

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, Inverness on Friday, 6 June 2008 at 10.30 am.

Present

Members

Mrs E MacDonald)
(Chairman))
Mrs E McAllister) Highland Council
Mr A M Millar)
Mr W Fernie)
Mrs M C Davidson)
Ms P Courcha) NHS Highland
Mr I Gibson)
Mrs A Bethune)
Mrs G McCreath)
Mrs J Baird)
Dr D Alston, Highland Drug and Alcohol Action Team
Miss G Slider, Youth Convener

Officers:

Mr H Fraser, Director of Education, Culture and Sport
Mrs H Dempster, Director of Social Work)
Ms S Brogan, Senior Childcare and Family Resource Officer) HC
Mr S Iliffe, Senior Manager, Additional Support Needs)
Ms J Baines, Development Officer, Support for Learners)
Mr P Mascarenhas, Principal Youth Development Officer)
Miss J Maclennan, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office)
Mr B Alexander, Head of Integrated Children Services) HC/NHS
Ms S Amor, Child Health Commissioner) NHS

In attendance:

Mrs L Munro, Children's Champion
Mrs J Douglas, Children's Champion
Mr C Munro, Highland Children's Forum
Ms F Nixseaman, Highland Community Care Forum Young Carers Project
Ms C MacLean, CHIP+
Ms V Gale, Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)
Mr G Morgan, Highland Users Group
Mr K Maclver, Highland Users Group
Mr M Mawby, NCH

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr C Punler, Dr R Gibbons, Inspector Macleod, Mrs A Brady, Mrs R Morrison, Ms A Darlington, Mr A McMahon, Mr L O'Neill and Ms J Veasey.

2. Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Committee held on 14 March 2008

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 14 March 2008 were circulated and **NOTED**.

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

- i Mrs A Bethune's apologies be included (item 1);
- ii the playgroup and nursery in Lybster had now amalgamated and was situated in the school (Item 4);
- iii following discussions with the playgroup and nursery in Maryburgh it had been agreed not to amalgamate provision in August 2008 but for CALA to take over the management of the playgroup and for the nursery to take both 3 and 4 year olds (Item 4);
- iv following enrolment there had been insufficient demand to continue with a playgroup in Ormlie and Knockbreck (Item 4).

3. Revenue Budget 2008/09

Report No CYP16/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was circulated informing Members that the revenue budget allocated to the Joint Committee for 2008/09 from the Highland Council and NHS Highland totalled £23.4m. The budget was organised around nine main headings and various proposals were made with regard to expenditure in the coming year.

AGREED:-

- i the budget proposals for 2008/09 as detailed in the report;
- ii the arrangements proposed by Highland Community Care Forum (HCCF) for the pan-Highland young carers' project, subject to the ongoing discussions about core funding with HCCF;
- iii to second one current practitioner to achieve Chartership as a Forensic Psychologist;
- iv that although provision had been made for a Drug Advisory and Information Service, funding be held in reserve at this time until discussions had been completed with BLAST as to their ability to provide such a service in 2008/09;
- v a report be submitted to a future meeting detailing how the Surestart funding was used;

and **NOTED:-**

- vi a report was to be provided to the Housing and Social Work Committee on 6 August 2008 which would consider information on provision of respite care services, the budget and how services might improve.

4. Revenue Budget 2008/09 – Monitoring Report

Following on from the above, Report No CYP17/08 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 30 April 2008, after one month of the new financial year. The report indicated that, at this early stage, it appeared the service was likely to deliver all services within the budget allocated.

NOTED the current position as at 30 April 2008.

5. Update on Out of Authority Placements Action Plan

Report No CYP18/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services and Stephen Iliffe, Senior Manager (Additional Support Needs) was circulated providing an update on actions being taken with regard to Out of Authority placements. It also included proposals to secure Service Level Agreements for enhanced educational provision at Glachbeg Croft and emergency care provision at Cromlett House.

Reasons for the increase in placement numbers in recent years were explained. It was suggested that a more structured approach to the procurement by local authorities of Out of Authority placements would ensure best value and the mechanism for pursuing this was considered to be CoSLA. Furthermore, the need to ensure the smooth transition of children with complex disabilities into adult services was highlighted as requiring further investigation.

NOTED the report and **AGREED**:-

- i that Service Level Agreements be established for Glachbeg Croft and emergency care at Cromlett House and Members be provided with inspection reports for Cromlett House as and when they were produced;
- ii to examine how to facilitate the transition of children with complex disabilities into adult services; and
- iii that a more structured strategy regarding the provision of Out of Authority placements continue to be raised with CoSLA.

