

HIGHLAND CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held on 31st March 2009, Committee Room 3, Highland Council HQ, INVERNESS

Present:

Mr Alistair Dodds, Chief Executive, HC
Mr Roger Gibbins, NHS Highland
Mr Hugh Fraser Director of Education Culture & Sport, HC
Ms Rhona Morrison, Chair of the Children's Panel
Ms Jan Baird, Director of Community Care, NHS Highland
Mr Tom Boyd, Authority Reporter, Highland SCRA
Mr Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services, HC&NHS
Ms Fiona Malcolm, Solicitor, Highland Council
Ms Pene Rowe, CP Development Officer, HCPC
Detective Superintendent Ralph Noble
Mr Innis Mitchell, Children's Planning Officer
Mr Steve Barron – Director of Housing and Property

Apologies:

Mr Ian Latimer, Chief Constable, Northern Constabulary
Ms Harriet Dempster, Director of Social Work, HC
Mr Andrew Laing, Procurator Fiscal
Mr Ken Ross, Vice Chair Children's Panel
Mr Stewart Fraser, Legal Manager, Highland Council

	Item	Summary of Discussion	Action Required
1.	Welcome and Apologies	Mr Alistair Dodds welcomed Mr Steve Barron and Detective Superintendent Ralph Noble to the meeting. Introductions were made of those present. Apologies were noted.	
2.	Minutes of 9th December 2008	The minutes of the meeting of 9 th December 2008 were agreed as accurate.	
3.	Matters Arising	Item 4 - Child Protection Messaging/ e-care connection for GIRFEC Mr Bill Alexander advised that the GIRFEC e-care stakeholder group was making progress with a project plan. This would involve complex work and substantial support from government was available. Support was available from agencies. Social Work would be ready by June 2009. Good progress was also being made with Phoenix.	

		<p>Detective Superintendent Ralph Noble advised that the Police had received a significant enhancement of funding around vulnerable people and would be linked in to the system in about one year. Work with the Police and A & E would continue.</p> <p>Ms Jan Baird advised that the NHS were now narrowing down to one national solution. This would link across GIRFEC and was part of the NHS e-care Agenda.</p> <p>Mr Alexander continued that the project plan involved support to government in developing a complete messaging system. Highland was working with government and this was progressing.</p> <p>Item 7 – Baby P It was noted that the draft letter referred to was not yet available. Mr Dodds agreed to follow this up.</p> <p>Item 3 – Matters Arising – Annual Report Ms Pene Rowe advised that she had prepared a summary report as agreed. Given the time delay that would be involved in getting it printed and distributed, it was suggested that a two year report for 2007-08 and 2008-09 might be appropriate. She advised that the 2008-09 report contained a number of extra sections that would make it quite bulky. Scottish Government feedback on the annual report had indicated that the document was more appropriate for lead officers than for the public.</p> <p>Ms Baird queried the value of publishing the 2007-08 report and suggested that this be entered on the website, rather than published.</p> <p>Mr Dodds agreed that the 2007-08 information should be on the website and the 2008-09 information published separately.</p> <p>Ms Rowe advised that the report would need to be ready for publication by the end of June.</p>	<p>AD</p> <p>PR</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Workplan - BA/TB/PR</p>	<p>Ms Rowe advised that HMIE had developed a new framework which she had circulated. The framework contained nine Quality Indicators, rather than the previous five. The new QIs were compatible with the workplan and the information had been circulated to members for consideration. Items in italics related to the new QIs that had not yet been discussed. Ms Rowe outlined the mapping of the workplan to the</p>	

new framework and explained that the QIs and actions were in line with Highland's priorities.

There was discussion about whether it was appropriate to match the identified workplan to HMle's inspection framework and whether this might lead to the appearance of gaps in service provision. It was suggested that the HMle framework could be used as a tool to measure and evidence the quality of service provided. It was noted that the new regime was based on self-evaluation and the intensity of HMle inspection would depend on the level of self-evaluation evidenced.

