

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL AND NHS HIGHLAND

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Joint Committee on Children and Young People** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday, 7 November 2007 at 2.30 p.m.

Present

Members

Mrs L MacDonald)
Mrs M C Davidson)
Mr W Fernie) Highland Council
Mrs J Urquhart)

Ms P Courcha (Chairman))
Mrs J Baird)
Mrs A Bethune) NHS Highland
Mr I Gibson)
Mrs G McCreath)

Dr D Alston, Highland Drug and Alcohol Action Team

Officers:

Ms H Dempster, Director of Social Work)
Mr D Goldie, Interim Director of Housing and Property)
Mr S Iliffe, Senior Manager, Additional Support Needs) HC
Ms L Thomas, Health Promoting Schools Development Manager)
Miss J Maclennan, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office)

Mr B Alexander, Head of Integrated Children Services) HC/NHS

Ms S Amor, Specialist in Public Health)
Mr A Ward, Women and Children's Services Manager) NHS
Ms S Young, Nurse Consultant)
Mr A Ward, Women and Children's Services Manager)

In attendance:

Mr D Kerr, Highland Councillor
Mr J Finnie, Highland Councillor
Mr C Munro, Highland Children's Forum
Ms C MacLean, CHIP+
Ms L Taylor, NCH Scotland
Ms H Duncan, Barnardos Springboard
Ms S Calder, Strategy and Implementation Manager, Highland Drug and Alcohol Action Team
Mrs A Brady, Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)
Miss G Slider, Youth Convener
Mr B Stradling, University of Edinburgh

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Highland Council and the Board of NHS Highland. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Joint Committee.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A S Park (OCD), Mrs E McAllister, Mr A Millar, Mr R Gibbins and Ms A Darlington.

2. Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Committee held on 19 September 2007

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 19 September 2007 were circulated and **NOTED**.

Arising from the Minutes, also **NOTED** that, in relation to Item 3, the overspend on Out of Authority placements was to be reported to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 8 November 2007 and that CoSLA was due to consider a paper about how Local Authorities might collectively address the costs of these placements.

3. Revenue Budget 2007/08 – Monitoring

Report No CYP19/07 by Bill Alexander, Head of Integrated Children's Services was circulated providing monitoring information to 30 September 2007 and the projected year-end position on those areas of expenditure that had been delegated to the Joint Committee. Budget pressures remained in two particular areas, namely, early education and out of authority placements. While Highland Council had committed funding to address the budget pressure on Early Education, a projected year-end overspend of £1.8 m was still anticipated on out of authority placements.

NOTED the report.

4. Delivering Integrated Services for Children in Highland: An Overview of Challenges, Developments and Outcomes

Dr Bob Stradling made a presentation about the overview report, published recently, following four years of analysis of the development of integrated children's services in Highland. He explained the focus of the evaluation and the strategic challenges that had been faced in delivering integrated children's services. As part of the process the Joint Committee on Children and Young People had been created and which had help to convey the clear message of political support and leadership from both NHS Highland and Highland Council. It had resulted in a new culture of integrated working and enhanced practice on sharing records across agencies. Although some variations in practice still occurred the transition from coordinated working to integrated working was starting to happen.

The Chairman having thanked Mr Stradling, the Joint Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

5. **Getting It Right for Every Child - Update**

Report No CYP20/07 by Marj Stewart, Project Manager was circulated updating members on recent activities as part of the implementation and roll-out of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Particular attention was drawn to multi-agency developments, including the GIRFEC training programme, and, that following meetings with Scottish Government officials, the basis for the final draft of the GIRFEC procedures had been confirmed for use both nationally and within Highland. As this would take time to complete, it had been necessary to reschedule local lead professional training until January 2008.

NOTED the report and recent activities.

6. **Early Years Review**

Report No CYP21/07 by Bill Alexander, Head of Integrated Children's Services was circulated providing an update on progress with the review since the Joint Committee's last meeting on 19 September 2007. In setting out the current position, the Report also sought agreement to consult on the future of local childcare and family resource partnerships and the proposal to restructure the current eight partnerships so they could follow the Highland Council's Administrative areas. In addition, proposals were outlined for consultation with elected members at Ward and Associated School Group level on future delivery of pre-school education and childcare following the results of the updated analysis that had been carried out by Childcare and Family Resources Officers.

NOTED the ongoing consultation process in the review of early years services and **AGREED** to:-

- i. support the consultation on the future organisation of Childcare and Family Resource Partnerships; and
- ii. move forward with briefings with local Members and providers on the outcome of the updated analysis of current childcare and early education provision with a report on the findings of this local consultation to the Joint Committee's next meeting.

7. **Children's Champions**

Report No CYP22/07 by Bill Alexander, Head of Integrated Children's Services was circulated setting out proposals for a continued model of Children's Champions in Highland. It highlighted the valuable role that political Children's Champions had played to date in the development and governance of integrated children's services and reviewed the proposed role and operation of these Champions in the new Highland Council Administration and by NHS Highland, Community Health Partnerships and Specialist Services Units. The report also referred to the role of Youth Convener in representing the voice of young people on the Committee and proposed that the postholder should be able to act on their own behalf. This would allow the Youth Convener to build on links currently being made with the Service Nominated Officers' Group (SNO Patrol), a Group of nominated officers from each Council Service to identify issues etc relevant to young people. It was proposed NHS Highland also take part in this Group with an officer who could act with regard to Child Health services.

