

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, 22 August 2008 at 10.30 a.m.

Present

Members

Mrs M C Davidson (Chairman))
Mrs L MacDonald)
Mrs E McAllister) Highland Council
Mr A M Millar)
Mr W Fernie)

Ms P Courcha)
Mr I Gibson) NHS Highland
Mrs A Bethune)
Mrs G McCreath)
Mr C Punler)

Dr D Alston, Highland Drug and Alcohol Action Team
Mr G Macleod, Northern Constabulary

Officers:

Mr H Fraser, Director of Education, Culture and Sport
Mrs H Dempster, Director of Social Work)
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing, Housing and Property Services) HC
Mr A McMahon, Children's Right Officer, Social Work Services)
Mr S Iliffe, Senior Manager, Additional Support Needs, Education, Culture)
and Sport Service)
Miss J Maclennan, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office)
)
Mr B Alexander, Head of Children Services)
) HC/NHS
Ms S Amor, Child Health Commissioner
Mr D McDonald, Head of Finance (Community Care))
Mr D Babb, Senior Dental Officer (Oral Health Promotion and) NHS
Epidemiology))

In attendance:

Mrs L Munro, Children's Champion
Mrs J Douglas, Children's Champion
Ms G Newman, Highland Children's Forum
Mrs A Brady, Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)
Ms A Darlington, NCH
Ms C MacLean, Children in the Highlands Information Point + (CHIP+)
Mrs R Morrison, Chairman to the Children's Panel

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs J Baird, Mr C Munro and Ms J Veasey.

2. Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Committee held on 6 June 2008

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 6 June 2008 were circulated and **NOTED**.

Arising from the Minutes, also **NOTED** that in relation to the Revenue Budget 2008/09 (Item 3), discussions were reaching a conclusion with BLAST as to their ability to provide a Drug Advisory and Information Service. As it was now expected that NCH Action for Children would take over the service, the Joint Committee **AGREED** that the reserved funding now be released.

3. Revenue Budget

There had been circulated the following reports on Revenue Expenditure:-

a) Revenue Budget - Unaudited Outturn 2007/08

Report No CYP30/08 by the Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services setting out the unaudited Revenue Budget outturn position for the Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2008 and showing a £1.228m underspend. Major pressures on the budget had been Early Education and Out of Authority placements and a considerable amount of work had taken place to control expenditure. In addition, delays in implementing the reorganised staffing structure had resulted in significant savings and the late receipt of a Scottish Government 2006/07 grant meant that overall an underspend had been achieved.

NOTED the unaudited 2007/08 Revenue Budget outturn position.

b) Revenue Budget - Monitoring 2008/09

Report No CYP31/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services detailing the position of the Joint Committee for Children and Young People budget as at 30 June 2008. Although too early in the financial year to make accurate year end projections, pressure on the early education and out of authority placements budgets was anticipated.

NOTED the report.

4. NHS Highland Children and Young People's Budgets

Report No CYP32/08 by David McRonal, Head of Finance (Community Care) was circulated informing Members of the totality of NHS Highland's funding for Children and Young People's Services. It identified the additional discrete budgets spanning Acute, Tertiary, Community, General Practice and Dental Services which amounted to £19.8m. The review had been limited to those budgets which were uniquely attributable to children and young people as there were many other budgets not split according to the age of patients such as the subsidiary service costs associated with operating theatres, diagnostics and laboratories etc.

In discussion it was suggested that, as the development of For Highland Children's 3 approached, it might be opportune to look at the scope for integrating financial streams.

NOTED the report and **AGREED** to investigate the value of whether or not any of the budget headings should be pooled.

5. Rates for Early Education Partner Centres

Declaration of Interest - Mrs A Brady declared a financial interest in this item as Chief Executive of the Care and Learning Alliance, who

would be in receipt of funding arising from the decision, and left the room.

Report No CYP33/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was tabled setting out the options for commissioning rates for early education partner centres in 2008/09. It was explained that, in 2007/08, 1781 three and four year olds received early education in 82 commissioned partner centres. At previous meetings, the Joint Committee had been made aware of the challenges facing partner centres as a result of management and staffing issues, rising costs and increased regulatory demands and recognised that enhanced support was required to address these difficulties. Although partner centre budgets had been increased, additional financial challenges were facing the sector because of the European working time directive, involving additional holiday entitlement for part time staff, and on-going difficulties recruiting and retaining managers given the rates of pay involved in relation to local authority rates.

In considering how difficulties facing partners centres could be addressed in the short term, Members asked that investigations be made as to how, in the next few years, the funding gap which existed between partner centres and the local authority could be addressed, bearing in mind the Council's commitment to providing a sustainable network of wraparound childcare in Highland.

AGREED:-

- i to meet the inflationary pressure on partner centres, the additional costs of fulfilling the European working time directive and to fund fully the management pressures as highlighted in the report;
- ii to investigate how the funding gap between the rates for partner centres and funding of local authority provision could be closed in future years; and
- iii a report be submitted to a future meeting on progress made towards achieving a sustainable network of wraparound childcare in Highland.

6. Care Commission Report on Child Protection in Residential Care

Report No CYP34/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was circulated on the Care Commission's report "Protecting children and young people in residential care: are we doing enough?" It identified current policy issues in Highland and made recommendations with regard to further actions.

Amongst areas currently being assessed in Highland was the use of the current approved physical restraint technique but which was not presently integrated with associated de-escalation measures. A review of the technique to incorporate de-escalation was to be undertaken in association with the Council's Education, Culture and Sport Service, and

other agencies working with young people, so a common and consistent approach could be reached, the outcomes of which would be reported back to Members.

