



Fife Child Protection

child protection is everyone's job...it's our job

www.fifechildprotection.org.uk

Foreword

The New Year brings us the return of the HMIE Inspection Team on the 8th of February. This visit is to conduct an interim follow through inspection following the publication of the HMIE inspection in April 2009.

Although there were findings which cast a shadow over the many examples of good quality child protection work that is a daily feature within both individual agencies as well as the partnership, all of us in Fife accepted the challenges identified within each of the key development themes of: Participation, Information Sharing, Risk Assessment, Planning, Review and Monitoring and Leadership and Direction. A fuller description of the HMIE findings is available via the CP website.

In the months since the inspection an enormous amount of energy and resource has been focused on improving child protection service delivery and practice to improve the outcomes for our children and young people. These changes have been led by the Chief Officers (Chief Constable, Fife Constabulary, Chief Executive, Fife Council and Chief Executive NHS Fife) who have taken an active role in initiating, supporting and monitoring the CPC's progress in delivering the improvement agenda.

This special edition news bulletin brings you the latest news on some of the developments which highlights the significant progress we have made so far and which will be evaluated during the Inspectors visit in February.

Child protection is extremely complex and there are still many challenges ahead. This will require additional long-term planning and further developments in practice. Change will require to be firmly established and embedded before we can confidently move forward.

But through the new structures, mechanisms and resources now in place we will continue to move our partnership forward. Importantly we will demonstrate significant continuous improvement, robust partnership working and self-evaluation which will ultimately improve outcomes for vulnerable children in Fife.



John Myles
Interim
Independent
Chair
Fife CPC

What we have achieved and moving forward

The responses to the HMIE's Inspection Report and the direction given by Chief Officers led to the formulation of the Multi-agency Improvement Plan.

The publication of the full HMIE report on the 30th of April 2009 allowed a wider audience within each agency to understand the findings and become more fully involved in the change programme.

The Chief Officers Group identified three key areas within the Inspection Report that they wanted both a multi and single agency response to. The 3 identified were

- Information sharing
- Risk assessment
- Leadership and Direction

The prioritisation of these areas did not mean that participation, planning, review and monitoring were not addressed but that more immediate focus and resources were concentrated on the three above.

This special bulletin summarises how Child Protection agencies in Fife have responded to the findings in the HMIE Inspection of October 2008.

Thanks to all staff and Services who have made these changes possible.



Steven Hatch
Lead Officer
Fife Child
Protection
Committee

You can contact the CPC Support Team at:

Auchterderran Centre, Woodend Road, Cardenden, KY5 ONE

E-mail: fife.childprotection@fife.gov.uk

Tel: 01592 583251

Visit: www.fifechildprotection.org.uk

Information Sharing

Information sharing is critical to the quality of services available to children and families involved in child protection processes. This includes detailed support and guidance for staff to ensure consistency of information-sharing across agencies.

- The implementation of the revised Inter-agency Referral Discussion (IRD) has now been embedded with key practitioners and services, particularly within the core agencies of Social Work, Police and Health.
- Comprehensive IRD guidance and a summarised version of guidance with a clear process map has been distributed widely. It is being rolled out for inclusion within all single and multi-agency training packs. This will develop a wider understanding of the process with universal children's services. This development will ensure all relevant staff have

a full awareness of the IRD process.

- Our Child Protection Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) is being considered by the CPC and the COPs groups and will form part of all single and multi-agency training. Its introduction will offer practitioners clear guidance of issues around consent, disclosure, data protection and recording. A leaflet produced by the Getting it Right in Fife Group for practitioners will also be distributed to accompany the more detailed protocol. A list of relevant individuals who have detailed knowledge of Child Protection issues has been added as an appendix to the ISP enabling access to expert advice when required.
- Social Work and Police have developed guidance, and processes to improve the quality of information requested

by social work from police. This change is the template to develop similar guidance, procedures and forms between core agencies. This will simplify processes and enable the proper monitoring and recording of information sharing across partners.

- The On-line Child Protection Register and messaging system continue to be embedded in agencies. These systems allow information to be readily accessible across agencies. It is a powerful tool to allow staff to analyse initial concerns they may have more effectively.
- Integrating information sharing has been an ongoing process for single and multi-agency training. Local procedures are to be introduced as a prominent part of all training events.

