

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.

This 4th edition of our briefing note arrives at the end a year in which there has been significant attention paid to our child protection services. We all know that this year has been challenging for all of us, but we can also look back and see the determination and commitment of all agencies to work together to improve child protection.

In fact, we can already see many significant improvements in how we organise and deliver our services. By making sure our systems and processes are more joined up, we are confident that we are now in a position to exploit every opportunity to work together effectively and improve the wellbeing of children, young people and families across the city.

As we said in our introductions at the events recently held in the Al Maktoum Institute, it is the people who work in our organisations that do, and will continue to, make a difference for the most vulnerable members of our community.

We thank you for all that you have done over the past year: For your commitment and dedication to pursuing high professional standards and for making a real, positive difference to the lives of many, many people in Dundee.

David Dorward
Chief Executive
Dundee City Council

Bill Harkins
Deputy Chief Constable
Tayside Police

Tony Wells
Chief Executive
NHS Tayside

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.

HMIe Interim Follow Through Inspection

The planned interim-follow through inspection of child protection services in Dundee took place between 14th and 17th December. At the end of the visit, HMIe provided verbal feedback that gave an indication of what is likely to be in the published report. We will receive a draft report in mid-January, with the final report due to be published by the end of February.

The very encouraging and welcome news is that HMIe indicated that it would report that positive progress has been made to improve child protection services in Dundee. This is across all the areas identified for improvement in the report published in June 2009.

Inspectors said that it was clear that a significant culture change has taken place. They made the point that this was due not only to the notable progress in collective leadership and direction-setting by Chief Officers and the CYPPC, but the obvious commitment and dedication of all members of staff. The increased confidence, energy and enthusiasm of staff was noted during the course of the visit and the efforts of everyone in making such noteworthy progress in such a short period of time were acknowledged.

After hearing this, the Chief Officers said that they wished to place on record their acknowledgement of the commitment and hard work of all staff involved in the protection and care of children in Dundee, and ask that we keep up the good work.

More information about the inspection findings will be sent to you once the written report is received.

Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

At its most recent meeting, the Chief Officer Group welcomed Elaine Stewart, MAPPA Co-ordinator. Elaine, a serving police officer currently seconded to the Criminal Justice Division of the Council's social work department, led a detailed discussion and analysis of the working relationships across agencies. She provided information on the number of sex offenders being managed in Dundee and the ways in which this is carried out.

Chief Officers noted that at both strategic and operational levels there is full commitment and participation from all relevant agencies and services. Elaine made

particular reference to the NHS Tayside MAPPA Liaison officer, pointing out that this is a unique post within Scotland. This is attracting the interest of other Criminal Justice Authority areas, where the links to NHS are not so strong.

Within Tayside the NHS MAPPA officer has promoted links with GPs and Accident & Emergency staff and relevant information is shared with staff in clinics and hospital settings.

Elaine also highlighted the links made with Housing Liaison Officers

and housing associations.

The MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group, chaired by Bill Harkins, oversees and reviews the MAPPA arrangements and ensures links to other planning structures, particularly those responsible for the protection of children and adults. It also oversees co-ordination and undertakes serious incident reviews.

Chief Officers also took the opportunity to discuss the disclosure scheme currently being piloted in Tayside. It was reported that a number of requests for disclosure information have been made to police.

Child Protection Engagement Events

In the last Briefing Note, there was a report on the first day of two arranged to seek views on and inform the development of, the child protection improvement plan that took place in the Al Maktoum Institute. By all accounts the second day, on 18th November, was as successful as the first.

Certainly the Improvement Plan Task Group Chairs were very enthusiastic about the quality of the views and opinions put forward; clear that these will have a significant impact on the development and implementation of improvements. An example of this is Policies, Procedures and Guidance. As a direct result of the discussions held

at the Al Maktoum, the Task Group is now reviewing not only the content, but the structure and style of both multi and single agency documents that support people doing the job of protecting children and young people.

Of the 182 people who attended the event, 95% said they wanted to be involved in similar activities in the future and 93% said the event was Good, Very Good or Excellent. Nobody said it was Poor.

Chief Officers, who attended a number of the workshop sessions, were equally enthusiastic about the quality of the discussion taking

place. They have confirmed their belief that the people who deliver high quality child protection front-line services must be involved in defining the 'what' and 'how' of service improvement.

The news is that these events will take place twice per year. Dates for an event to be run on two separate days at the end of April/beginning of May are already pencilled in. At the time of writing, final checks on availability of venues and people are being carried out. The dates will be confirmed early in 2010. There will be a second event over two days in November/December 2010.

The Child Protection Improvement Plan

Chief Officers were provided with a progress report on the Improvement Plan. They gave their approval of the work and progress to date and thanked those involved in implementing the plan and improving services.

As noted above, the Chief Officers confirmed their belief that engagement events, such as those held in the Al-Maktoum Institute, are an important opportunity for people working in our organisations to be directly involved in shaping the content and development of our improvement plans. They emphasised their wish that similar events become a regular part of the calendar in Dundee.

Attendance at Review Child Protection Case Conferences

Data about the attendance levels at review case conferences was considered by the COG. The significant improvement in attendance levels by a number of key agencies was welcomed. This information will be monitored on a 3-monthly basis. Qualitative analysis of decision-making at these meetings will be an important part of self-evaluation. Together, the quantitative and qualitative information will provide us with a more complete picture of our practice. This will be a cornerstone in informing the ongoing improvement of services.