AGREED that:-

- i all the recommendations of the report were relevant to private and voluntary sector establishments within Highland;
- ii the report and the recommendations be brought to the attention of providers, including respite providers, with a request that they undertook an audit;
- iii officers bring the report to the attention of residential schools where the Council had placements and ask those schools what actions they were taking with regard to the recommendations;
- iv the Council audit practice in its own units against the relevant recommendations and include any performance improvements in Unity Quality Improvement Plans; and
- v the Council, in particular,
 - explore the enhancement of personal plans for children in residential care within the new Child's Plan framework
 - review current approved techniques for physical restraint, including the application of the Care Commission's "Holding Safely" guidelines
 - review formally the respective roles and responsibilities of Who Cares? Scotland and the Children's Rights Officer in the management and monitoring of child protection for children in residential care.

7. Sweet 16: The Age of Leaving Care in Scotland

Report No CYP35/08 by Linda Maclennan, Resource Manager was circulated regarding the report from Scotland's Commissioner on Children and Young People entitled "Sweet 16: The Age of Leaving Care in Scotland". Members were reminded that the report had made 23 main recommendations and identified 21 specific issues for Highland's Integrated Children's Services.

Specific detail was provided concerning care leavers supported by Highland's Throughcare and Aftercare services together with the range of accommodation settings currently used. Care leavers needed a range of support arrangements and work was continuing to ensure seamless integration was achieved. Unfortunately, Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and Hostel accommodation was still used due to the considerable pressure on the Council's housing waiting list. However, every effort was made to ensure that a minimum standard was met and that it was used only for a limited time. Concern was also expressed that care leavers had to leave Housing Association flats after two years and were then being placed in B&B accommodation but it was explained this referred to a specific accommodation unit funded through "Supporting People". In practice, forward planning and a more flexible interpretation of the guidance was

being emphasised both in negotiations with accommodation providers and the Council's Homelessness Strategy.

NOTED the report and **AGREED** that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Joint Committee on how the use of Bed and Breakfast and hostel accommodation for young people leaving care might be minimised within an acceptable timescale.

8. Highland Children's Forum Final Report on "For Highland's Children 2: "Are We There Yet? – A Way To Go"

Report No CYP36/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was circulated introducing a presentation by Highland Children's Forum of the final report on the consultation with young people about implementation of For Highland's Children 2. A copy of the final report had been circulated as a separate booklet.

The presentation informed Members of how well children felt that services had progressed in delivering the central themes of For Highland's Children 2 and considered the possible impact of listening to children's voices as part of the on-going evaluation of services. In particular, children wanted to know what had happened since they had last contributed to the evaluation process and discussion took place as to how this could best be achieved.

NOTED the contents of the report and **AGREED**:-

- i hard copies of the report be sent to Head Teachers in Highland;
- ii Children's Champions take on the role of providing feedback to those who had contributed; and
- iii the Director of Public Health, Highland Council Directors and the Chair of the Children's Panel respond to the report's participants stating what they would do differently, in the style adopted by the Children's Commissioner.

9. Reporting on Services to Young People

Report No CYP37/08 by Innis Mitchell, Integration Manager was circulated introducing a booklet which was designed to be read by all young people of secondary school age explaining the aims and scope of children's services in Highland. A copy of the draft booklet had been circulated separately.

In discussion, the following points were made:-

- the booklet be made school specific, it being accepted that this would mean booklets would have to be reprinted more frequently;
- the booklet would continue to evolve and develop over time;
- senior secondary school pupils be consulted as to the booklet's design;

- the booklet be used as a training tool for those professionals who would be communicating it to the children and young people;
- Guidance Teachers use the booklet to help target those young people who might use the services detailed in it;
- the content be enhanced to highlight looked-after children and those dealing with racism and discrimination;
- contact telephone numbers be included where appropriate given that not all pupils had access to computers;
- reference be made to the Young Scot packs already issued to school pupils;
- topics such as the Children's Panel and suicide prevention be incorporated;
- support available for children with disabilities be included, including the service provided by CHIP+.

AGREED that work continue to complete the booklet, taking into account the comments made, and that it then be distributed to all secondary aged pupils.

10. Children's Oral Health – A Trajectory for Improvement

Report No CYP38/08 by David Babb (Senior Dental Officer, Oral Health Promotion and Epidemiology) was circulated introducing a presentation highlighting Highland's improvement trends in children's oral health. These trends indicated progress towards the national targets as detailed in the National Dental Inspection Programme reports of recent years. The presentation also introduced Members to the Childsmile programme which was designed to deliver further improvements to child oral health across Scotland.

The improvements which had taken place in children's oral health in Highland were welcomed and Members felt that this should be publicised to encourage more parents to involve their children in the Childsmile programme

NOTED the report and **AGREED**:-

- i that Highland's improvement in children's oral health, and the introduction of the Childsmile programme to Highland, be publicised; and
- ii that consideration be given to the proposal of progress being made into reviewing joint Health Efficiency Access and Treatment (HEAT) targets and Single Outcome Agreements being submitted to meetings of the Joint Committee.

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

Report No CYP39/08 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:-

- BLAST Update
- Use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation by Care Leavers
- Youth Build
- Progress Towards Providing Wraparound Child Care
- Transition Between Children's Services to Adult Services
- Children and Young People's Respite Care
- Quality Assurance Report On All Areas of Service Relating to Young Care Leavers

12. Date of Next Meeting

NOTED that the next meeting would be held in Committee Rooms 1 and 2, Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness on Friday 3 October 2008 at 2.15 p.m. following a seminar in the morning for NHS Highland and Council Members on the roll out of Getting It Right for Every Child and Corporate Parenting.

The meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.