

Minutes of The Child Protection Meeting on Tuesday 13 March 2007 at the Menzies Belford Hotel, Edinburgh

Meeting Of **Child Protection Committee Chairs**
Child Protection Committee Lead Officers
The Crown Office
The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
HMle Services for Children Unit
Scottish Executive

Item 1 – Welcome and Introduction

Claire Monaghan welcomed attendees. Mary Fegan summarised discussion from the morning meeting of the National CPC Chairs' Forum. CPC Chairs and Lead Officers were working jointly to meet the challenges of the many developments in delivering services to children and young people. The Forum took the view that some initiatives might appropriately be led on a national basis by the Executive, for example the provision of multi-agency guidance and the commissioning of research. Graeme McNaught of the Executive's Children Missing from Education Project had given a presentation to the Forum entitled *Keeping Young People Safe and Well*. The Forum considered that, rather than focus solely on Children Missing from Education, there was a need for a National Missing Children's Protocol, especially in light of the overarching provisions of Getting It Right For Every Child.

A list of attendees and apologies for absence is at Appendix A to these minutes.

Item 2- Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 December 2006 and Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed. Under Matters Arising – Item 8 of the Minutes of the Meeting on 8 December 2006 – the letter covering issue of the UN Convention Paper to stakeholders had been sent to Chairs and Lead Officers last December.

Item 3 – Scottish Coalition for Young Runaways – Scoping Study to Map Existing Services for Young Runaways Across Scotland – Presentation by Bryan Evans, Assistant Regional Director, Aberlour Child Care Trust and Margaret Malloch, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, University of Stirling

Bryan explained the history, aims and objectives of the Scottish Coalition for Young Runaways which has membership from statutory and voluntary bodies in Scotland who support the coalition's aims to raise awareness of the need for:-

- a national consistent support framework for young people across Scotland who run away and are at risk of running away.
- Policies, structures and funding streams that can support this;
- The translation of these policies, structures, protocols and other arrangements into actual positive change for young people who run away or at risk of running away.

The Coalition monitors current supports for young people, including protocols supporting inter-agency work as required by the Vulnerable Children and Young People Guidance Pack published by the Executive in 2003. A scoping study of services for young runaways has been commissioned by Aberlour, funded by the Executive and undertaken by the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research at the University of Stirling. Margaret gave a power point presentation on the details of the study which will :

- Explore the level of awareness of young runaways among local authorities and review the extent to which their needs are identified in Children's Services Plans.
- Establish how many local authorities have adopted proposals for responding to runaways in line with the Executive's guidance and identify how many protocols are being utilised.
- Consider the extent to which protocols meet their objectives and the needs of young runaways.
- Identify what action has been taken to provide services for young runaways either directly or in partnership with other agencies.
- Explore any existing plans to identify gaps and develop services.

The study will inform the development of a national response to the needs of young runaways. The Executive expects to develop this in partnership with the Scottish Coalition for Young Runaways and is currently exploring with Aberlour how the Coalition's remit might be expanded to form a national group.

Child Protection Committees were asked to help with the study. In the first instance Margaret would contact each CPC to request some background information and to be put in touch with a designated individual. At a later stage Margaret would seek the help of CPCs to set up focus groups involving young people in three or four local authority areas to analyse responses.

Action - Secretariat to email copies of Bryan's and Margaret's handouts to the Group.

Item 4 – ChildProtectionLine

Maggie reported that the 24 hour national child protection freephone line had gone live on 12 February. The essentiagroup had handled 159 calls in the first month of operation. The launch had been promoted through a PR campaign comprising poster and leaflet drops to local community resources, national press articles, articles in 108 local titles and local radio interviews. Promotional activities to complement local needs would continue during 2007 with activity at the beginning of the summer holidays and before Christmas. CPCs would be asked to help identify where local campaigning activity might best be focussed. Maggie had circulated

initial feedback from the essential group which showed that parents and neighbours had been the most frequent callers to date.

