

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 18 MARCH 2004

DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD PROTECTION – PROGRESS REPORT

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise elected members of developments in child protection, including progress with the Scottish Executive-led Child Protection Reform Programme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 25 November 2002, the Scottish Executive published the report of its audit and review of child protection services in Scotland, entitled *It's Everyone's Job to Make Sure I'm Alright*. The Executive had commissioned the review in response to the enquiry into the death of the child Kennedy McFarlane in Dumfries and Galloway.
- 2.2 Following publication of the review, a national implementation team was established to support local agencies in improving child protection arrangements. A follow –up review will take place in 2005, with annual reports on progress being made in the interim period.
- 2.3 The priority workload for the national implementation team was formulated into a Child Protection Reform Programme, the main elements of which are :
 - Development of national standards for child protection;
 - Preparation of a children's charter;
 - Issuing of revised guidance on the role, remit and structure of Child Protection Committees
- 2.4 On 6 November 2003, Committee approved the submission of comments to the Scottish Executive in respect of consultation papers issued on national standards and the role and remit of Child Protection Committees.
- 2.5 On 11 November 2003, Scottish Ministers wrote to local authorities, NHS Boards and the Police, requiring the submission of a joint

statement of assurance about child protection arrangements in their local area by May 2004.

- 2.6 On 10 December 2003, NHS Scotland wrote to local NHS Boards, setting out an immediate plan for action by Health in response to reviews of child deaths.
- 2.7 On 19 December 2003, the Scottish Executive wrote to Child Protection Committee chairs, outlining current thinking on the role and remit of Child Protection Committees and suggesting that a Ministerial announcement would be made in February 2004.

3. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.1 At the time of writing, a Ministerial announcement on the outcome of the Child Protection Reform Programme priorities, as set out in paragraph 2.3 above, is still awaited. In the interim period, further work on the priority activities has been pursued in the Scottish Executive-led national forum for Child Protection Committee Chairs, the Crown Office and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration. A Ministerial summit meeting with Leaders of Councils, NHS Chairs and Local Authority and NHS Chief Executives has been convened on 22nd March 2004, to launch the new arrangements.
- 3.2 In pursuit of the NHS Scotland immediate plan for action, NHS Ayrshire and Arran have appointed the Primary Care Trust Director of Nursing as lead officer for implementing the plan at local level.
- 3.3 On 29 January 2004, a high level meeting took place to begin work on preparing the joint statement of assurance for submission by May 2004. Senior representatives from local statutory agencies took part in the meeting, including senior elected members and officers from the Council. Further meetings are being held and it is anticipated that a draft statement will be available for consideration by Social Work and Education Committees in the May 2004 cycle of meetings prior to submission to Scottish Ministers.

4. POLICY/LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy, legal or financial implications arising from this report. Any such implications arising from the anticipated Ministerial announcement on the Child Protection Reform Programme or the joint statement of assurance will be the subject of separate reports to Committees as appropriate.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Committee is requested to:

- a) note the current developments in child protection set out in section 3 above;
- b) note that the report will also be considered by the Education Committee at its meeting on 23 March 2004;
- c) instruct the Director of Educational and Social Services to submit further reports to Committee on the outcome of the Child Protection Reform Programme and on the draft joint statement of assurance on child protection before submission to Scottish Ministers; and
- d) otherwise, note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services
8 March 2004

For further information, please contact John Alexander, Principal Officer (Quality and Planning) (Tel. 6978)

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : JACKIE DONNELLY, HEAD OF SOCIAL WORK