

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, Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness on Friday, 27 March 2009 at 2.40 p.m.

Present

Members

Mrs M C Davidson (in the Chair))
Mr W Fernie) Highland Council
Mrs L MacDonald)
Ms P Courcha)
Mr I Gibson)
Mrs A Bethune) NHS Highland
Mrs G McCreath)
Mrs J Baird)

Officers:

Mrs H Dempster, Director of Social Work)
Mr A McMahon, Children's Right Officer, Social Work Services)
Mr S Iliffe, Senior Manager, Additional Support Needs, Education, Culture and Sport Service) HC
Miss J MacLennan, Acting Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office)
Mr B Alexander, Head of Children Services) HC/NHS

In attendance:

Mr C Munro, Highland Children's Forum
Ms L Taylor, Youth Action Service
Mr A Wilson, "Who Cares? Scotland"
Mrs A Brady, Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)
Ms C MacLean, Children in the Highlands Information Point + (CHIP+)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A S Park, Mr A M Millar, Mrs E McAllister, Mr C Punler, Mr G MacLeod, Ms J Douglas, Miss C Burns, Ms A Darlington, Mrs L Munro, Mr H Fraser, Ms S Amor and Ms J Veasey.

2. Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Committee held on 16 January 2009

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 16 January 2009 were circulated and **NOTED**.

Arising from the Minutes, also **NOTED**:-

- i. in relation to item 4, Substance Misuse and Funding Streams, the applications made to the Highland Drug and Alcohol Action Team by Action for Children for additional monies and for direct dedicated nursing support into Youth Action Teams had been successful; and
- ii. in relation to item 7, the "Who Cares? Scotland" Trek to Nepal, the support that was to have been provided by the Children's Rights Officer would require to be addressed given that this post had now been deleted.

3. Revenue Budget 2008/09 – Monitoring Report

Report No CYP8/09 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services, was circulated detailing the position of the Joint Committee for Children and Young People budget as at 6 March 2009 which showed a projected underspend of £628,000.

In providing further detail on the main variances, particular attention was drawn to the impact that the various staff vacancies had had on the budget. An advert was shortly to appear in the national press which, it was hoped, would result in many of these posts being filled. Members were assured that the number of vacancies had reduced but a report providing additional detail of the recruitment position would be submitted to the next meeting.

- i. **NOTED** the current budget position as at 6 March 2009;
- ii. **NOTED** that the year-end Monitoring Report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a report also be submitted to the next meeting providing an update on the recruitment of social work staff and the current number of vacancies yet to be filled.

4. Implementing Sweet 16 – Report by the Children's Commissioner

Report No CYP9/09 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services, was circulated which provided an update on the implementation of the Sweet 16 report by the Children's Commissioner, on the age of leaving care. It included proposals to support children returning from out of authority care situations in a new intensive resource currently known as Northern Lights, managed by Barnardo's, and also for developments in supported accommodation.

In detailing developments taking place, Members were informed that the Highland Council was to hold a Corporate Parenting Seminar in June, 2009 and it would be beneficial for members of the Joint Committee, together with the Board of NHS Highland, to attend. Providing appropriate housing for young care leavers still required attention but improvements had been achieved. The proposals contained within the report for supported

accommodation were welcomed but assurances were sought that careful monitoring and evaluation were in place to ensure their success. It was hoped the Quality Assurance report on all areas of service relating to young care leavers would also address this in detail.

NOTED that the Highland Council's Corporate Parenting Seminar was to be held on 25 June 2009 and **AGREED:-**

- i. to support the initiatives detailed in the report;
- ii. to allocate funding from the out-of-authority budget in 2009/10 of £50,000 for the Northern Lights Project Manager and £57,000 for the supported accommodation developments; and
- iii. that Members of the Joint Committee and the Board of NHS Highland be invited to attend the Corporate Parenting Seminar.

5. Developments in Early Education

Report No CYP10/09 by Sam Brogan, Senior Childcare and Family Resource Officer, was circulated setting out the implications of the Concordat intention for 15 hour early education from 2010. The Joint Committee was asked to consider the policy implications of extended hours and to agree proposals for consultation.

There were various factors to take into account if this target was to be achieved including the length of the nursery day, the registration of the workforce, the working hours of staff and the financial implications. It was also vital that local provision was rationalised and to ensure that a degree of standardisation was achieved for both families and the staff involved.

AGREED:-

- i. consultation be undertaken with Head Teachers and nursery staff about the proposed organisation of the nursery day, and a subsequent consultation with families;
- ii. consultation be undertaken with the trade unions about the changes recommended to the working patterns and remuneration of staff;
- iii. that partner centre rates be increased proportionately by the same amount as local authority rates; and
- iv. that any subsequent changes to local provision be incorporated into the ongoing review of all early years services.

6. Additional Support Needs in the Early Years

Report No CYP11/09 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services, was circulated setting out a policy framework to promote equity for families with young children with additional support needs (ASN) when accessing pre-school education and childcare. The report sought to demonstrate how the Getting It Right for Every Child approach, as part of the national Early Years Framework, would support improved outcomes for children. It took into account the resources required to meet ASN, particularly in establishments of

16-20 children, the need to rationalise the support ratio in partner centres and the issue of providing childcare services for parents wishing to go out to work or undertaking training. In assessing the needs of children with ASN it was felt that Pre-School Home Visiting Teachers were best placed to carry out this function. Funding for these measures already existed but, because of the fragmented approach, it was suggested that it was not currently being used in the most effective manner.