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AGREED:-

- i. the proposed role of the Children's Champion be "to promote an understanding and recognition of the needs of children and young people within the various strategic and governance forums of which the Children's Champion is a member, and to promote consideration of these needs in policy and strategic developments. As part of this, particular account should be taken of looked after children and children who are deemed to be "in need" or "at risk" ;
- ii. in principle, that each Council area should have one Children's Champion and that each Community Health Partnership and Specialist Services Unit should have one Children's Champion, subject to the agreement of the Highland Council and NHS Highland;
- iii. the Champions should attend the Joint Committee but that current voting arrangements be continued insofar as they would have no voting powers;
- iv. that the Highland Youth Convener represent the views of young people on the Joint Committee as a full Member on her own behalf and not as a member of any other constituent group within the Joint Committee, subject to the agreement of the Highland Council and NHS Highland; and
- v. that NHS Highland nominate an officer to the Service Nominated Officers Group for Child Health services.

8. Review of Leaving Care Services

Report No CYP23/07 by Bill Alexander, Head of Integrated Children's Services was circulated informing members of the outcomes of a joint review of leaving care services, particularly focusing on aftercare and housing support. The report identified themes that had emerged during the review and explained the current support available for throughcare and aftercare for young people. As part of the Council's Administration's commitment to better outcomes for looked after children, it identified issues for further development including the need for strategic leadership, improved planning for individual young people, availability of housing support and the review of mental health services.

It was recognised that although systems were in place for assisting those young people leaving care, they did not always work in the best way and a more co-ordinated strategic approach was required. To achieve this, a Working Group was proposed to examine the issue in more detail and to identify resources available. The Highland Council took its corporate parenting responsibility very seriously and a report on this matter was due to be considered at an early meeting of the full Highland Council but it was felt an identified person within the Council could help to address issues raised and help meet the challenges that these young people were facing. Some of these young people had also been involved with Criminal Justice Services and ideally, should resources permit, social workers from within this team should have responsibility for after care.

Having considered the implications of this review and having **NOTED** that a update report on the review of mental health services would be submitted to its next meeting, the Joint Committee **AGREED** to:-

- i. support further costed reports that made specific proposals with regard to the following:-
- ii. sustaining the current level of service provided by Barnardo's Springboard;
- iii. streamlining the management of young people's finances;
- iv. new housing services, with support, to fill the gap between residential or foster care and temporary and permanent accommodation;
- v. the review of mental health services, including how they could better meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers.
- vi. establish, if needed, a Working Group to investigate and bring reports on the above, with a report on its remit and membership to be brought to the Joint Committee's next meeting;
- vii. stress the need to identify, as soon as possible, a senior officer within Highland Council to have lead responsibility for throughcare and aftercare; and
- viii. that the Director of Social Work explore the feasibility of specific workers within the Criminal Justice Services team taking responsibility for young people with the aim of providing a more seamless and holistic service.

9. Impact Assessment Framework

Report No CYP24/07 by Bill Alexander, Head of Integrated Children's Services was circulated addressing the request of the Joint Committee for an impact assessment to take account of planned changes. A framework would also provide a consistent method of risk assessing the effects of decisions when financial constraints impacted on services. It would take into account factual information about the service and the service provider and consider alternative actions that might be available.

AGREED the framework and that it be used in future reports to the Joint Committee about changes to policy or service provision.

10. The Education of Pupils With Dyslexia

Report CYP25/07 by Hugh Fraser, Director of Education, Culture and Sport setting out a policy statement on "The Education of Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties/Dyslexia", as approved by the Highland Council's Education, Culture and Sport Committee at its meeting on 20 September 2007. The policy contributed to the Council's Programme for Administration and would promote improved attainment in literacy and numeracy and the implementation of Getting It Right for Every Child.

NOTED the report and **AGREED** to endorse the policy "The Education of Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties/Dyslexia".

11. RSA Commission on Drugs

Report No CYP26/07 by Louise Thomas, Health Promoting Schools Development Manager was circulated informing Members, as requested at the last meeting of the Joint Committee, of the Substance Misuse Prevention and Education work being developed in Highland. The report included the outcomes

of the consultation and information in connection with the report of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce and Commerce Commission (RSA), "Drugs – Facing the Facts" and also updated Members on the planned pilot of a Highland lifestyle survey.

Evidence showed that demonising substance misuse did not work and therefore it was more important to concentrate on harm reduction. It was necessary to be realistic about how messages were tailored and for young people to know how to keep themselves safe. For this to be effective, it was important to focus education on harm reduction of substance misuse at as early a stage as possible, fitting in with the curriculum, even as early as primary school, and in secondary school to support, in effect, a harm reduction approach.

Having considered the report, the Joint Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the principles and approaches of a revised prevention and education strategy for substance misuse services in Highland, including that further consideration was given through the Highland Drugs and Alcohol Action team to the issue of harm reduction in secondary school drugs education; and
- ii. an approach be adopted which was evidence based, recognising that substance misuse would always take place, on how to minimise danger to the individual.

12. Airport House

Report No CYP27/07 by Bill Alexander, Head of Integrated Children's Services was circulated which provided an update on the operation of Airport House, the Intensive Support and Vocational Training Centre in Caithness. It made proposals to confirm the post of Manager which had been temporary since the commencement of the service on a permanent basis.

NOTED the report and **AGREED** the proposal to establish a permanent Manager post at Airport House.

13. Date of Future Meetings

AGREED the following dates for meetings of the Joint Committee during 2008:-

Friday 18 January 2008 at 2.15 p.m.
Friday 14 March 2008 at 10.30 a.m.
Friday 6 June 2008 at 2.15 p.m.
Friday 22 August 2008 at 10.30 a.m.
Friday 3 October 2008 at 10.30 a.m.
Friday 28 November 2008 at 2.15 p.m.

NOTED that the next meeting would be held in the Town House, Inverness following a seminar to be held in the morning and that confirmation as to the venues for the remaining dates would be made in advance of each meeting.

The meeting ended at 4.50 pm.