

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL AND NHS HIGHLAND
JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Highland Council and NHS Highland

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Joint Committee on Children and Young People** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Inverness on Friday, 3 October 2008 at 10.30 a.m.

Present

Members

Mrs M C Davidson)	
(Chairman))	
Mrs L MacDonald)	Highland Council
Mrs E McAllister)	
Mr W Fernie)	
)	
Mr I Gibson)	NHS Highland
Mrs A Bethune)	
Mrs G McCreath)	

Ms J Douglas, Highland Drug and Alcohol Action Team
Miss C Burns, Youth Convener

Officers:

Mr G Watson, Community Development Manager, Education, Culture and Sport Service)	
Mr P Mascarenhas, Principal Youth Development Officer, Education, Culture and Sport Service)	HC
Miss J MacLennan, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office)	
)	HC/NHS
Mr B Alexander, Head of Children Services)	NHS
Ms S Amor, Child Health Commissioner)	

In attendance:

Mrs L Munro, Children's Champion
Mr C Munro, Highland Children's Forum
Mr T Boyd, Children's Panel Reporter
Mrs A Brady, Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)
Mr M Mawby, Action for Children Scotland
Ms C MacLean, Children in the Highlands Information Point + (CHIP+)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A M Millar, Ms P Courcha, Mr C Punler, Dr R Gibbins, Mrs J Baird, Ms A Darlington, Mr H Fraser, Ms J Veasey, Mr G Macleod, Mrs R Morrison and Mr L O'Neill.

2. Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Committee held on 22 August 2008

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 22 August 2008 were circulated and **NOTED**.

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

- i. in relation to item 4, with regard to NHS Highland Children and Young People's Budgets it was important to plan together to deliver together and, as both organisations went forward with For Highland's Children 3, the value of pooling any other budget streams would be looked at;
- ii. in relation to item 7, recent statistics had shown an increase in the number of families with young children being accommodated in Bed and Breakfast establishments and that this issue would be incorporated into the proposed report on care leavers and the use of such accommodation;
- iii. in relation to item 8, it was reported that the Children's Champions had provided feedback to the contributors of the Highland Children's Forum (HCF) report "Are We There Yet? – A Way to Go". Chief Officers were also in the process of responding to the report's participants on what they intended to do differently. HCF had visited Nairn Academy with their presentation which had resulted in a number of positive outcomes and they were thanked for their contribution;
- iv. in relation to item 9, progress continued to be made in the production of the booklet explaining children's services for secondary school age pupils; and
- v. in relation to item 11, the report on Youth Build would now take the form of a briefing instead.

3. Revenue Budget 2008/09 – Monitoring

Report No CYP40/08 by the Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was circulated detailing the position of the Joint Committee for Children and Young People budget as at 31 August 2008. Although still too early to make accurate year end projections, pressure was anticipated in the early education and out of authority placements sectors. However, staff vacancies and close management of discretionary budgets were resulting in underspends in childcare, Surestart and the Youth Action Service.

NOTED the current budget position as at 31 August 2008.

4. Update on Substance Misuse Advice and Information Services

Declaration of Interest – Mr M Mawby declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of Action for Children Scotland, recipients of funding from NHS Highland and Highland Council for the substance misuse advice and information service, and left the room during the presentation of the report.

Report No CYP41/08 by Pol McClelland, Resource Manager was circulated regarding the positive developments in improving the delivery of Substance Misuse Services to children and young people in Highland.

The Blast Project had, in recent years, provided independent advice and guidance on substance misuse to children, young people, parents and other professionals. Due to a number of factors, they were now unable to continue to deliver this service and Action for Children Scotland had taken over this role. As well as providing a revamped Highland wide Substance Misuse “one stop shop” it would also direct young people to more specialised support. Discussions were continuing as to what the new service would be called and how the service would be rolled out but it was recognised that the strengths of the service Blast provided should also be retained. It was proposed to use “midnight football” to promote the new service but, in so doing, it was emphasised that communities should be educated on the objectives behind the “midnight football” initiative.

- i. **AGREED** to support and endorse the new positive direction of the Service in order to provide a more comprehensive and supportive one stop shop approach to young people and their families.

5. **A New Approach to Tackling Scotland’s Drug Problem**

Report No CYP42/08 by Suzy Calder, Substance Misuse and Strategy Implementation Manager and Pene Rowe, Child Protection Committee Development Officer was circulated introducing the review by the Scottish Government of its approach to problem drug use, The Road to Recovery. The purpose of the new strategy was to signal a step change in the way Scotland dealt with its drug problem and to set out a new vision for drug treatment and rehabilitation services which were based on the principle of recovery.

Instances of children and young people caring for family members using drugs were explored and it was recognised that it was important to take their views and feelings into account by reinforcing the Getting It Right for Every Child message to those involved with Adult Services. While many of the points raised in the Scottish Government’s strategy were already being done, an integrated approach across services and agencies was recognised as the best way forward. There were also various strands of money being made available for both substance and alcohol misuse and it was opportune to look at these and how they might be invested.

NOTED:-

- i. the summary of the national document and the Highland position in relation to the key priorities contained within, as discussed at the Highland Drug and Alcohol Action Team;
 - ii. the developing action plan for children affected by parental substance misuse;
- ii.
- iii. and **AGREED:-**
- iii. the Getting It Right For Every Child message be reinforced to those dealing with Adult Services so that when intervening or withdrawing services to those with problem drug use, the needs of young people in the home were taken into account; and

iv. the Head of Children's Services should identify the various funding streams available that could relate to drug and alcohol misuse.

iv.

