

Dundee's future lies with its children and young people. They deserve the best this city can give them. We will provide the protection they need, when they need it, to keep them safe from harm.

Chief Officers scrutinise staff development provisions as part of child protection improvement

At their monthly meeting on 28 July and as part of the programme of examining each aspect of the child protection improvement programme in detail, the Chief Officers considered activity and plans in relation to multi-agency training and staff development. The CYPPC's Staff Development Officer, Sally Anderson, prepared a paper for the COG and attended the meeting to discuss the paper with Chief Officers.

Chief Officers were made aware of the increase in demand for places on CYPPC programmes, thanks primarily to the work of the agency representatives on the multi-agency staff development forum. In particular, there has been a significant increase in the number of health personnel applying for places. What remains important, however, is that there is a balance of disciplines represented on each course so that the opportunities for learning from each other are maximised.

The Chief Officers agreed that it is hugely important for the right people to be targeted to attend the right courses. In other words, experienced staff should be attending Level 2 and 3 course whilst less experienced staff need to be involved in Level 1 courses before progressing to the higher

levels. Each agency is responsible for identifying, with every member of staff, what core competences are required for the job they do and matching up those needs with training that is available.

The reality is, however, that resources available for multi-agency staff development programmes are finite. That is why it is imperative that:

- people looking to attend courses and their managers need to be clear about the person's learning needs and objectives and crucially assess which is the right programme to be applying for,
- the content of programmes and the methods of delivery must remain under constant review so that the best possible learning opportunities are provided for the greatest number of people possible.

Finally, the Chief Officers heard that the current suite of programmes delivered by the CYPPC both in its own right and as part of the pan-Tayside partnership with Angus and Perth & Kinross CP Committees, is supporting the achievement of the objectives listed in the child protection improvement plan.

CYPPC Annual Report and Business Plan

The Chief Officers considered a final draft of the CYPPC's Annual Report for 2009 - 2010, along with its proposed Business Plan for 2010 - 2013. With the incorporation of some amendments proposed by them, the Chief Officers endorsed the Report & Business Plan. It is now being prepared for publication and copies will be widely distributed.

Like the Child Protection Improvement Plan that was developed during 2009, the Business Plan sets challenging targets for everyone from front-line practitioners to Chief Officers.

The Business Plan sets out the long-term, high-level objectives for child protection services in Dundee. The group or service allocated lead responsibility for achieving each of the objectives will need to develop detailed action plans setting out what it and others need to do in order to achieve the objective. All this work and progress towards achieving objectives will be reported upon regularly to the CYPPC and, in turn, onto the Chief Officer Group.

Independent Chairperson appointed for Practice Review Group

When proposals were developed for the creation of the Practice Review Group, the importance of having an independent chairperson was recognised. The post was openly advertised and the CYPPC has appointed Ms Joan Elliott as chairperson.

Joan, a former senior officer with Glasgow City Council social work department and an associate inspector with HMle, is now Quality Assurance Manager with FosterPlus in Scotland. She will devote up to 12 days per year to leading the Practice Review Group in Dundee. The COG welcomed the appointment of someone with such experience into the role.

Chief Officer/Staff Engagement Events - November 2010

The scheduled engagement event will go ahead as already planned on 10 November in the Al Maktoum Institute. This will again provide the opportunity for members of staff to engage directly with the Chief Officers in examining the performance of our services and to inform the future development of those services.

For the second day of these twice-yearly events, the CYPPC is joining with the Children's Services Strategic Planning Group in a major event that will take place in the Caird Hall on 24 November. Details of this day will be issued from the office of the Integrated Children's Services Manager.

Multi-Agency Assessment Team

By the time of the next COG Briefing note, the Multi-Agency Assessment Team (MAAT) will have come into being. Awareness- raising events and training will be held from the end of August. These will allow staff from all agencies to learn about the role and functions of the team and how it and they can work together to ensure the best outcomes for Dundee's children and young people. More information about these events will be circulated within partner agencies.

HMIe follow-through Inspection

This will be taking place during the week commencing 15th November. We are still awaiting information from HMIe as to the precise scope of the inspection. However, we expect that members of the HMIe team will want to meet with operational practitioners and managers as well as with senior and chief officers. As much of the preparatory groundwork as possible has been done. The CYPPC office will swing into full preparation mode as soon as it has information from HMIe as to what will be required.

... in the meantime

Our programme of multi-agency self evaluation is now up and rolling.

Those who have attended key meetings during July will be aware of the use of the scrutiny questionnaire that allows participants to reflect and comment on the quality of a meeting in which they have just participated. Initial feedback from those recording the information is that the pro-forma is easy to use and the process is not overly time-consuming. The first results will start to come through in about two months time and will be reported in this Briefing Note.

The case-based self evaluation team has now been assembled and is ready for its two-day preparation programme on 23 and 24 August ahead of starting to read case records and meet staff and families over the following 8 days. The sample cases have been selected and consents obtained from families.

The Chief Officers wish to express their thanks to both the members of staff involved in the randomly selected case sample for their efforts at facilitating the process and also to those who have volunteered as members of the evaluation team. It is excellent that so many members of the team are, themselves, practitioners with a very grounded experience in dealing with the realities of supporting and protecting Dundee's most vulnerable children and young people.

As always, any views or comments you have about this briefing note or child protection services in general, should be fed back through the office of the Children & Young Persons Protection Committee at dundeeprotects@dundeecity.gov.uk.