

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 23 MARCH 2006

INTERNAL INSPECTION AND EVALUATION OF CHILD PROTECTION CASE FILES

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the development of a monitoring and evaluation tool for use in Social Work Child Protection cases.
- 1.2 To advise Social Work Committee of the results of an initial Internal Inspection and Evaluation of Child Protection Case Files conducted in November 2005.
- 1.3 To inform Committee of plans to Audit all East Ayrshire Social Work Child Protection Cases on a six monthly basis.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Developments relating to the implementation of the Child Protection Reform Programme have been reported previously to Social Work Committee.
- 2.2 The recommendations of the Caleb Ness Report (2003) and the Report on the Inspection into the Care and Protection of Children in the Western Isles 2005 have also previously been considered by Social Work Committee.
- 2.3 Both the Child Protection Reform Programme and recommendations from enquiry reports have recognised the need to develop monitoring, evaluation and performance measurement tools and techniques to support the introduction of standards for Child Protection work.
- 2.4 The implementation of the East Ayrshire Social Work audit tool will allow Social Work Services to accurately monitor and continuously improve services and practice within the Child Protection field.

3. AUDIT TOOL AND SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The Audit was carried out by the two senior managers within Children and Families over three days accessing all Child Protection files on site at the three fieldwork team locations.
- 3.2 The overall results of the audit were positive with examples of good practice in Child Protection cases.
- 3.3 All but one of the cases audited rated in the "good" or "very good" category in relation to the overall presentation of the files.

- 3.4 98% of cases were met or exceeded Child Protection recording standards.
- 3.5 Of all the case records audited, only one fell below the minimum standards required in Child Protection and immediate management action was taken to address the issues in this case.
- 3.6 The Audit highlighted a need to review current practice in relation to the minuting of meetings. This issue is in relation to delays in minutes being available and is being addressed by the Children & Families Management Team within Social Work and will result in the delivery of refocused training to relevant staff.

4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Nil.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Nil

6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The area of Child Protection is at the heart of Community Planning and is significantly supported by the Improving Opportunities, Eliminating Poverty and Improving Community Safety themes of this plan.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Social Work Committee is asked to:
 - (i) Invite the Chief Social Work Officer to report to Social Work Committee annually on the results of any scheduled and unscheduled Child Protection Audits; and
 - (ii) Otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
SB/AGW
27 February 2006
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report of Child Protection Audit and Review 2002
2. The O'Brien Inquiry Report on the Death of Caleb Ness 2003
3. An Inspection into the Care and Protection of Children in Western Isles – 2005
4. Its Everyone's Job to make Sure I'm Alright – Report of the Child Protection Audit and Review 2002

For further information, please contact Sally Ann Kelly, Senior Manager (Children, Families and Criminal Justice) Telephone: 01563 576907.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : JACKIE DONNELLY