6. Supporting the Transition for Young People with Additional Support Needs into Young Adulthood

Report No CYP43/08 by Marlyn Campbell, Development Officer (Disability) was circulated setting out the policy for the management of transitions between children's and adult services for young people with additional support needs and which had been agreed between Highland Council and NHS Highland officers. It confirmed how good management of the transition was critical to various key agendas for both organisations but made clear the need to strengthen existing and create new partnerships with employers, colleges and development agencies.

A flexible approach to transition was required to address the varied needs of young people. Members felt particular attention was required to assist young people with additional support needs into employment. Employers, Careers Scotland and Job Centre Plus were part of the proposed partnership but it was hoped the employment of young people with additional support needs could form part of the Highland Council conference on Employment scheduled for November, 2008.

AGREED to:-

- i. endorse the approach;
- ii. the proposals for the establishment of the new partnership, including a major stakeholders conference later in 2008, provisionally set for 28 November 2008 after the Joint Committee's next meeting; and
- iii. in relation to the Highland Council Employment Strategy conference aimed at supporting a new employability network for the Highlands, scheduled to be held in November 2008, the issues of employability of young people with additional support needs and/or disability be taken into account.

7. Children and Young People's Respite Care

Report No CYP44/08 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services was circulated setting out the key issues with regard to respite care for children, including the ongoing work to review provision, and the progress made to date.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- It was important that there were enough social workers in place to carry out assessments.
- Ideally a more equitable and transparent approach should be achieved with clarity as to who should receive services.
- A more co-ordinated approach between public service and voluntary respite care providers would benefit all service users.
- When reviewing respite provision, particularly domiciliary nursing care, consideration be given to providing clear guidance and information.

- Work should take place to gauge more accurately the range of needs and numbers involved requiring respite services.
- When carrying out a respite assessment, all members of the family should be consulted, including other children and young people.
- In relation to young carers, even small levels of respite provision could have significant positive effects.
- Direct payments, while benefiting a number of families, required money to be vired from elsewhere thus eventually reducing base Service provision.

NOTED:-

- i. that the issues highlighted in the report would be taken into account in the continued development of For Highland's Children 3;
- ii. the need for a more transparent and equitable approach to respite care for children and young people together with clear guidance; and
- iii. that in the review of children's respite care provision, the various issues requiring to be addressed, including domiciliary nursing, be reported back to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

8. Getting It Right for "Children in Distress"

Report No CYP45/08 by Innis Mitchell, Children's Planning Officer, was circulated explaining the requirement for training to support national and Highland strategies for suicide prevention and outlining the reasoning for a broad preventative approach which embraced self-harm and other risk taking behaviour. The report detailed a specific proposal for training which had been devised through consultation with a range of relevant service providers in the voluntary and statutory sectors.

On the basis that some funding was available to undertake this from the Highland "Choose Life" initiative, it was proposed that other funding was made available from the budget previously used to support the activities of "Positive Parenting" within Highland as this organisation had indicated that it was no longer able to undertake work in the authority with parents of children involved in risk and offending behaviours.

AGREED:-

- i. the proposed preventative approach for self-harm and other risk taking behaviour; and
- ii. the virement of funding from the budget previously used to support the activities of "Positive Parenting" to training, for three years, to support national and Highland strategies for suicide prevention.

9. Play Development – The Way Forward

Report No CYP46/08 by Graham Watson, Community Development Manager was circulated recommending actions to ensure the delivery and further development of Play in Highland. It emphasised that play was important for children and families and that Highland Council and NHS Highland had an important role in supporting play, particularly in supporting communities in Highland to take forward play projects.

While welcoming any funding that might be made available by the Scottish Government for improving play areas and play environments, it was vital that the value of play was recognised across services and agencies. Play was an important part of a child's early years and contributed towards healthy lifestyles. It was important to see play development grow and the voluntary sector's involvement would help facilitate this.

NOTED the steps being taken to take forward the Highland Play Strategy and **AGREED**:-

- i. to staff resources being committed to support Play Highland or a similar organisation to constitute itself to act as a coordinating body to maximise the opportunities for Highland communities to attract grant aid for Play projects;
- ii. should an announcement be made for funding for Play by the Scottish Government, a report be brought back to a future meeting with recommendations as to how this body could be best supported to ensure that the Highlands could have maximum benefit from the initiative;
- iii. that the importance of play be kept to the fore across all services meantime; and
- iv. to promote full involvement of partners in the voluntary sector.

10. Mental Health Link Worker

Report No CYP47/08 by Sally Amor, Child Health Commissioner and Sally Nowell, Clinical Nurse Specialist, was circulated setting out how the Scottish Government's proposals for a mental health link worker for all schools might be addressed in Highland.

NOTED the functions of mental health link workers and **AGREED**:-

- i. to endorse the proposed service model; and
- ii. to a wider consultation on the proposed service model with specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Community Health Partnerships, schools and the educational psychology service.

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

Report No CYP48/08 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:-

- The Development of Personal Plans for Children in Care
- Use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for families, including vetting of Landlords

12. Date of Next Meeting

NOTED that the next meeting would be held in Dingwall Academy, Dingwall on Friday 28 November 2008 at 10.30 a.m.

13. Date of Future Meetings

AGREED the following dates for meetings of the Joint Committee during 2009:-

Friday 16 January 2009 at 2.15 p.m.
Friday 13 March 2009 at 10.30 a.m.
Friday 5 June 2009 at 2.15 p.m.
Friday 14 August 2009 at 10.30 a.m.
Friday 2 October 2009 at 2.15 p.m.
Friday 20 November 2009 at 10.30 a.m.

NOTED that confirmation as to the venues would be made in advance of each meeting.

The meeting ended at 12.35 p.m.