



EAST AYRSHIRE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE: 19 MAY 2009

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON 'PROTECTION' – 'LISTENING TO CHILDREN'S VOICES AND CORPORATE PARENTING' – 25 FEBRUARY 2009

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the above Conference and subsequent evaluation from the multi agency attendees.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following on from the success of the first East Ayrshire Annual Conference on 'Protection' in January 2008, a second Annual Conference was arranged for 25 February 2009. This Conference was held at the Lochside Hotel, Cumnock, to ensure equitable access for staff located in the South of East Ayrshire.
- 2.2 East Ayrshire Council's Chief Executive, Fiona Lees, had highlighted the importance of the Scottish Government document, 'These Are Our Bairns: a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent', which was published in September 2008, therefore it was decided by the Child protection Committee to have Corporate Parenting as the topic for the 2009 Conference.
- 2.3 It was very important to hear the views of children and young people who have been/or are looked after and accommodated within East Ayrshire, therefore a group of children and young people were also invited to participate in the Conference.

3. CONTENT OF THE CONFERENCE

- 3.1 The Conference covered a range of topics (**Appendix 1**), providing the perceptions of children, young people, foster carers and professionals.

4. EVALUATION OF THE CONFERENCE

- 4.1 There were 113 delegates who attended the Conference and 61 delegates completed an evaluation form (**Appendix 2**). The Conference evaluated very positively by all agencies. Examples of comments were as follows:
- Very positive comments included – The Chair welcomed us very warmly and chaired the Conference extremely well; Thank You, a very worthwhile day!; The training was a great success, well done!; It was enhanced by the young people.
 - Delegates felt more knowledgeable about – The Authentic Warmth Approach; GIRFEC; Provision for LAAC children; Responsibility as a Corporate Parent; Issues and consequences of children being in care.
 - Delegates felt more confident about – Need to listen to children; where and to whom to go to for advice and support; Theory of the GIRFEC Rationale.

- The benefits to young people and their families included – will use knowledge to inform better practice within leisure services; greater awareness of work of other agencies; more aware of all help and support in East Ayrshire and how to access it; will raise staff awareness in schools; better understanding of the chaos that permeates their lives; aware of Local Authority's vision.
- Suggested improvements for training included – open this up to schools for all staff; consider an Early Years focus; more time to discuss workshops.
- All seven dimensions for Scotland's children were supported by this event to a large degree.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Child Protection Committee is asked to:

- i) give consideration to the topic for the annual Conference on 'Protection' for 2010 and, otherwise:
- ii) note the content of this report.

Susan Taylor
Chair of Child Protection Committee
12 May 2009

Report prepared by: Frances Milne, Child Protection Co-ordinator



Listening to Children's Voices and Corporate Parenting



APPENDIX 1

East Ayrshire Annual Conference on Protection 25 February 2009

Programme

0900 – 0930 Registration

0930 – 0945 Welcome by **Susan Taylor** (Chair of East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee)

0945 – 1045 Living Psychology: The 'Authentic Warmth' approach to children and young people who have been rejected, neglected and abused

Speaker: Dr Sean Cameron

1045 – 1115 Break

1115 – 1130 The Carer's Perspective of being a Corporate Parent.

Speaker: Margaret Walker

1130- 1200 'Who Cares' – Independent Advocacy service for all Looked After children in East Ayrshire. **Speaker: Heather Gray (Director, Who Cares)**

1200 - 1230 The Voices of Children who have experienced Local Authority Care – DVD

1230 – 1330 Lunch

1330 – 1400 Corporate Parenting: 'These are our Bairns'. **Speaker: Fiona Lees (Chief Executive)**

1400 – 1450 'We Can and Must Do Better'. **Speaker: Graham McCann (Development Worker, Scottish Government)**

1450 - 1510 Break

1510– 1630 Workshops:

1. GIRFEC / IAF – **Speakers: Superintendent Douglas Robertson & Jim Lyon (Principal Officer, Children)**
2. The LAAC Health Perspective - **Speakers: June Milne & (Public Health Facilitator, LAAC Health Team) Kathleen Winter (Public Health Practitioner, Child Health)**
3. Early Years Framework – **Speaker: Janie Allen (Principal Officer (Early Education & Childcare))**
4. Corporate Parenting Action Plan - **Speaker: Stuart Bates (Service Manager, Care & Review)**

1620 **Close**

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1. EVALUATION FEEDBACK

1.1 Delegates were asked to rate aspects of the event and comment on any benefits the event had for them or their work and to give ideas for future events. 61 of the 113 delegates (54%) completed an evaluation form.