There was discussion around the extent to which the Child Protection Line will add value and improve public access to child protection services. These were early days and the service needed time to achieve its potential in terms of uptake. It was unique in offering a single access point to CPC providers for those with concerns about a child or young person. It would be important for agencies, under the guidance of CPCs, to plan to meet the demands of increased referrals that might result from introduction of the service.

This 3 year project would be evaluated at the end of 18 months. The working group for this project will continue developing the service over the next several months.

Item 5 – Induction Training for Child Protection – Presentation by Peter Ashe, NHS Scotland and Lindsay Ferguson, Lead Child Protection Nurse, Scottish Executive

Peter and Lindsay gave a powerpoint presentation entitled *Induction, basic awareness and response training, and e-learning* highlighting possible approaches to training the large numbers of staff employed by organisations, especially large organisations who are not part of children's services but work with people who are parents or carers. E-learning offered significant advantages including 24/7 availability and the capability to track a learner's progress. Challenges were that this might not be the optimum learning experience for this topic and some smaller organisations might not have access to a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). A list of possible training materials had been collected and initial discussions on a general approach had taken place with some key stakeholders. Much remained to be done and local partnerships might tailor the overall menu to suit local circumstances as well as to add in or commission their own content and decide on and plan for the balance between e-learning and other approaches to training.

In discussion it was noted that:-

- At present it was difficult to find capacity to release staff to attend training events – might there be similar difficulties in freeing up time for virtual learning?
- Target staff might not have access to home IT facilities but these were now widely available in public libraries. E-learning also enabled staff to undertake training outwith working hours if so inclined.
- E-learning had capacity to spark additional underlying interest that could lead to further development and acquisition of skills.
- It would be important to ensure that e-learning programmes took account of inter-agency working and information sharing.

Chairs and Lead Officers generally welcomed the proposals and it was agreed that Peter and Lindsay should develop the concepts and bring revised proposals to CPC Chairs and Lead Officers in due course.

Action: – Peter and Lindsay to bring revised proposals to Chairs and Lead Officers when these have been developed.

Item 6 – Significant Case Review Guidance

Maggie explained that the Working group under the Chairmanship of John Elliott had reconvened to progress interim guidance which had been significantly revised in light of consultation. Key issues to emerge from consultation were around definition of criteria to be applied, the timelines to be set and the lack of a legal basis to conducting a Significant Care Review (SCR.) Initial consideration had been given to whether the guidance might be redrafted or otherwise revised to include provision for investigating significant incidents involving offending adults. The following aspects were raised in discussion:-

- There was a fine line to be observed in publishing detailed information from which lessons could be learned, and preserving the confidentiality of the subject of the review and that individual's family and/or carers.
- Meaningful lessons were more likely to be learned through a "blame free" process where practitioners felt uninhibited in providing information. This might be achieved by publishing an anonymised executive summary and affording only very restricted access to the full report itself. However, the entire process could be subject to Freedom of Information provisions.
- There were considerations around when reviews should be undertaken internally and when they should be out-sourced.
- Accountability should be at Chief Officer level.

The SCR Working Group was scheduled to meet on 28 March and it was expected that an interim document would be available before the dissolution of Parliament. A detailed update would be provided at the next meeting of the Group in June.

Note: The guidance can now be accessed at xxxx.

Item 7 – Evaluation of the Child Protection Reform Programme

Maggie reported that the Centre for Child Care and Protection at the University of Dundee and Barnardo's Scotland had recently submitted the final report on their independent evaluation of the child protection reform programme. The remit was to examine whether the programme had been an effective approach to reforming child protection in Scotland and, in particular, the extent to which it was influencing practice amongst child protection professionals. Findings were largely positive and there was an overwhelming consensus that the Programme had been successful in

meeting its aims and objectives and had brought about improvements at national and local level.

The report would be published and available on line from 20 March.