6. Governance of Childcare Grants

Report No CYP19/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was circulated updating Members on childcare grants awarded in 2007/08 and making proposals for future arrangements for these grants.

AGREED the proposals for future arrangements for these grants as follows:-

- i to ensure due scrutiny, the budget management pass to the Resources Manager (Early Years);
- ii to ensure alignment with local strategy, funding decisions continued to be dependent on application to the local childcare partnership and endorsement by Area Service Managers;
- iii applications be routinely discussed with the Area Children's Champions; and

- iv where providers were unhappy with the level of grant provided or the nature of grants to certain organisations, a disputes resolution process be established involving a meeting between the Area Children's Services Manager and/or Resource Manager and a Children's Champion, from a different area from where the dispute had arisen, and any other aggrieved parties, with a recommendation to the Head of Service to determine the matter.

7. ICAN Early Talk Scheme

Report No CYP20/08 by Jane Baines, Development Officer, Support for Learners was circulated informing Members of the progress made on the ICAN Early Talk Scheme which was a national model of best practice. The success of the ICAN Scheme at the Obsdale Centre, Alness was highlighted where part of its role was to provide training for Primary and Nursery staff on speech, language and communication development issues. The Early Talk Accreditation Scheme had also proved particularly successful with a large number of nurseries supporting pre-school children in the Highlands.

The benefits achieved through the Scheme and the excellent joint working with NHS Highland, particularly with Speech and Language Therapists, were welcomed. However, it was felt that the Scheme would gain by raising its profile and various suggestions were made as to how this could be achieved, in particular by promoting it on the Highland Council's website.

AGREED:-

- i to commend those nurseries that had achieved accreditation on the Scheme; and
- ii the Council promote the Scheme through measures including highlighting it on its website.

8. Early Years Provision

Report No CYP21/08 by Sam Brogan, Senior Childcare and Family Resource Officer was circulated setting out issues in relation to inputs and outcomes for early education in the local authority and independent sectors including the findings which confirmed that it was best practice to place 3 and 4 year old provision in the same setting. In particular, attention was drawn to the fact that currently the Council had to a duty to provide 12.5 hours of funded pre-school education per week, over 38 weeks, which was likely to increase to 15 hours in 2010 and it was important that plans were put in place to address this increase. There were significant differences between local authority provision and partner centres and these were set out in detail in the report.

The equality impact assessment carried out on the Early Years Review was welcomed. It had, however, raised concerns regarding disability and disappointment was expressed that there was no specific commitment for officers to carry out a disability impact assessment. Members were assured that the issues raised in the impact assessment would be the subject of future reports but that disability, given the complex nature of the subject, would specifically be addressed as part of a report on Additional Support in the Early Years.

AGREED:-

- i further to the outcome of job evaluation, work commence to identify how some of the challenges and anomalies identified in local authority staffing arrangements might be addressed in the planning for 15 hours/week provision from 2010;
- ii that further work be undertaken to examine how commissioning arrangements could continue to support partner centre provision, including in relation to terms and conditions across sectors, particularly in relation to Management;
- iii to confirm a strategic commitment to support Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) as the principal partner provider and to enter into detailed discussion with CALA regarding its future role and long term funding needs; and
- iv the impact assessment on disability on Pre-School policies be addressed in a future report to the Joint Committee on Additional Support in the Early Years.

9. Early Years Staff Qualifications

Report No CYP22/08 by Sam Brogan, Senior Childcare and Family Resource Officer was circulated updating Members on the workforce development issues for staff in the pre-school education sector who did not wish to undertake qualifications that met the registration requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council.

The same qualification requirements applied to the voluntary sector and CALA had carried out a similar mapping exercise. It had shown that although expectations of staff were the same, those in the voluntary sector had comparably lower salaries.

AGREED that staff who had indicated that they did not wish to undertake qualifications be encouraged to reconsider but, failing that, discussions be initiated with Highland Council's Personnel Services and Trade Unions about redeployment options for those staff.

10. Second Response to Highland Children's Forum Inclusion Report

Report No CYP23/08 by Stephen Iliffe, Senior Manager (Additional Support Needs) was circulated providing a follow-up response to the report prepared by the Highland Children's Forum (HCF) on Inclusion Issues "What Difference Would There Be If Children's Experience Framed Policy?" which was presented to the Joint Committee on 21 April 2006 and was initially responded to in June 2006. Members had asked that a further report be submitted showing how services had considered the report and incorporated its recommendations. The report detailed how the issues raised were reflected in current policy and practice.