The meeting noted that Ms Rowe had cross-referenced strategic priorities to the inspection framework and this would enable Highland to demonstrate where they were doing well against indicators. It was agreed that the CPC might look to see whether there were any gaps between the workplan and the inspection framework and where Highland might have different responses to key sections.

Mr Alexander advised that he had meetings with other agencies the following day and this could be discussed further and brought back to the next meeting.

In relation to HMle and the information circulated, Mr Alexander advised that he attended a recent meeting where the move from five to nine headings was discussed. He noted that the emphasis had shifted to outcomes.

Mr Alexander outlined the inspection format – intelligence gathering, scoping, reading, etc. He noted some concerns as follows:

- The sampling of cases – only between 19 and 29 cases would be looked at.
- Only cases on the CPR and deregistered cases would be looked at. This would not take into account cases where early intervention had prevented children from being at risk and requiring registration. He noted that HMle had taken this on board.
- The inspection would not address the issue of why Highland's CP registration numbers were down in comparison to previous years.

Mr Alexander advised that the public report should be in plain English and accessible. He confirmed that there would be a post-inspection meeting.

	<p>Ms Rowe identified a further concern that if HMIE were only going to identify the families they wished to speak to in week one this did not allow a lot of time to organise meetings with the families and other agencies.</p> <p>Mr Dodds confirmed that Mr Alexander and Ms Rowe would continue with the action plan and strategy document and identify where there were gaps between this and the inspection framework. This would then be considered at the next meeting.</p> <p>Lord Laming Report</p> <p>Ms Rowe advised that she had circulated the recommendations from the Laming report. There were 58 recommendations, mostly aimed at the English system. Where the recommendations matched the practice of the Scottish system these were highlighted. The report contained discussion about the importance of independent chairs of meetings. Ms Rowe advised that case reviews in Highland were often done in house, but where these were serious they were done independently. The report queried whether in some cases a non-independent chair would be able to provide sufficient challenge. She advised that the response from Adam Ingram MSP, Minister for Children and Early Years, had been tabled for discussion today. Mr Ingram's comment about robust systems in Scotland was noted.</p> <p>Mr Alexander agreed that the Laming report was very reassuring for Scotland. He noted that the report required a one year turn around for case reviews and advised that the case review commissioned in Highland in January 2009 was now complete and he had already received the first draft report. He advised that there were no issues arising from the Laming report that Highland needed to pay attention to. He noted that on the first page there were three words in capitals that spelt out JUST DO IT.</p> <p>Ms Rowe noted that this was a reference to the fact that systems were in place to meet the requirements and people had to just do it.</p> <p>The meeting noted that in terms of the recommendations, Highland was already meeting these. The high interest in training and risk assessment was noted. No actions for Highland were identified from the Laming report.</p>	<p>BA, PR</p>
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5.	Public Protection Event	<p>Governance Issues</p> <p>Mr Dodds advised that it had been decided that Ms Baird, Mr Alexander and Detective Superintendent Noble would get together and discuss.</p> <p>Mr Alexander advised that they had a working session and a paper was being prepared for the leadership group in May 2009. This would map out the work of sections. He suggested that Youth Justice should also be included in discussions. He advised that it was agreed that they would meet separately to discuss the remit of the safety group and 6 proposals in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V A W (Violence against women) • A S P (Adult Support and Protection) • A D A T (Alcohol and Drug Action Team) • M A P P A (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) • Youth Justice • CPC <p>He advised that a more coherent approach was being developed and proposals would be available by the end of April.</p>	JB, BA , RN
6.	Scottish Government Child Protection Guidance	<p>Mr Alexander advised that the Government had formed a National group and he had attended the first meeting. Adam Ingram MSP spoke at the group. It was recognised that the review of national and local child protection guidance should be done in parallel. There were two work streams –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. information sharing and risk assessment 2. procedures and protocols <p>Mr Alexander advised that he might ask some people to help with this. The National guidance would be available by the end of the year and this would relate to GIRFEC.</p>	BA
7.	Highland Child Protection Guidance – Road Shows	<p>Mr Alexander advised that the guidance document had to be printed in time for the Roadshow and needed to be completed by 10th April 2009.</p> <p>There were some items still to be completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Underage sex – Inspector Mairi Grant had some information for this. ○ Young people who were abusers and Court processes – Mr Boyd had prepared this. <p>Mr Boyd confirmed that he had prepared a section for the guidance and had consulted with Andrew Laing, Procurator Fiscal.</p>	