Item 8 – Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Bill – Update on Recent Developments and Pre-Consultation Paper

Claire updated the Group on progress on the Bill. Ministers had agreed to the withdrawal of Part 3 of the Bill which had contained provisions for the sharing of child protection information. However, Ministers were committed to the development, in association with stakeholders, of a non-statutory Code of Practice on Sharing Information When A Child Is In Need of Protection.

To facilitate urgent progress of the Bill a pre-consultation discussion paper covering key issues that would affect secondary legislation had been developed and circulated to a wide range of stakeholders and the Education Committee. Stages 2 and 3 of the Bill led to a number of amendments that significantly strengthened the legislation. The Bill completed its Parliamentary passage on 8 March. The Executive is now engaged in preparatory work for implementation of the legislation. The Executive would keep CPCs informed of progress on this work.

Action – Executive to keep CPC Chairs and Lead Officers Informed of Progress on Implementation.

Item 9 – Letters of Assurance 2

Maggie apologised for the delays in providing feedback on this exercise. A general report containing a summary overview of themes to emerge from the Letters would be issued to all LoA respondents over the next few weeks and individual feedback provided on request. Key themes to emerge included confirmation that the guidance issued to CPCs in 2005 had been implemented and that the new functions required of CPCs were being undertaken.

Item 10 (Item 9 on the Agenda) – Child Protection Committee Annual Reports for 2006/2007

Maggie noted that CPC Annual Reports for year ending 31 March 2007 were due to be with the Executive by 30 June 2007. In the first instance, Annual Reports are intended to reassure Chief Officers Groups of their CPC's progress. The submission of reports to the Executive is a second order activity. The process of writing up the Annual Report should provide an opportunity to demonstrate the ways CPCs were bedding in and extending their activities. Gaynor Davenport will be happy to provide guidance on request to CPCs on the drafting of reports.

There was discussion on ways the CPC Guidance might benefit from being updated. It was agreed that the Executive would consider this with CPC's as a possible agenda item for the next meeting.

Action – Executive to raise at next meeting whether CPC Guidance issued in 2005 now needs to be updated.

Item 11 (Item 10 on the Agenda) – UK Action Plan on Human Trafficking

Maggie also mentioned a recent report by Save the Children contends that young children are being smuggled or trafficked into Scotland. The report recommends a national reporting facility for children whose arrival or departure gives rise to suspicion and calls for guidance for local authorities on child trafficking.

Action – Executive to keep CPCs informed of developments on the UK Action Plan.

Item 12 – (Item 11 on the Agenda) – Draft Code of Practice on Sharing Information When a is in Child Need of Protection - Applicability of The Glasgow Protocol for Working with Young People Who Are Sexually Active

Maggie updated on the work of the Executive's Short Life Working Group (SLWG) on the Reporting and Handling of Disclosures of Underage Sexual Activity. This Group was set up late in 2005 to consider what, if any, action is required and by whom with regard to information sharing practices between agencies and procedures for handling disclosures of inappropriate sexual activity where there are concerns about the child or young person. Recently Glasgow Council had developed and published for their Council's use a Protocol for Working with Young People Who Are Sexually Active. This Protocol contains guiding principles to assist professionals in making quality assessments and developing appropriate responses. The Executive's Short Life Working Group had been considering parts of the Glasgow Protocol in relation to its potential applicability to national guidance on handling disclosure and confidentiality issues involving underage sexual activity. SLWG had agreed that it would be very helpful to take wider soundings on this sensitive and difficult area. Accordingly the Executive would shortly write to CPC Chairs and Lead Officers to request their comments.

Action – Executive to write to CPC Chairs and Lead Officers seeking comments on the potential applicability of parts of the Glasgow Protocol as national guidance.

Item 13 (Item 12 on the Agenda – Any Other Business)

No items of Other Business were raised by the Group.

**Scottish Executive
Children & Families**

April 2007

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In Attendance

Claire Monaghan – Scottish Executive (Joint Chair of Meeting)
Mary Fegan, North Lanarkshire Council (Chair, National CPC's Forum)
Maggie Tierney – Scottish Executive
Gaynor Davenport – Scottish Executive
Myra Frankland – Lead Officer, East Renfrewshire CPC
Fiona Swift – Co-ordinator, North Lanarkshire CPC
Sandra Paterson – Chair, North Ayrshire CPC
Safaa Baxter – Chair, East Renfrewshire CPC
Neil McKechnie – Director, HMIE
Lindsay Ferguson – SEHD
Peter Ashe –
Andrew Main – East Lothian CPC
Alan Ross – Angus CPC
Brenda Doyle – South Lanarkshire CPC
Gordon McKay – Development Officer, Perth & Kinross
Sara Lovelock – Clackmannanshire/Stirling
Catriona Laird – Falkirk CPC
Margaret Anderson – Falkirk CPC
Jill Eadie – Stirling CPC
Martin Donachy – East Ayrshire CPC
Susan Kerr – Lead Officer, Inverclyde CPC
Kenneth Ritchie – Chair, Inverclyde CPC
Alistair Dodd's – Chair, Highland CPC
Beth Smith – Chair, Dumfries and Galloway CPC
Mike Briggs – Lead Officer, Dumfries and Galloway CPC
Sandra Thain – ELBCPO
Alwyn Bell – (on behalf of ELB Co-ordinating Group)
Susan Bell – Renfrewshire CPC
Nora Fisher – Renfrewshire CPC
Liz Strang – Argyll & Bute CPC
Astrid Telfer – Edinburgh CPC
Gillian Nicol – Scottish Borders CPC
Donald Urquhart – Midlothian CPC
Trevor Muir – Midlothian CPC
Jane Ridgway – Lead Officer, West Lothian CPC
Alison Wright – Head of Practice, SCRA
Jo MacPherson – West Lothian CPC
Bill Atkinson – Perth and Kinross CPC
Neil Watson – Chair, South Ayrshire CPC
Maxine Hawthorn – Lead Officer, North Ayrshire CPC
June Gardiner – Co-ordinator, South Ayrshire CPC
Claire Carthy – Lead Officer, East and West Dunbartonshire CPC

Anne Ritchie – Chair, West Dunbartonshire CPC
Tony Keogh – Head of Social Work, East Dunbartonshire
Iain MacAulay – Chair, Eilean Siar CPC
Marion Martin – HMIE, Services for Children
Colin McKerracher – NESCP
Reese Reilly – NESCP
Angus MacLeod – Western Isles CPC
Gillian Buchanan – Glasgow CPC
Helen Watkins – Lead Officer, Shetland CPC
Malcolm Bell – Chair, Shetland CPC
Ross Drummond – Lead Officer, Fife CPC
Allan Burnett – Vice Chair, Fife CPC
Gordon McIntosh – Senior Manager, Angus Council
Shona Montgomery – Scottish Executive (Secretariat)
Laura Nisbet – Scottish Executive (Secretariat)

Apologies

Sheila Foggan – Lead Officer, East Lothian CPC
David Comley – Director of Social Work, Glasgow CPC
Deirdre Cilliers – Social Work Officer, Clacks CPC
Kate Mearns – Development Manager, Angus CPC
Eric Byiers – Chair, Fife CPC
Rena McCarry – South Lanarkshire CPC
Tim Warren – Scottish Executive
Boyd McAdam – Scottish Executive
Dr Rosie Ilett
Alan Baird – Chair, Dundee CPC
Dougie Watson – Independent Chair, Scottish Borders CPC
Sandra Power – Aberdeen City Council
Joyce Nisbet – Chair, Edinburgh CPC
Sarah Cocoran – Scottish Executive
Karen Brady – SCRA
Alastair Merrill – Scottish Executive
Gillian Garvie – Scottish Executive
Jackie Donnelly – East Ayrshire CPC
Dougie Watson – Chair, Scottish Borders CPC
Roy Jobson – Chair, Edinburgh CPC
Martin Henry – Executive Officer, ELBCPO
Malcolm Graham – Chair, ELB Co-ordinating Group