1.2 Rating aspects of the event on a 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) - scale showed: -

Score Breakdown (%) and Average Score for each aspect

	Poor 1	2	3	4	Excellent 5	Average
Objectives Met	0%	0%	5%	64%	31%	4.2
Event Organisation	0%	1%	15%	51%	33%	4.1
Presentation – Speakers	0%	0%	3%	44%	53%	4.5
Presentation – Content	0%	0%	2%	57%	41%	4.4
Usefulness of Event	0%	0%	12%	57%	31%	4.2
Venue - Facilities	2%	0%	7%	47%	44%	4.3
Venue - Catering	0%	5%	15%	31%	49%	4.2

Comments:

1.3 Delegates rated the speakers highest of all with an average of 4.5 with particular positive comments for Dr Sean Cameron who had flown up from London to the Conference. Fiona Lees was also thought to be 'inspiring and very positive too'. The presentation content was almost parallel with the speaker response with a score of 4.4.

1.4 All delegates felt the objectives had been met with responses ranging from 'adequate' through to being met to an 'excellent' degree.

1.5 No delegates felt the Conference had not met their needs in some way and the majority felt the Conference had been 'good' or 'excellent' in the overall usefulness to each delegate.

1.6 In response to the venue and catering, the vast majority of delegates felt this was 'excellent', however, one delegate felt it was 'too remote'. There were some comments about having to 'queue' for lunch however, once lunch was served the food was thought to be excellent. This venue was chosen to promote equity for staff in East Ayrshire as the Conference held last year was hosted in the North of East Ayrshire, in Kilmarnock.

2. RAISING AWARENESS AND CONFIDENCE

AWARENESS

2.1 Delegates were asked ‘How much did the event raise your awareness of child protection issues?’

2.2 The overall rating on a 1 to 5 basis with an average of 3.8 was:

Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	Average
0%	5%	12%	57%	26%	3.8

2.3 The vast majority, 83%, of delegates felt the event raised their awareness of child protection issues and no-one felt it did not raise their awareness in child protection to some degree.

Specific comments when asked of particular areas that delegates now felt more knowledgeable about included:

‘The Authentic Warmth Approach’
‘GIRFEC x 2’
‘LAAC x 2’
‘Atunement and Attachment’
‘Challenges of the environment which LAAC live in / have to deal with’
‘More aware of your responsibility’
‘Raised awareness of the issues for LAAC children’
‘Issues and consequences of children being in care, necessity to intervene as early as possible’
‘Early intervention’
‘I don’t feel I am more knowledgeable, however feel more inspired to make sure that “we do things better!”’
“I feel happier in knowledge about of ‘corporate parenting”’
‘Corporate parenting statistics relating to LAAC children’

‘Provision for LAAC Children
‘Corporate Parenting / Residential Care
‘Work of ‘Who Cares’ Scotland
‘Corporate Parenting x 5
‘Total empathy with young people
‘Responsibility as a Corporate Parent
‘Children’s views of care, corporate parenting, who cares organisation’
‘Coming from Early Years it was good to see the different perspectives of all involved’
‘When presenting results from research and data in East Ayrshire could we stress the positive – i.e. 80% can – because if necessary we can do the maths’

Some delegates expressed a view that they were:

‘Well informed/experienced anyway’
‘Up to date due to the high profile given to Child Protection within the authority’
‘Already know a lot given that I work within the social work sector but further training is still beneficial’

‘Already fairly aware’
‘Already have a lot of child protection training’

2.2 CONFIDENCE

Delegates were asked 'How much did the event raise your confidence in dealing with child protection issues?'

The overall rating on a 1 to 5 basis with an average of 3.7 was:

Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	Average
0%	10%	29%	46%	15%	3.7

The vast majority, 61%, of delegates felt the event raised their confidence in dealing with child protection issues and no-one felt it did not raise their confidence in child protection to some degree.

