

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE: 26 JANUARY 2006**

### **CHILD PROTECTION REFORM PROGRAMME UPDATE**

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

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

- 1.1 To update committee on progress in the Child Protection Reform Programme

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Scottish Executive committed to a three year reform programme for child protection services in 2002 as part of the response to the audit and review of child protection services in Scotland, "It's Everyone's Job to Make Sure I Am Alright".
- 2.2 The overall goal of the Child Protection Programme is to improve the protection of children at risk of neglect and abuse and reduce the numbers of children who need protection.
- 2.3 The Child Protection Reform Programme has included the publication of National Standards for Child Protection and a Children's Charter. These publications inform the overall development of the reform programme and are used as references in taking forward the child protection reform programme across Scotland.

#### **3. CHILD PROTECTION REFORM PROGRAMME UPDATE**

##### **3.1 Chief Officers Group**

East Ayrshire Council has established a Child Protection Chief Officers Group in line with the requirements of the Child Protection Reform Programme. This group has Chief Officer representation from East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Strathclyde Police and Scottish Children's Reporters Association. The group collectively agree the Constitution and work plan of the Child Protection Committee and is currently chaired by the Chief Executive. Strategic and operational priorities and resources for the delivery of effective Child Protection Services also fall within the remit of the Chief Officers Group. Members of the Chief Officers Group work closely with their respective agency representatives on the Child Protection Committee in order to ensure the effective delivery of agreed priorities

##### **3.2 Child Protection Committee**

New guidance for Child Protection Committees was published in February 2005. Steps were taken by East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee to ensure that its membership and workings were in line with the new guidance. The Committee meets a minimum of four times a year and is supported

through the work of four sub groups in the areas of Performance and Audit, Training, Public Engagement and Information and a Practitioners sub group.

### **3.3 Multi- Agency Inspection**

The Services for Children Unit within Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) completed two pilot inspections on services for protecting children in East Dunbartonshire and Highland Council areas. Child Protection Inspections will be carried out in all Scottish Local Authorities over the course of the next three years. The East Ayrshire Council response to this programme of inspections is the subject of a separate Committee Report.

### **3.4 Training**

A Child Protection Strategic Training Group has been established by the Scottish Executive. Its remit is to deliver a multi-disciplinary training framework and develop a national suite of training materials on child protection to underpin this. East Ayrshire Council Child Protection Committee is in the process of developing a local multi-agency strategy in line with the Reform Programme.

### **3.5 Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF)**

Within East Ayrshire a working group has been actively developing the Integrated Assessment Framework. The IAF first stage pilot has been completed and the project has now moved on to the development of the stage two pilot which will be run in the Cumnock and Doon Valley area at the beginning of 2006.

The Integrated Assessment Framework sets out a common definition and process for assessing a child across all services. It requires agencies to use a standard method of recording.

### **3.6 Information Sharing Protocol**

A draft Information Sharing Protocol was presented to Committee in November 2005. All agencies are working together to facilitate the full use of this protocol.

### **3.7 Child Deaths and Significant Case Reviews**

A review group has been established by the Scottish Executive to look at the current arrangements in Scotland for reviewing cases which have resulted in the death or significant injury to a child. This group will also develop proposals for future arrangements for review and offer guidance in the form of enquiries that should be instituted in these cases.

### **3.8 Disqualified from Working with Children List**

The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 commenced on 10 January 2005. Section 11(3)(a) was deferred until 11 April 2005 and it is now an offence for an organisation to offer work in a child care position to, or procure such work from an individual who is disqualified from working with children. (Commencement of Section 11(3)(b) which creates the new offence of failing

to remove a disqualified person from a child care position is still deferred). Referrals to the list are now being made and East Ayrshire Council has procedures in place to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and will actively consider any case which may merit a referral to this list.

#### **4. POLICY/LEGAL/PERSONNEL ISSUES**

4.1 Nil.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Child Protection reform programme is a crucial area of work for Local Authorities and their partners. Key child protection posts within East Ayrshire Council are funded from Changing Children's Services Fund allocation. The successful implementation of the Reform programme relies on the continued funding of these posts.

#### **6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The aims of the Child Protection Reform Programme are consistent with the principles and aims of community planning and there are clear links between the wider child protection agenda and the themes of the Community Plan

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 Members of the social work committee are asked to:

- (i) note the progress made with regard to the Child Protection reform programme;
- (ii) invite the Chief Social Work Officer to provide a further update on the Child Protection Reform Programme for Social Work Committee in September 2006;
- (iii) note this report will also be considered by the Education Committee; and
- (iv) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational & Social Services  
9 January 2006  
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#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. It's Everyone's Job to Make Sure I'm Alright
2. Child Protection Standards
3. Children's Charter

For further information please contact: Sally Ann Kelly, Senior Manager, Children and Families and Criminal Justice, telephone: 01563 576845

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY**