

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.

Welcome to the third issue of the briefing note produced following meetings of the Chief Officer Group (COG). Any views or comments you have should be fed back through the office of the Children & Young Persons Protection Committee at dundeeprotects@dundeecity.gov.uk.

The COG met on 28th October. Key points from the meeting are:-

Adult Support & Protection

Laura Bannerman, Manager of Community Care Services in Social Work, attended the COG on 28th October along with Professor James Hogg, independent chair of the Adult Support and Protection Committee (ASPC).

In fulfilling its governance role in relation to the ASPC, the Chief Officer Group had asked Professor Hogg and Laura Bannerman to report to it on a number of developmental areas. Professor Hogg provided detailed comments about each of the ASPC's key areas of work.

Child Protection Improvement Programme

The latest updated version of the Improvement Plan was considered at the meeting. The Chief Officers noted progress being made in accordance with the timescales set. In the few cases where there was delay this was generally by only a few days and was because of reports going to committees etc., for approval.

Chief Officers also noted and approved the re-definition of some actions in the Plan. These have been re-defined as a result of the work of some of the Task Groups. For example, the task to extend the scope of the pre-referral screening forum has led the Immediate Response to Concerns Group to initiate a more fundamental review and development of the multi-agency approach to managing child care and protection referrals.

The Improvement Plan will be submitted to HMle ahead of its return to Dundee to conduct the interim follow-through inspection between 14th and 17th December.

Section 1 of Multi-agency Child Protection Guidance re-written

The priority task for the Policies, Procedures, and Guidance Task Group has been to put into action those recommendations from the Hawthorn/Wilson report relating to the need for improved guidance about Initial Referral Discussions (IRDs). The group agreed that the best way of dealing with these was to undertake a complete re-write of Section 1 of the Multi-agency Guidance.

Each draft was sent out with the request for widespread consultation, particularly amongst practitioners who will have to implement the guidance. The final document presented to and endorsed by the COG. It went live on 9th November.

All copies of Section 1 in the 2006 edition of the Multi-agency guidance should now be marked as 'Replaced', or removed from hard copy versions.

The effectiveness of this new guidance will be monitored as part of the review of the whole multi-agency guidance that will be completed by March 2010.

Any comments you have about the new, interim, Section 1 should be fed into the CYPPC at dundeeprotects@dundeecity.gov.uk.

Practice Review Sub-Group

As part of putting a robust system for self-evaluation of practice in place, the Chief Officers had previously asked that a proposal for a Practice Review sub-group be developed to sit alongside the other self-evaluation activity being planned by the Task Group headed up by Michael Wood, Head of Secondary Education. The underpinning principle behind this is that examining our own practice and what impact it has for children and young people is one of the best ways of learning and improving.

At their meeting on 28th October, the Chief Officers approved, in principle, the proposal put to them. The detail will be put in place by the CYPPC. A multi-agency group will receive referrals of cases that are considered worthy of review - to illustrate good practice that needs to be shared with others, or to identify issues and learn from them - agreeing what action is required improve practice.

Child Protection Improvement Programme (continued)

Supporting and Strengthening Vulnerable Families

The COG considered and approved the implementation of new initiatives, designed to provide support to the most vulnerable families.

Improving Parenting Capacity will see all parents being initially assessed by mainstream staff in addiction services. Where concerns are identified, parents will be invited to take part in a programme of assessment and supportive intervention. It is envisaged voluntary sector agencies, working in partnership with the statutory sector, will provide these interventions.

The Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) is a preventative programme, which works with parents and children aged 10 to 14 in the transition to teen years and aims to reduce alcohol and drug use and behavioural problems in adolescence and strengthen the parent/child relationship. SFP will be delivered by trained facilitators employed by voluntary sector organisations (and ultimately by staff employed by the Community Planning Partners) working in collaboration.

And, finally, a re-design of the 'New Beginnings' service will provide a more integrated, effective and multi-agency response to the needs of all unborn babies and babies under the age of one, who are the subjects of

professional concern and potentially compromised parenting.

Each of these will be evaluated to establish their effectiveness in providing positive outcomes for children and young people.

Replacement for Seymour Lodge

The Chief Officers noted that a planning application has now been submitted for the new building on the NHS Kings Cross site. Work is underway to commission a contractor to demolish the existing building that occupies the ground upon which the new centre will be built.

HMIe Interim Follow-Through Inspection

Since the publication of the last Briefing Note, staff have met with HMIe to prepare for the interim follow-through inspection of child protection services in the Dundee City Council area. Inspectors will be in Dundee from 14 - 17 December and the inspection will focus exclusively on the 7 areas highlighted in Section 8 of the report published in June.

HMIe does not expect that there will be significant impact felt, yet, in service delivery as a result of the child protection improvement plan. What they will examine is the extent to which we have acted upon the findings set out in the inspection report and the progress we have made towards implementing improvements.

The follow-through inspection will not examine any case records, nor will any staff be asked to meet inspectors to discuss specific cases. The major focus of the work will be on meeting Chief and Senior Officers, those officers involved in the Improvement Task Groups and on studying documents (Minutes, Reports, Discussion Papers, etc) which illustrate the action we are taking.

Child Protection Improvement Consultation Events

Two events to seek views on the child protection improvement plan, took place in the Al Maktoum Institute on 6th & 18th November. Over the two events 182 members of staff attended.

The evaluations from the day are still being fully analysed but the initial information shows that about 76% of those attending rated the event Excellent or Very Good. 89% said that they would want to attend a similar event in future. The comments recorded by those present demonstrate that practitioners want to be involved in planning, want to do that in the company of practitioners from other disciplines, and that people want to get into a greater depth of discussion about the future design and delivery of services.

Membership of the COG

In case you didn't see the first edition, the members of the group are:

Tony Wells	Chief Executive, NHS Tayside
Bill Harkins	Deputy Chief Constable, Tayside Police
David Dorward	Chief Executive, Dundee City Council (Chairperson)
Alan Baird	Director of Social Work and Chair of the Children & Young Persons Protection Committee
Caroline Selkirk	Commissioner for Child Health, NHS Tayside
David Lynch	General Manager, Dundee CHP
Colin MacKay	Divisional Commander, Tayside Police
Chris Ward	Asst Chief Executive (Corporate Planning), Dundee City Council