Specific comments when asked of particular areas that delegates now felt more confident about included:

'The Theory of the GIRFEC Rationale'
'Need to listen to children'
'Confidence is built and maintained by attending these events'
'Being able to listen and respect children who allow you to hear their stories'

'Where and to whom I would go for advice and support if necessary'
'Involvement'
'A greater understanding'
'Providing support for LAAC children'

Some delegates expressed a view that they were:

'Already feel confident in this area x 2'
'Already fairly aware'
'Confident due to awareness raising by the authority'

'I was already confident in dealing with issues due to previous training'

3. BENEFITS

3.1 Delegates were asked 'What benefits to young people and their families, carers and colleagues will there be as a result of your participation in this event?'

3.1 The responses were:

'Will use to inform better practice within leisure services'
'Hopefully a Corporate commitment from ALL areas of the council & partners'
'Greater awareness of work of other agencies'
'Highlighted need to listen to children'
'More consideration given to LAAC'
'This training has reinforced the continued need to listen to children!'
'I am much more aware of all the help and support there is in East Ayrshire, and how to access it. I now understand better what 'corporate care' involves'
'Interagency working – better achievement'

'Positive interaction'
'Raising of staff awareness in school'
'Better awareness of care issues'
'The impact of being looked after on the child's education'
'They can be sure that I will act on any childcare concerns'
'It gave a good insight to how young people feel about being looked after. Their thoughts, feelings and fears'
'To retain the young person & their needs when looked after'

'Communication at centre'
 'Increased awareness of inter-agency working'
 'Some information will be cascaded onto staff in school to give them better understanding'
 'More effective multi-agency working'
 'Help provide continuity & stability for our LAC'
 'Raised awareness will hopefully lead to changed attitudes and motivation to help change. This does not require additional resources'
 'Better understanding of Corporate Parenting'
 'Inform Policy & Practice'
 'Inform practice – cascade to staff'
 'Build on the good practice already established within my school'
 'Makes you aware of your responsibility as part of the corporate family'
 'Raised awareness of services / support available and Local Authorities vision'
 'Hopefully all partners in the process will work in a consistent manner'

nurturing their talents, education, etc'
 'Better understanding of the chaos that permeates their lives'
 'More informed, better understanding of LAAC children'
 'The partnership working in our authority'
 Cascade information to the team
 'Info on corporate parenting'
 'Intrinsic benefit as information will be put forward & used to their benefit'
 'Raising awareness with staff team'
 'Raised awareness'
 'More empathy, encouraging staff to disseminate information'
 'Participation in highlighting relevant issues'
 'I will feel confident in cascading information to others'
 'Hopefully to pass on my new listening skills to children in my care'

4. SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

4.1 Delegates were asked 'What new skills or knowledge have you gained?'

The responses were:

'Knowledge of actual document & stats in relation to cared for children. Improved awareness of needs of children within my own service'
 'New knowledge gained on older LAAC, as I work in early years'
 'Learning more about trauma and its effects'
 'It gave a good insight to how young people feel about being looked after. Their thoughts, feelings and fears. I particularly enjoyed listening to Dr Cameron and really enjoyed listening to Who Cares Scotland and loved what the young people done (dvd, performance, etc)'
 'Good background knowledge of the issues, i.e. current developments'
 'Reminded me of importance to put self (if possible!) in mind of the young vulnerable people – to see things from child pt of view'
 'Knowledge of how the different agencies work together'
 'Further opportunities to speak to and work with children who are LAAC'
 'Where to find further info'

'An overview of the entire process and defined areas & specialisms'
 'Overview of children's needs in care'
 'Now much more aware of the disadvantages in educational qualifications young people in care' have to overcome – all the positive speakers and DVD's and presentations were very uplifting'
 'Developed knowledge of the Authorities Framework'
 'A better understanding of child protection and more aware of other agencies'
 'Better understanding of the chaos that permeates their lives'
 'Knowledge around the input from Dr Sean Cameron – I found this useful'
 'Corporate Parenting – the concept'
 'Everyone's responsibility'
 'Met new colleagues in other