Amongst the points raised during discussion were the following:-

- It was important that all Highland Council and NHS Highland establishments and services took continuing action to implement the recommendations of the report;
- It was important that the Joint Committee continued to monitor action and progress and build on experience;

- Given the time taken for the follow-up report to be prepared, it was argued, that it might be seen that there was a resources issue in supporting children with additional needs;
- While conditions in PPP schools were excellent, there had to be sufficient resources in other schools to provide intimate care facilities and to allow policies to be properly implemented;
- It was important to think carefully about how the impact of policies was evaluated; and
- Young people's views had to be taken into account when shaping policy.

AGREED:-

- to support the continuing work as summarised in the report;
- that where difficulties had arisen with the implementation of the points highlighted in the HCF report, the lessons learnt be reported back to the Joint Committee; and
- to look more clearly at the outcomes for young people and the impact of the policies in place.

11. Moving and Handling of Children and Young People

Report No CYP24/08 by Stephen Iliffe, Senior Manager (Additional Support Needs) was circulated describing current developments in relation to the Moving and Handling Policy, Guidance and Training and also some related developments. These developments were consistent with the recommendations made in the recently issued national report "Handle With Care" prepared by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People.

The training to be provided, particularly to parents and carers, was welcomed. It could, in principle, be rolled out further to allow young people with disabilities to gain improved access to tertiary education in Highland. The policy had been drawn together through a joint working group informed by those affected, namely, young people, parents and carers.

NOTED the action being taken collaboratively by the Highland Council and NHS Highland and **AGREED** to:-

- support these continuing developments; and
- commend those involved in the formation of the Moving and Handling policy and protocol.

12. Highland Users Group – Presentation

Report No CYP25/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was circulated introducing a presentation by the Highland Users Group (HUG) on their recent report "Young People and Mental Health: The Views of Users of Mental Health Services Who Are Affected By Mental Health Problems".

Mr G Morgan, HUG addressed Members and explained the background to the report together with its main themes. In particular, the report had shown that resources for young people's mental health problems were over stretched and that there was a need to increase young people's knowledge about mental illness. Mr K MacIver then provided a personal account of his experience as a young person accessing mental health services.

Having thanked HUG's representatives for their presentation, it was pointed out that NHS Highland were in the process of improving services for mental health and, in focusing on young people with particular needs, the HUG report would prove invaluable. Current developments were outlined as was the consultation process NHS Highland was carrying out in developing these services. It was recognised that families also needed support and the work undertaken by HUG in Highland schools was explored, particularly through the use of drama and art.

NOTED the presentation by HUG on their recent report on mental health and young people and **AGREED** to take account of it in the current work on the Mental Health Framework.

13. Getting It Right for Every Child

Report No CYP26/08 by Marj Stewart, Programme Manager was circulated updating Members about progress on the development and implementation of "Getting it Right for Every Child" in Inverness and Highland, including activities of the programme team.

NOTED the progress that continued to be made.

14. Communications Strategy

Report No CYP27/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was circulated detailing the proposals for a revised communications strategy for integrated children's services.

AGREED the communications strategy for integrated children's services.

15. Raddery Trust

Report No CYP28/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was circulated seeking homologation of the appointment of Councillor L MacDonald to the Raddery Trust.

AGREED to homologate Mrs MacDonald's appointment to the Raddery Trust.

16. Future Business of the Joint Committee for Children and Young People

Report No CYP29/08 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** reports also be considered on the following topics:-

- NHS Funding of Children's Services
- Drugs Strategy
- Children Commissioner's Report on Child Protection in Residential Care

17. Date of Next Meeting

NOTED that the next meeting would be held in the Council Chamber, Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness on Friday 22 August 2008 at 10.30 a.m.

Additional Urgent Item

18. Child Protection Follow Through Inspection

Due to the delay which would otherwise have resulted in the report being considered by the Highland Council and NHS Highland, there had been circulated Report No CYP30/08 informing Members of the findings of the follow-through inspection of services to protect children and young people in the Highland Council area.

Having commended the staff involved in Child Protection for their continuing hard work, the Joint Committee **NOTED** that, as a result of the effective performance shown by services in taking forward improvements, HM Inspectorate of Education was not going to make any further visits in relation to the inspection reports published in July 2005 and January 2007.

The meeting ended at 1.05 pm.