AGREED that a consultation be carried out with families, providers and the relevant agencies about the various proposals included within the report.

7. Child Protection Inspections

Report No CYP12/09 by Alistair Dodds, Chief Executive, was circulated updating the Joint Committee about matters in relation to child protection and, particularly, the newly announced series of multi-agency inspections and the ongoing review of the Committee's workplan and activities, including the imminent publication of new guidance.

While broadly welcoming the proposals for the inspection of child protection services by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) some aspects had given cause for concern. In particular, they proposed to continue the narrow focus of cases sampled and, in the first instance, a "slimmed down" public report was to be published rather than the more detailed reports preferred in Highland. Furthermore, the proposed structure of inspections did not allow a lot of time for staff, child and family preparation. Some of these concerns had already been taken on board by HMIe but a response reflecting these views was proposed.

- i. **NOTED** matters in relation to child protection and, particularly, the newly announced series of multi-agency inspections and ongoing review of the Committee's workplan and activities, including the imminent publication of new guidance; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a formal response be submitted to HMIe on issues of concern regarding their proposals for Child Protection Inspections.

8. Implementation of the Mental Health Framework

Report No CYP13/09 by Sally Amor, Child Health Commissioner, was circulated reminding Members of the considerable change, in the last two years of review and redesign, within specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) across NHS Highland and the progress that had been made in developing shared priorities with partners of the Joint Committee. It set out the various developments taking place and the priorities for the months ahead.

The complexity of the roles of staff involved with young people with mental health problems was recognised as was the need to ensure adequate training was in place to help to alleviate the pressures faced by them. Assurances

were sought, and received, that this was incorporated into CAMHS Action Plan.

NOTED:-

- i. the progress made in developing the Highland Implementation Plan for the Mental Health of Children and Young People: A Framework for Promotion, Prevention and Care;
- ii. the service change and redesign that had been undertaken within specialist CAMHS;
- iii. the findings of a series of consultation seminars undertaken with integrated children's service partners and the recommendations that would inform CAMHS Framework Implementation Plan which in turn would address the needs of For Highland's Children 3;

and **AGREED:-**

- i. to investigate, in terms of the CAMHS Action Plan, how the Joint Committee might demonstrate its commitment to staff mental health and well-being.

9. Intimate Care Policy

Report No CYP14/09 by Stephen Iliffe, Senior Manager (Additional Support Needs), was circulated which introduced the Policy and Guidance on Intimate Personal Care for Children and Young People covering nurseries and partner centres, schools and residential child care settings. It had addressed particular areas of concern to staff and had provided clear advice. A copy of the policy document had also been circulated.

AGREED:-

- i. the Policy and Guidance; and
- ii. to support its dissemination and the associated training.

10. For Highland's Children 3 - Update

Report No CYP15/09 by Innis Mitchell, Children's Planning Officer, was circulated providing an update on the drafting of For Highland's Children 3 with detail on the current developments in key sections of the new Integrated Children's Plan. The Services for Children and Young People booklet, copies of which had been sent out to all Secondary school pupils, had also circulated.

NOTED that the number of Key Outcome Targets in For Highland's Children 3 might be greater than originally planned and **AGREED:-**

- iii. the presentation of the For Highland's Children 3 Disability Strategy to the meeting of the Joint Committee on 5 June 2009;

- iv. to endorse the proposal to develop an Integrated Children's Service Training Framework; and
- v. to support the proposal to improve and modernise the For Highland's Children web-site.

11. Review of Nursing in the Community

NOTED, in relation to circulated Report No CYP16/09, that the presentation by Pat Tyrell, NHS Highland on the implementation of the Review of Nursing in the Community by NHS Highland would be made to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

12. Getting It Right For Every Child – Update

Report No CYP17/09 by Marj Stewart, Project Manager, was circulated updating Members on the implementation of "Getting It Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC) in the pathfinder area and on pan Highland developments.

The project was due to finish at the end of March 2009. From April, it would change into mainstream operational management and to mark this, the Minister for Children and Young People was to visit the Highland Council on 5 May 2009. In acknowledging the major benefits it was hoped that the project would generate, it was important for the Joint Committee to monitor how GIRFEC embedded into Services and to ensure sustained change took place. A major part of this would be the performance measures of For Highland's Children 3 which would provide evidence of the success of joined up working between partner agencies.

NOTED:-

- i. the implementation of GIRFEC in the pathfinder area and on pan-Highland developments;
- ii. that the Minister for Children and Young People was to visit Highland Council on 5 May 2009 to mark the end of the GIRFEC Project and the launch of its implementation into operation, an event to which all Joint Committee Members would be invited;

AGREED:-

- i. consideration be given as to the best way of monitoring how GIRFEC was embedding into practise; and
- ii. that practitioners using GIRFEC be invited to attend a future meeting of the Joint Committee to explain how the project had changed work methods.

13. Future Business of Joint Committee for Children and Young People

Report No CYP18/09 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services, was circulated setting out a proposed list of reports to be considered at future meetings of the Joint Committee on Children and Young People.

NOTED the proposed list of reports and **AGREED**, as referred to in item 3, that reports also be considered on the year-end Revenue Budget Monitoring position and the recruitment of social work staff.

14. Date of Next Meeting

NOTED that the next meeting of the Joint Committee would be held on Friday 5 June 2009 at 2.15 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness.

The meeting ended at 4.25 p.m.