'Importance of warmth, empathy & sensitivity'
 'Knowledge of care leavers – also who is classed as a looked after person!
 'Raised awareness of These Are Our Bairns & Can& Must Do Better'
 'More aware of statistics'
 'More aware of the developments for Looked After children
 'What East Ayrshire's vision is for Child Protection'
 'Better listener. More in tune with National development perspective where voluntary organisations are concerned'
 'Corporate parenting'
 'Being able to see situations from the children's perspective'

areas'
 'Not so much new skills as an awareness of useful resources & websites'
 'Greater understanding of impact on children & young people of inadequate parenting'
 'Impact of LAC child & brain development & dealing with anger'
 'A wider knowledge of initiatives around corporate parenting'
 'Holistic view of child protection'

5. IMPROVEMENT

5.1 Delegates were asked **'How can this training be improved?'**

The responses were:

'Maybe more discussions groups interspersed throughout the day'
 'Workshops could be in separate rooms, not in same hall! Distracting'
 'The training was a great success. Well Done! It was enhanced by the young People. Well done to them!'
 'More for teaching staff and classroom assistants not just SMT. Graham's DVD help with this'
 'Didn't think it could be improved on'
 'The venue was too small for the number of delegates, but overall a very useful and enjoyable event'
 'More movement throughout the day – it was very interesting but a long time to be seated'
 'Delegate list distributed in packs providing contact details of those in attendance for future reference?'
 'Open this up to schools (in-service) so that all staff can participate'
 'Seating / Plan / difficult to see overheads / videos / children – not well laid out given numbers of people. Rethink of speakers – 1) Different venue 2) More time to discuss aspects of presentations - no new information given. Info already known – apart from Fiona Lees'
 'Early Years focus – i.e. need play therapy / special supports for nursery aged children experiencing difficulties re being accommodated'

'Continued progress and commitment for EAC & all partnership agencies in this area'
 'More talk about social work services and how services can be improved between agencies'
 'The venue was not set out well for the number of delegates. Theatre style would have been better but will would have required more breaks to allow staff to refreshments'
 'Workshops should have been longer (timing wrong)'
 'More workshops that are specific to people's expertise, health, education, social work, etc'
 'Another 3 hours...to allow attendance at all workshops!'
 'Would have preferred to have the workshops in the morning – the GIRFEC esp. is necessary but slot too late in the day - didn't need to see all of Craig's story'
 'Don't think much can be improved. Lovely & interesting day!'
 'Some of the print on the overheads was too small to read'
 'Maintain the high priorities of LAC'
 'More opportunities for inter-agency working'
 'More time for the workshops & the opportunity to do more than one for networking'

'The education side was not very positive – too little too late!'

'Further workshop discussion'

'No suggestions. Training was excellent. Only Criticism was with the Who Cares DVD – one small section was accompanied with music that was too loud & made it difficult to hear what the children & young people said'

6. SEVEN DIMENSIONS FOR SCOTLAND'S CHILDREN SUPPORTED BY THE EVENT

6.1 Delegates were provided with a list and asked 'Which of the seven dimensions for Scotland's children are supported by this event?'

6.2 The responses for each dimension were:

SAFE	HEALTHY	ACHIEVING	NURTURED	ACTIVE	RESPECTED & RESPONSIBLE	INCLUDED
82%	70%	84%	75%	54%	87%	82%

6.3 All seven dimensions for Scotland's children were supported by this event to some degree. Eighty seven percent believed the two dimensions which were most supported by this event were 'achieving' and 'respected and responsible' which reflects the message that the event wished to deliver. This is where all agencies have a responsibility as corporate parents to support all looked after children and young people, to 'seek for them the same outcomes as any good parent would want for their own children' (Scottish Government, 2008).

7. WORKSHOPS

7.1 Four workshops were offered at the Conference. Workshop 1 was the most popular, however the delegates had been asked to provide a first and second choice and through a selection process, the delegates were given first choice where possible then second choice if any workshop was oversubscribed. This ensured equity in numbers across the workshops. There were approximately 28 delegates attending each workshop.

7.2 Workshop 1-GIRFEC / IAF

The interactive comments were as follows:

Education:

'Concerns that Education do not get any feedback after 'spending hours' collecting information'

Response to this:

'Assured that managers are provided with feedback & this is only passed on on a need to know basis. Staff invited to discuss issues with Line Manager. Feedback issue in Education is currently being reviewed'

‘Should GIRFEC paperwork be passed from primary school to secondary as a standard part of a child’s file?’

