairing and possible rotation of the chair;

- the need to amend the constitution to ensure that the CPC Co-ordinator is line managed by the chair;
- the timing of any proposed change, given the need to coordinate activity across agencies in respect of the next phase of inspection, coupled with the need to resource the activity necessary to recruit a new chair.

**Susan Taylor**  
**Chair of Child Protection Committee**

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