

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2006

### QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD PROTECTION

#### Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise members of the development of a national document describing a process of self evaluation in the area of child protection.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the last meeting of the Social Work Committee, a seminar was held describing the main issues relating to child protection, particularly in the light of the report surrounding events in the Western Isles. A national prominence has been given to child protection. This matter remains one of critical significance to all who work with, or who are responsible for, children.
- 2.2 As part of the national Child Protection Reform the document "*Protecting Children and Young People: The Framework for Standards*" was issued by the Scottish Executive in 2004. This document set out the commitment to ensure improvement in services to protect children. "*The Children's Charter*" which was published at the same time gave a clear statement on what children and young people themselves expected from services.

## 3. THE QUALITY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 In late November 2005 the Scottish Executive issued "*How Well are Children and Young People Protected and Their Needs Met? : Self Evaluation Using Quality Indicators.*" This document marks the next logical stage of development from the two earlier works referred to in paragraph 2.2 above and is the result of wide consultation
- 3.2 The framework is constructed around five key questions:
- How effective is the help children and young people get when they need it ?
  - How effectively do agencies and the community work together to keep children and young people safe?
  - How good is the delivery of key processes?
  - How good is operational management in protecting children and young people and meeting their needs?

- How good is individual and collective strategic leadership?

Each question is developed into a series of themes which are given at Appendix 1. These themes describe in more practical terms the areas of activity that might be measured by the indicator.

**3.3** The key questions are in turn related to six key areas of interest:

- Key performance outcomes achieved
- Impact of services
- Effectiveness of delivery of processes
- Effectiveness of operational management
- Effectiveness of strategic management
- Capacity for improvement.

This structure of key questions and key areas matches precisely the new generations of quality indicators being jointly developed by the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA), Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and particularly the Services for Children's Unit (SFCU). Further they also map exactly onto the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) system of indicators, which is the East Ayrshire corporate standard. It therefore follows that an evaluation using these indicators will both supplement and complement existing and planned self evaluation exercises.

**3.4** Each indicator is also developed into illustrations which provide some practical detail. The Level 5 illustration describes "very good" performance, while Level 2 is equivalent to "weak". It is envisaged that performance will be evaluated on a full 6 point scale ranging from "unsatisfactory" to "excellent". The illustrations support this process but are not intended to be used as checklists or prescriptions of performance. A full copy of the indicators, together with their illustrations is available in the Members' Information Point.

## **4. NEXT STEPS**

**4.1** The national inspectorates have announced an intention to inspect child protection services starting in 2006. These inspections will cover services beyond those provided by the Council, and will in particular have an impact on the Police, National Health Service and Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA). Two pilot inspections have already been conducted in East Dunbartonshire and Highland. It is to be anticipated therefore that East Ayrshire will be included in one of these exercises in the immediate or near future. It is likely, however, that because of health service and Police boundaries will also cover North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire. In keeping with normal inspectorate procedures it is likely that the first stage of any external evaluation will be to seek the results of any self-evaluation exercises.

- 4.2** The significance of this document is being considered by East Ayrshire's Child Protection Committee, where all involved services are represented. As part of this consideration, the results of a seminar held in December in 2005 will be important as a prelude to mounting a self-evaluation exercise. This exercise will involve officers within the Department of Educational and Social Services and where appropriate and possible, will seek the views of children, young people, parents and carers as well as practitioners.

## **5. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** The conduct of a self-evaluation exercise will assist substantially in providing reassurance that the Council and partner agencies are fulfilling their obligations to children and young people.

## **6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** This development has significant implications to the improving community safety strand of the community plan. The implications of joint inspections, and associated self evaluation exercises will be significant for community planning partners.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** This development will be accommodated within existing resources.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) approve a self-evaluation exercise based on the national indicators;
- (ii) note the development of national inspections in this area of provision;
- (iii) note this report will has also been considered by the Social Work Committee; and
- (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report

**John Mulgrew**  
**Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**  
**GRS/GRS**  
**26 January 2006**

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Service: Quality Improvement, (01563-576089).

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Protecting Children and Young People: The Framework for Standards, Scottish Executive, 2004.
2. The Children's Charter, Scottish Executive, 2004

**Implementation Officer: Jackie Donnelly and Graham Short**

## **THE FRAMEWORK OF QUALITY INDICATORS**

### **QUALITY INDICATORS – 1: How effective is the help children and young people get when they need it ?**

- Children and young people are listened-to, understood and respected.
- Children and young people benefit from strategies to minimise harm.
- Children and young people are helped by the actions taken in immediate response to concerns.
- Children and young people's needs are met.

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### **QUALITY INDICATORS – 2: How effectively do agencies and the community work together to keep children and young people safe?**

- Public awareness of the safety and protection of children and young people.

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### **QUALITY INDICATORS – 3: How good is the delivery of key processes?**

- Involving children, young people and their families in key processes.
- Information sharing and recording.
- Recognising and assessing risks and needs.
- Effectiveness of planning to meet needs.

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### **QUALITY INDICATORS – 4: How good is operational management in protecting children and young people and meeting their needs?**

- Policies and procedures.
- Operational planning.
- Participation of children, young people families and other relevant people in policy development.
- Recruitment and retention of staff.
- Development of staff.

### **QUALITY INDICATORS – 5: How good is individual and collective strategic leadership?**

- Values, vision and aims.
- Leadership and direction.
- Leadership of people and partnerships.
- Leadership of change and improvement.