Risk Assessment

Improve the process to assess the risk and needs of individual vulnerable children and ensure assessments are sufficiently rigorous to identify the actions needed to protect children.

- A factor that often increases risk for children is substance misusing parents. Fife has recently launched CAPSM Guidance that contains information on recognising substance misuse and identifying the affects this may have on children. The guidance offers information on how you progress child protection concerns.
- A new one day multi-agency training module which is being developed encapsulates the relationship between substance misuse and domestic abuse and how these factors can increase the risk to children.

- Additional staff are addressing issues of inconsistency in response to initial referrals and this has helped address the large number of 'cause for concern' reports generated by the police. This has speeded up responses to referral and allowed some filtering of referrals to reduce the demand on Children and Families team.
- In health a review of risk assessment processes and the documentation use to guide staff and to record risk has been undertaken. This has resulted in all of the processes being "joined up" and agreed 'Child Welfare Pathway' being implemented. Through an extended training programme this is currently being rolled out across services.
- Work has been ongoing to ensure that the SWIFT Assessment Framework Module is fully embedded within social work services. It now produces

easily assessable and accurate information both assisting assessment and consistently producing a higher quality of assessment.

- The CPC is working with the GIRIF Group to ensure that any integrated assessment for children will be effective for children involved in child protection systems. Work is ongoing to improve risk assessment and meet children's needs.
- As part of the CPC's work plan there will be a comprehensive review of the processes in child protection from recognising a concern, to referral, to investigation and the planning and intervention stages. The simplification and clarification of Child Protection processes will be measured against the ultimate aim of making a positive difference to the outcomes for children. This work is anticipated to be a longer-term goal and will be prioritised within future improvement plans.

Leadership & Direction

Ensure chief officers and senior managers direct and monitor the effectiveness of the CPC and key child protection processes.

- Governance arrangements for the Children's Services Group, Chief Officers Public Safety Group and the Child Protection Committee have established structures that support the delivery of high quality services to children in Fife.
- The Chair of Children's Services Group joins the Chair of the CPC as an attending member of the COPS Group. This is pivotal in developing all children's services in Fife and the increasing influence of the GIRFEC agenda and to ensure consistency of approach and mutual awareness.
- To encourage integration between child protection and children's services planning, the Chairs of the CPC and Getting it Right in Fife (GIRIF) are now attending members of the other group's meetings, ensuring effective and meaningful joint working between the CPC and wider children's services.
- The capacity and structure of the Child Protection Committee has been significantly enhanced to deliver the improvement agenda. We have replaced the

two previous groups with five new multi-agency Working Groups with responsibility for the following areas;

- Policy, Procedure and Performance
- Self Evaluation
- Training
- Communications
- Significant Case Reviews
- Each of these groups is chaired by a full member of the CPC.
- A child protection conference for managers, in addition to the existing annual practitioners conference, was held recently around the main themes of Recognition, Reporting and Recording. The evaluation results have been used to inform the content of future training courses as well as inform the agendas of the child protection working groups and influence the Child Protection Improvement Plan.
- The role and remit of the Local Child Protection Groups (LCPG) are being developed to focus on the effectiveness of child protection measures at a local level through self-evaluation.
- The CPC Support Team has been strengthened with the addition of two new members of staff, resourced from partner agencies, to work in the areas

of self-evaluation and policy development.

- As a move towards greater information sharing and integration of planning within the wider public protection arena, the CPC Support Team, Adult Support & Protection Team and the Offender Management Unit Support Team have co-located to a single office in the Education building at Auchterderran Centre. This is the first in Scotland.
- A Significant Case Review Protocol (SCR) has been completed and the Child Protection SCR Working Group has been recently established. The practicalities of feeding corporate lessons learnt from case reviews into agencies and into practice are still being developed.
- Important changes to the parameters for the collection of statistics from the Management Information & Statistics report have been agreed by all partner agencies. This will provide more meaningful and relevant data informing future strategic direction and planning. Further work is ongoing to develop performance indicators that more directly relate to outcomes for children.

Participation

Improve the participation of children and families in key child protection processes and ensure they are more fully involved in decision-making about their lives.

- We continue to drive change and to increasingly engage children and families within child protection processes. This will ensure they have the opportunity to influence strategy, policies and changes in process and in turn have a positive impact on service delivery to children.
- New reports and forms which emphasise children and parents views are being used.