		<p>Mr Alexander advised that the first Roadshow would be on 5th June. Dates had been circulated with today's papers.</p> <p>Ms Rowe advised that an extra Roadshow event might be required for Inverness as the one arranged for Inverness was almost full. The meeting agreed that it would be difficult if key people had not registered.</p> <p>Mr Dodds advised that he was happy to front an extra session if this was required. Mr Gibbins, Mr Boyd and Ms Baird also advised their availability.</p> <p>Mr Alexander advised that Adam Ingram MSP was attending an event on 5th May 2009. Chief Officers and Senior Managers would be required to attend. Mr Ingram wanted to celebrate Highland's achievements with GIRFEC. This would be a joint launch of the new CP guidance and GIRFEC.</p>	<p>Chief Officers/ Managers required</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>National Issues:</p>	<p>Whistle Blowing – The letter from Adam Ingram, MSP was noted. Mr Dodds confirmed that he would address this in the letter referred to above (Matters arising, Item 7).</p> <p>HMIe next round of inspections - Discussed above.</p> <p>Protection of Vulnerable Groups update - An update was circulated in relation to this.</p> <p>National CPC Chairs update – A paper was circulated in relation to this. Ms Rowe referred to specific items that were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A need to ensure there were appropriate Child Protection Policies held by Thai Boxing groups as this was not a recognised sport and was not subject to the standard Child Protection Charter governing regulated contact sports. Ms Rowe also advised the need to be alert to pushy parents who may push their children into such sports to the detriment of their welfare. This had been discussed with Community Learning and Leisure. ○ Horizon Scanning Event on 6th May – Protecting Scotland's Children 2010 – 2030. This would be held in Edinburgh by the Scottish Government and would consider the future of Child Protection 	<p>AD</p>

		<p>Services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Trafficking – new legislation would be introduced in relation to this on 1st April 2009. Ms Rowe referred to the paper circulated. <p>Child Trafficking – Actions for CPCs –</p> <p>Ms Rowe advised that the paper referred to in the circulated information was now published and there were specific requirements on each agency. The CPC would need to ensure that guidance was provided to agencies with regard to this. The CPC should also prepare a campaign to raise awareness of the signs of trafficking.</p> <p>Mr Alexander confirmed that this was covered by a working group known as Operation Pentameter. This group had not met, but were in contact. He confirmed that he had been told that this was not a significant issue in Highland.</p> <p>Mr Dodds clarified that Ms Rowe would prepare a public awareness element as part of the campaign proposal to be brought to the next CPC.</p>	PR
9.	Standing items	<p>Log Minutes of 24th February</p> <p>Ms Baird noted the CPC discussion regarding Police medicals and confirmed that the NHS difficulty in covering the paediatric rota was due to national difficulties. She confirmed that Highland now had more staff and the paediatric rota was covered. Work was continuing with regard to forensic issues and there had been discussion about the possibility of working with Grampian to cover the requirement for this.</p>	
10.	AOB	<p>Ms Rowe advised SCRA had confirmed that they would issue quarterly reports in relation to the number of referrals of children going to Hearings, etc. Ms Rowe would circulate this report for the next CPC.</p>	PR
11.	Date of Next Meeting	23rd June 2009 at 3pm-5pm, Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, INVERNESS	