‘General confusion noted over the status of GIRFEC Information in schools as it is not kept in the child’s file but in a separate locked filing cabinet (which suggests it should not be passed on)’

Other Agencies:

‘Youth Justice agree it should be on a need to know basis’

‘Do families know that they have been discussed at GIRFEC?’

‘If Lead Agency does not carry out the tasks as designated – who follows this up?’

7.3 Workshop 2 – The LAAC Health Perspective

The perspective aims to address the following issues with looked after children and young people:

‘Through Immunisation Teams – Health will ensure all LAAC Young People have access to pertinent immunisations, e.g. HPV’
‘Supporting Young People to access services’
‘The Mental Health of young mothers’
‘Alcohol & young people – what interventions are in place’
‘“Foster” caring model, i.e. parents with Learning Disabilities and a new baby’
‘There is a specific Community Planning Pledge to address the needs of LAAC’

‘Addressing non-attendance at schools’
‘Use of text messaging to communicate’
‘Promoting use of more school nurses & developing their role & remit’
‘Actions pledged over the next 3 years – additional monies made available’

7.4 Workshop 3 – The Early Years Framework

The interactive comments were as follows:

‘Issues should be identified at early stages of pregnancy if possible’
‘Due to a lack of resources, much of our work is reaction to crisis rather than preventative work (Health Visitor)’
‘The limited capacity of Daycare has been a problem’
‘Number of Family Care workers should be increased’
‘Resources are required to assist parents’
‘More preventative work is required’
‘Learning life skills should come before

‘Can the number of pre-birth Conferences be increased?’
‘Health Visitors reported that Early Years Services have been a lifeline’
‘Nurseries are very important but parents should be more included’
‘The best resource we can provide is well trained people’
‘Parenting classes in

learning the 3 Rs'
'There should be increased opportunities for outdoor play and risk taking'

secondary schools should be extended'
'Health and wellbeing is the most important thing'

7.5 Workshop 4 – Corporate Parenting Action Plan

The interactive comments were as follows:

Re Mentorship for LAAC:

'Questions /Comments:

"Will every child get a Mentor? How will this be developed? Will there be individual support, e.g. buddies in school already exist & at primary schools SW support assistant adopts role?"

'Concerns about children having to go into respite when the foster carer goes on holiday'

"Are there systems in place for reviewing care plans for children who are looked after but not accommodated as these children give the greatest concern?"

"Is corporate Parenting not just about SW Abdicating it's own responsibility?" There Is a need to involve the child/young person Throughout – how can this be done in each'

'Development of a support network establishment for each child/young person involving Early Years Framework'

'Community development – training for youth workers/community activities'

Re Children's Views:

'Need to consider how to obtain children's of views – oppressive practice to ask their views in front of parents/carers'

'Should children & young people be in attendance at LAC reviews/CCPC/Hearings when information could be emotionally harmful? There was a need to get the balance right. It was thought Panel members

Responses:

'At Grange School – work is outstanding, acts as the voice Child & provides a listening ear'

'Important to remember inclusion in community activities as well as school activities'
'Kinship Care policies have been developed to support foster carers and extended families'

'Need for parallel planning for SATs /CATs. Practitioners have been asked for views on Paperwork but did not get feedback'

'Need a grounded plan for for foster & respite carers (e.g where a child aged 2 has had 5 placements already) Must consider how to support these families' provided – to develop skills'

'Good that "everyone is singing to the same song"'

'Preparation of the child is key importance – supported to make views, ability to talk to someone after the meeting – this could be done in schools. Craig's story will trigger a lot of discussion in the workplace'

don't ask often enough for the room to be cleared for the young person'

Additional Comments:

'Susan Taylor welcomed us very warmly and chaired the Conference extremely well'

'Thank You, a very worthwhile day!!'

'Please send all schools a copy of the DVD & CD & words of the "Care" song rap'

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Child Protection Committee are asked to: -

- i) Not the contents of this report.

Susan Taylor
Chair of Child Protection Committee
12 May 2009

Report prepared by: Frances Milne, Child Protection Co-ordinator

References

Scottish Government (2008). These Are Our Bairns: a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent, Edinburgh, St. Andrew's House.

Scottish Government (2007) Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better, Edinburgh, St. Andrew's House