- We have taken action to ensure that children and families are prepared prior to child protection meetings, are involved during meetings and are supported post meeting to understand what decisions have been taken and what this will mean for the child and the family. This was achieved through a combination of audits and self-evaluation particularly focusing on the role of the Reviewing Service.
- Social Work has commissioned Barnardos to enhance their advocacy services to children in Fife with a specific remit to

support children involved in child protection issues. This has ensured that children have their voices heard in the child protection process.

- Work is ongoing through "The Big Shout" project to target young people who would not normally be involved in community youth groups. This will allow a wider group of children who are vulnerable to have their voice heard.
- A recent Children's Right's Conference brought young people and senior policy makers in Fife together and we are currently considering how the feedback from this event can best impact on our Improvement Plan.

Planning, Review & Monitoring

Improved planning to meet children's needs ensuring all children have sufficiently detailed plans which contain arrangements for monitoring and review.

- Additional staff have been recruited to the Reviewing Service. This has created the capacity within the service to extend the role of Reviewing Officers enabling them to be more responsive to children and their families.
- The wider adoption of the Child's Plan by core agencies using the SHANARRI Framework (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected and Responsible and included) has improved focus on outcomes and created a higher degree of consistency in plans.
- A standard of three weeks notice for Child Protection Case Conference Reviews has been set and is being monitored by social work.
- Core group meetings monitor children's plans between formal child care review meetings. Core group meetings now follow the SHANARRI indicators and risk is systematically assessed at each meeting.
- Social work has introduced chronologies which are now evident within each child's paper file in addition to being held electronically. The chronology includes all recorded child protection activity and case recordings.
- The introduction of a Case Scrutiny Group self-evaluation process in the Social Work Service has created an additional mechanism for quality assurance in child protection. Individual team managers and social workers are asked to present random cases to a small group of managers, chaired by the Head of Service.
- In health a review of the child health record system is underway and plans are being developed to move towards development of electronic systems that support shared records. Alongside this a tracking system is being implemented that allows us to pull together existing files on children (particularly those on the child protection register) when a child is seen to be "at risk".

Self-evaluation

Creating continuous processes of self-evaluation should be given a high priority and a systematic approach to single agency quality improvement across partner agencies, including Fife Council, Fife Constabulary and NHS Fife should be adopted.

- The Child Protection Self-evaluation and Audit Working Group brings together single and multi-agency self-evaluation work, in a systematic and planned manner.
- A three year plan of self-evaluation is currently being refined for implementation in April 2010. The holistic plan identifies the priority areas of evaluation, linking to the overall improvement plan. A multi-agency self-evaluation calendar of activity details both single and multi-agency audits
- The CPC Case File Audit process was reviewed and revised, with new guidance issued in June 2009. A number of case audits were undertaken expanded the audit process to include focus groups of practitioners, and interviews with children and their families. The audit identified recommendations some of which are being directly implemented by services (e.g. combining Educational and LAC Reviews).
- The CPC has engaged in a number of small scale evaluations on specific areas of child protection work, such as Case Conference attendance and IRD outcomes. This has given the CPC specific details of where changes need to be made to improve the outcome for the child. This process has highlighted and clarified expectation on individual services.

Fife Child Protection Committee

Independent Chair of Fife Child Protection Committee

- John Myles

Chair of Policy, Procedures & Performance Working Group

- Alistair Gaw,
Head of Service Children and Families & Criminal Justice

Chair of Training Working Group

- Garry Crosbie,
Directorate Service Improvement, Fife Council Education Service

Chair of Self Evaluation & Audit Working Group

- Andrew Barker,
Assistant Chief Constable

Chair of Communications Working Group

- Annie Buchanan,
Nurse Director, NHS Fife

Chair of Significant Case Review Working Group

- John Myles,
CPC Independent Chair

CPC Support Team

- Steven Hatch,
CPC Lead Officer
- Melanie Durowse,
CPC Quality Assurance and Development Officer
- Julia Daghish,
CPC Quality Assurance and Development Officer
- Craig Ritchie,
CPC Policy Development Officer
- Kath Collins,
CPC Support Officer
- Nancy Hainey,
CPC Support Assistant

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